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Amplifying 'whispered interventions' into loud and forceful cries

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

AMPLIFYING ‘WHISPERED INTERVENTIONS’ INTO LOUD AND FORCEFUL CRIES

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Joelina Robinson Machera

August, 2019

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
DEDICATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ix
VITA	x
ABSTRACT	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background	2
Relevance, Positionality, and Lens	3
Theoretical Perspectives	6
Statement of Problem.....	7
Research Questions	10
Significance of Study	10
Terminology.....	11
Key Assumptions	13
Delimitations of Study	14
Summary	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
The Identity of A Black Woman.....	21
Black Women and the World.....	29
Black Women and Education.....	34
Black Women and Their Agency.....	39
Stories	42
Conceptual Frameworks and Theories.....	51
Chapter 3: Research Design And Methodology	57
Research Questions	57
Research Design.....	58
Data Sources	63
Human Subject Considerations	65
Data Instruments	66
Data Methodology	68
Ethical Considerations	73
Validity and Reliability	74
Summary	77

	Page
Chapter 4: Results	78
The Questions	79
Participants.....	80
Data Collection	82
Findings.....	83
Analysis.....	88
Summary	97
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	98
Implications for the Institution.....	99
Recommendations for Future Research	100
Self Advocacy	100
Recommendations for Future Research	101
Further Thoughts.....	102
REFERENCES	104
APPENDIX A: CITI Training Certificate	119
APPENDIX B: IRB Approval Certificate	120
APPENDIX C: Recruitment Email.....	122
APPENDIX D: Informed Consent.....	123
APPENDIX E: Scheduling of Interview Email	126
APPENDIX F: Interview Question Attachment	127
APPENDIX G: Confirmation of Date Email.....	128
APPENDIX H: Day Before Confirmation Email	129
APPENDIX I: Interview Process Form	130
APPENDIX J: Interview Process Script.....	132
APPENDIX K: Thank You Email	134
APPENDIX L: Participant Review of Transcribed Interview	135
APPENDIX M: Receipt of Response Email.....	136

	Page
APPENDIX N: Peer Reviewer Email.....	137
APPENDIX O: Original Draft of Research/Interview Questions.....	138
APPENDIX P: Peer Reviewed Draft of Research/Interview Questions	139
APPENDIX Q: Expert Reviewed Draft of Research/Interview Questions	140

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Research Questions and Related Interviews	72
Table 2. Participant Identification and Self-Identity.....	81
Table 3. Methodology, Framework, and Lens Associated with Tenents.....	83
Table 4. Methodology, Framework, and Lens Associated with Tenents and Identified Key Terminology.....	84
Table 5. Methodology, Framework, and Lens Associated with Tenents, Identified Key Terminology with Assigned Themes and Research Questions.....	87

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation my brothers Elliott Lee Robinson and Herbert Joel Robinson Jr and my cousin Matthew Robinson. I love them so much and miss them every single day. They were my first best friends - the ones who taught me how to hold hands, keep secrets, and stand up and fight when someone or something knocks you down. My affinity for great music, crime television series, and staying up late at night drinking ice cold soda comes from them. They lived life as Black men in the south with grace, compassion, and love. They showed me how to be fierce in my thoughts and my actions. Without them, I would not know how to love myself, love others, and be loved.

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VITA

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 Bur-Mac Group Incorporated (2009-current) – Human Resources
 Compton Unified School District (2017) – Education
 Medical Diagnostic Clinic (2012-2016) – Human Resources
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 WASC (California) Accreditation Team (2009-2012) – Education
 The Buckley School (2008-2009) – Education
 Inglewood Independent School District (2003-2008) – Education
 The Education Trust (2003-2008) – Education
 Community Advocates (2004-2005) – Education
 Sacramento County Office of Education (2004-2005) – Education

Professional

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 Bur-Mac Group Incorporated (2004–2009) - Director of Human Resources
 Hoover High School (2000-2003) – Administrator, Activities Director, Teacher, Coach
 Anti-Defamation League (1999-2000) – Assoc. Director, A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE
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Publications/Presentations

APADS – Spring 2019 – Presentation
 AERA-Division B, Spring 2019 – Presentation
 Critical Thinking Project - Presentation
 The Journal of Global Leadership - Publication
 ICGL July 2017 - Presentation
 HICE January 2017 – Poster Presentation
 ISSOBR October 2016 – Presentation, Publication – Designated Best Paper

Community Organizing

We Care for Youth

Collaborative effort to improve middle and high school student success

Planting the Seeds of Peace

Collective of community members to resolve conflict and reduce violence with youth

Children of the Dream

Facilitator for young people –diversity meetings, yearly community service project

Do Something Community Coach

Provided guidance to students participating in a national initiative for service learning

Sista II Sista Freedom School For Young Women

Collective board member and youth trainer

ABSTRACT

An equitable educational environment includes the voices of the individuals and the power of their stories. For marginalized people, particularly women of color, surviving school means existing in oppressive environments which require the stealing of knowledge while struggling to obtain an education (Collins, 2002). It is imperative that institutions acknowledge the specific complexities women of color face in the academy (Crenshaw, 2017). This study is designed to make meaning of the journey of Black women doctoral students using counterstories and composite stories to capture and learn from their lived experiences. Through the (re)covery and (re)telling of the stories of Black women, the research amplifies knowledge production by highlighting the perseverance, adaption, and resilience of these scholars. This work is revolutionary and the act of doing such work is subversive, difficult, and dangerous (Dillard, 2012). To subscribe to this change; institutions should work toward the inclusion of new voices, ideas, paradigms, and frameworks (Nieto, 2000). As the work of social justice and equity is (re)framed, institutions and dominant cultures need to remain clear that cultural relevance and the treatment of marginalized populations is at the center of these critical conversations.

Keyword: marginalized populations, counterstories, social justice, equity

Chapter 1: Introduction

In their book, Guinier and Torres (2002) tell a story of the miner's canary to describe the detrimental experiences people of color endure in higher education. They explain how in some mining communities; the miners take a canary into the mines to test the quality of air. The miners wait for the collapse of the canary as an indicator that the miners should leave before they too become overwhelmed by toxic gases. Guinier and Torres (2002) use the metaphor to underscore the roles students of color play as indicators that something is wrong with our systems.

Guinier and Torres (2002) ask that the academy consider evaluating the experiences of racially marginalized people in academia as systemic concerns rather than collection of experiences placed upon one group's identity. Guinier and Torres (2002) point out that racially marginalized individuals are like the miner's canary "their distress is the first sign of a danger that threatens us all" (p. 11). They asked that the academy consider the implications of this sacrifice as something that does not solely affect the marginalized population but instead a bold warning that we are all in danger. Guinier and Torres' research can also be considered when examining the marginalization of other populations in the academy.

This dissertation is the story of the canary. It will make the case that honoring and privileging Black women's stories and experiences is a key way to investigate academia. Much like the canary, Black women in the academy are suffering and as such, the institution as a whole is at peril. The limited research on Black women doctoral students is focused on acceptance into and matriculation out of the doctoral program but lacks any concentration on their experiences as students while the academy. The miner's canary expressly discusses racism; this research attempts to broaden the landscape to the intersectionality of racism and sexism using critical race

theoretical underpinnings. Ladson-Billing (1997) addresses the need to focus on the constant struggle Black women face in the academy while they push against the present power structures built into the system. In documenting and examining the stories, narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students in the academy, this study will assist the academy to better understand the inequities and challenges that currently exist within the system.

Background

In my first year as a doctoral student, our cohort worked closely in and out of the classroom to complete both written assignments and presentations. In the Spring of year one, I travelled internationally with my cohort and another cohort from the same program. In my cohort, the Black women intentionally formed a group to complete the coursework during our travel and upon our return. It was the first time we all worked together. We prepared a presentation to be delivered while away.

The presentation was given on a bus with approximately 30 other doctoral students from many walks of life. Our group topic was seeing international travel and schooling through the lens of Black American women. Our professors commended the courage, the work, and the delivery. However, the next day another group presented and a White male member of this group concluded their presentation stating that the only lens in which to view the world is the human lens. With one statement he publicly and intentionally negated our race and our gender as well as our lived experience.

The bus went silent. No one spoke up. No one intervened. Our professors and our colleagues decided in that moment that silence was the best option. For the remainder of the trip, each of the four of us, Black women doctoral students, were approached daily by individuals in the larger group. All of them shared their discomfort with the situation but their inability to speak out. They questioned why we did not speak up. We were seen as the casualties of an interaction gone bad. However, I saw at is a great systemic failure of academia as well as our program, and a disservice to all who were present on the bus, not only the Black women.¹

Black women have historically struggled to obtain and keep the status of a functioning member of humanity (Collins, 2000; Dillard, 2003). Black women have traditionally been

¹ Composite narrative based on the transcripts from interviews of this study are in block quotes and italicized throughout the study.

nameless champions in the development of human rights causes (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1989; hooks, 2015). Feminism and women's rights movements have a history of documenting the accomplishments of middle class and wealthy White women solely, leaving women of color and poor women in the margins of the movements (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1981, 1989). Black women, regardless of their accomplishments both individually and as a group, still struggle to be acknowledged and heard in society at large as well as in the academy (Sule, 2011).

For marginalized people, particularly Black women, surviving school means to be whole and brilliant, stealing knowledge and not letting schooling limit your education (Collins, 2002). Dillard (2012) wrote in her second book, "I want to engage a commitment to the spirit of community as the African spiritual mandate that it is raising possibilities for rethinking teaching and research as spaces that are—or can become—deeply embedded in cultural memory and imbued with the intention of being responsible for the energy that we bring to the room as teachers and researchers" (p. 84). The work as both a student and an educator begin with self-care. Black women are the only population able to tell the stories, the counterstories of the academy, referencing their path, their pain, and their perseverance; all while expected to remain present and achieving success in the academic world.

Relevance, Positionality, and Lens

During my developmental phases of exploring this topic for my dissertation, we were required to submit various drafts in several classes. In one class, a professor asked a series of questions: "Why women?", "Why Black women?", and "Why not be inclusive of all stories in education?" At the moment, I found it difficult to answer the questions. The knowledge I had acquired in my research in addition to the experience I had as a Black female student in a doctoral program, flooded my thoughts as I searched for a reply to his questions. Upon drafting a written response, I naturally began to reflect on my own stories and how these stories intrinsically deepened my understanding as a doctoral student.

From preschool to the doctoral program, I have had limited exposure of Black women educators as well as literature and research written by Black women. The exposure became more narrowed in the doctoral program, it was Eurocentric, male-dominated, and lacked any of the experiences, stories, or ideas of Black women. In fact, I had no Black women educators in my tenure as a student upon entering the doctoral program. My first Black woman educator was the second year of my doctoral program. This trajectory from preschool to current day impacted me because I did not see myself in the work or the articulation of the work. Not seeing the work of Black women or from Black women made me feel invisible, unimportant, and less than capable. This notion of erasure emphasized that my experiences and my selfhood in the academy were not relevant within the structure of the institution or the literature and research of the people within the academy.

As an educator, I cannot knowingly witness another Black woman endure the same erasing of their culture, identity, language, and essence in the classroom. As such, to better understand the inequities and challenges that currently exist in the system, this study focuses directly on the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black woman doctoral students enrolled in a graduate school of education.

In a larger sense, education is constantly striving to support the whole student (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014), if educators and students refuse to acknowledge the importance of race and gender in the classroom, the institution will also deny the proper education to all educators and students (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Districts, universities, and education at large are focusing on implementing strategic plans on multiculturalism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (Banks, 2015). Banks (2015) ponders the question that by omitting faculty of color and curriculum from people of color what impact does that have on girls and women students of

color? Also, K-12 districts push for developing the social-emotional identities of students of color (Matias, 2016). In fact, in not doing so, there is a rise in mental health, bullying, and school shootings (Morris, 2016). Therefore, to assuage this, educators must focus on the schooling, learning, and education of girls and women of color. As such, my study focuses on the unique racialized and gendered needs of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education.

I am a self-identified Black woman. I am raising a woman of color. I come from a family of firsts as Black people and women. I want to continue to acknowledge the fight, understand the fight, and eliminate the struggle for future generations. I graduated from high school with a diverse class of over 1200 students; however, the educators were predominantly White; this impacted my identity and my commitment to my passion by lowering my future aspirations because as reflective as possible, I had no role models. I felt irrelevant. I will not let this be a reality for my daughter. I cannot let silencing and erasure happen to any more Black girls and Black women. I refuse to let institutions continue to deny our contributions to education as Black women. The institutions can no longer be allowed to erase our history, identities, and experiences. As such, this project is one of the heart. As much as I want to correct the societal injustices of the past and present; I also want to heal from my own experience of being denied my right to a whole education.

This research is not only an addition to another body of literature. This research is my world. This research is my heart. I am a mother. I am a woman of color. I am a Black woman. I am an activist and educator simultaneously. I am a racially just scholar. My experiences as a student, an educator, and a parent both inside and outside of the classroom have led me to this project and this spiritual calling.

In my research and my lived experience, this topic is both relevant and timely. It is both my privilege and my responsibility to illustrate why Black women are an ideal population for this study. The literature underscores the impact of being Black and being a woman on the lives of Black women faculty in education (Dillard, 2012; Mattis, 2000; Wheeler, Ampadu & Wangari, 2002). However, there is a significant gap in the literature that calls attention to the importance of focusing on the experiences of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education, specifically on their voices and stories along the educational journey. They are owning the telling and owning the stories.

It is through that lens that this research has been undertaken. This study gives me the space to discuss the barriers that must be overcome in order to conduct this research, including the system of permission to conduct this research has to be confronted. It is imperative that uprisings Black women doctoral students and future researchers are exposed to critical race theory and understand what these experiences are and how they contribute to the Black female doctoral journey and the broader body of literature.

Theoretical Perspectives

One approach to magnify the voices of Black women doctoral students is to situate their experiences within the appropriate theories and conceptual framework. Critical race theory (CRT), critical race feminism (CRF), and endarkened feminist epistemology (EFE) are the theoretical frameworks chosen to deepen the thought and understanding of the experiences of Black women doctoral students. These lenses place the experiences and ideas of Black women at the center of the study and the analysis of the study (Berry, 2018; Collins, 1991; Dillard, 2012; hooks, 1994). CRT is a counter framework that identifies, disrupts, and challenges White supremacy in educational, social, and legal institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT

identifies racism as both real and relevant and deeply entrenched in the institutions and systems of the United States (Ladson-Billings, 2000). CRF operates from the larger CRT movement and encompasses feminism into the understanding of racial inequalities and injustices (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). CRF addresses the intersectionality that persists within the construct of inequality as it relates to women of color (Crenshaw, 1991). EFE is a teaching and research epistemological framework that combines the wisdom of black feminism (Collins, 1990), feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1987), and spirituality in education (Palmer, 1983). EFE is a radically humanist project emphasizing emancipatory research while addressing the constructs of race, gender, and other identities (Dillard, 2006). Owning the knowledge that exists within critical race theory, critical race feminism, and endarkened feminism, my research is carefully situated within their fundamental frameworks guiding the ability to retell Black women's lived experiences.

Statement of the Problem

This study will document and examine the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students to better inform the institutional practices, policies, and procedures of graduate schools of education from the perspective of the lived experiences of these women as well as to contribute to the larger body of knowledge on the subject of Black women in graduate schools of education. Research has historically ignored, removed, deficiently represented, or minimized the stories and experiences of Black women (Berry, 2018). However, there are established bodies of work involving the experiences of Black women in society at large (Bell-Scott, 1994; hooks, 1981; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003), and in higher educational institutions (Evans-Winters, 2005; Fordham, 1993; Stevens, 1997, 2002). Research has begun to challenge the deficit perspectives of Black women in the academy, namely faculty in graduate schools of education.

Although research exists focusing on Black women faculty, more knowledge emphasizing the exclusive experiences of Black women students in doctoral programs is needed.

The motivation for this study comes from my experiences as a self-identified Black woman educator and doctoral student in education. Although studies have been done to equal the playing field for women entering doctoral programs, Black women continue to face challenges of systemic racism and sexism (Benjamin, 1997; Garcia, 2005; Reyes, 2005; Sule, 2011). There is a need to hear the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories to better understand the journey of Black women doctoral students (Scott, 2005). This study addresses the need to hear the voices of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education to challenge the racialized and gendered marginalization of Black women in the academy using the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminism.

While Black women doctoral students continue to find ways of minimizing the invisibility and erasure they endure in life and in school and persevere to achieve academic success, the silence of their experiences inhibits any comprehension of how degrading and negative experiences in schooling influence them in the academy and beyond. There is not much known about the adaptation of and resilience in the way Black women doctoral students sustain themselves throughout their educational tenure as marginalized students (Fordham, 1993; Stevens, 2002) and the consequences they suffer later for these self-imposed adaptations. Fordham (1993) argues that Black women attain academic success through invisibility resulting in erasure as well as participating in their own marginalization and exclusion. Fordham postulates that these specific adaptive behaviors have critical negative and sustaining consequences as they do not afford Black women doctoral students the type of behaviors crucial

to success after the program is concluded. Despite growing numbers of Black women being accepted in and matriculating from doctoral programs in graduate schools of education, there remains a problem of invisibility, marginalization, and exclusion (Sule, 2011).

Statement of the Purpose

Guided by research, the purpose of this research is to (re)cover and (re)tell the stories of Black women doctoral students via an endarkened feminist epistemological lens amplifying ‘whispered interventions’ into a loud and forceful cry to value Black women’s voices in knowledge production highlighting the perseverance, adaptation, and resilience during their tenure as students within graduate schools of education. By highlighting the experiences of these women in pursuance of a doctoral degree, perceptions of professional hegemony, invisibility, marginalization, exclusion, and erasure relevant to the attainment of the degree are also investigated. Due to the racialized and genderized functioning of doctoral programs (Jain, 2009), institutions need to understand how Black women are both retained and persevere in their doctoral studies while attending these institutions and how the racialized and genderized processes, programs, policies, and procedures effect these women (Williams, 2002). This study is designed to ultimately inform higher learning institutions in hearing the voices of Black women doctoral students in ways in which they can modify current practices by shifting the institutional culture to better support Black women scholars enrolled in their programs and place more Black women scholars in important and visible educator and educator leadership roles. This dissertation calls attention to the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students enrolled in a graduate school of education to better understand the extent in which these experiences impact all doctoral students, faculty, and staff in the programs.

Research Questions

Following in the footsteps of previous scholars, the focus of this study is to explore the extent to which stories, personal narratives, and counterstories can be tools to assist academics interested in de-colonizing their research and their institutions to create a more culturally responsive, inclusive culture. In this light, the guiding research questions for this study are:

RQ1: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?

RQ2: What epistemological insights can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?

RQ3: How can the articulated lived experiences of Black women doctoral students impact, influence, and inform graduate level policies and curriculum and graduate level educators and leaders?

Significance of Study

Inclusion is critically important in helping students from diverse backgrounds access learning. Although the numbers of students from marginalized communities in education are increasing (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007), many educators and educational institutions have failed to hear and support students from marginalized populations. Research indicates that students from marginalized populations can easily feel isolated when they are not around others from the same ethnicity and gender (Banks, 2015). Cultivating space for stories, personal narratives, and counterstories in learning environments encourage the sharing of lived experiences among students and faculty when numbers of marginalized populations are low. These lived experiences assist the learning community to

deepen understandings of themselves and others, creating a more inclusive and nurturing environment (Jehangir, 2010).

Collins (2016) discusses the need for Black feminist epistemology by asking how educational institutions are going to include the voices of black women scholars if they refuse to include those same voices in discourse within the classrooms and between students. Dillard (2012) speaks to the same inclusivity of voices through endarkened feminism and the re-truthing of the experiences of Black women by acknowledging the already existing voices of established scholars. Walker's (1989) articulation of womanism argues the inclusion through the ever-present existence of Black women. Valenzuela (1999) discusses subtractive school, therefore additive schooling is needed which includes the stories previously excluded populations. Finally, Anzaldua (1993) argues that women of color need our own stories, tongue, and identities so as not to lose ourselves in the process of learning.

This study is designed to support the existing literature on Black women faculty in doctoral programs by including Black women students in said programs. The study is formulated to inform the institutional practices of graduate schools of education, and provide the leadership within the institutions a narrative of the perspective of the Black women doctoral students in their program. There is a lack of research that ascertains factors that focus on Black women attending doctoral programs within graduate schools of education. Black women doctoral students are often an isolated, select group that has been previously excluded from this body of work.

Terminology

Because I am engaging a study about stories, personal narratives, and counterstories, the following definitions will clarify the positionality of me as a researcher as well as the responses

of my participants. I have a selective literature and a particular list of terminology used because my focus is on the telling of experiences solely of Black women as doctoral students.

Black - the self or social identification as a racial marker for groups of people, typically associated with African-ancestry, across ethnicity, language, national origin, and religion (Omi and Winant, 1994).

Black women - people of African ascension who self-identify as Black and a woman, therefor experiencing race and gender marginalization based on a group identity (Dillard, 2000).

Counterstory - a particular method of storytelling of people whose experiences are not often told which include marginalized populations such as people of color and women. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Cultural Competence - the ability to work with and across cultures while simultaneously acknowledging an understanding of different cultural systems. (Mendenhall et al., 2013)

Culture - a grouping of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group (Blackmore, 2010).

Gender - the social construction of individuals or groups of people who self-assign roles and norms according to their biological sex (Blackmore, 2010).

People of Color - individuals who racially self-identify and are also socially constructed and positioned as nonWhite (Boser, 2011)

Personal Narrative - a collection and accumulation of numerous stories from one person (Delgado, 1989).

Professional Hegemony - the dominance of one social group over another, specifically the domination that is found in an institution of work or education (Sule, 2011).

Storytelling - a unique way people communicate to generate production outcomes, transfer knowledge, and form ideas that add value (Benjamin, 2006; Comstock, 2006; Ellyatt, 2002; Poulton, 2005; Schein, 1984).

Traditional Structures - institutional structures that operate within hegemonic paradigms centered on a male, Eurocentric worldview (Sule, 2011).

White - the congruence of the social, political, economic, and historical construction of racial categories who self-identify with the phenotype and European ancestry (Moule, 2012)

White Women - people of White ancestry who self-identify as White and a woman, therefore experiencing gender marginalization based on a group identity (Leonardo, 2002).

Key Assumptions

The key assumptions of the study are that the research of this study:

- The participants' age and class will not significantly affect their perceptions.
- The participants' geographical history within the United States will not significantly affect their perceptions.
- The participants' citizenship status will not significantly affect their perceptions.
- The participants' first language identification will not significantly affect their perceptions.
- The participants' experience being a Black woman doctoral student within a graduate school of education.
- The participants' stories, personal narratives, and counterstories told by the participants are honest and contain actual events.

- The participants' stories, personal narratives, and counterstories are used by the participants as part of their learning process within the doctoral program.
- The participants' of this study have shared their stories, personal narratives, and counterstories with other students, faculty, and administration within the institution.

Delimitations of the Study

This study contains the following limitations:

- This study will not cover geographical diversity outside of the United States of America.
- The study will not include women who do not identify as Black.
- This study will not include men or gender-neutral individuals.

Summary

During our first semester as doctoral students, we participated in an activity similar to the game 'telephone' that I played when I was a child. As adults, we were asked to quietly repeat a quote taken from current research from one person to the next in a counterclockwise circle. The stated purpose of the activity was to see if the quote would remain intact as it is passed from person to person. As each participant shared with the next, facial expressions ranged from humor to confusion. Once the quote reached the final participant, it was changed. The quote was different and the author was different. It was clear that parts of the message were deleted while other items were added. When the final quote was stated and followed with the original quote, the room erupted in laughter. As I sat and listened to the recap, I wondered if anyone else in the room realized the author of the quote changed from a Black female (Oprah Winfrey) to a White male (Ken Robbins). There was a (re)write of race and gender that was palpable to me as a Black woman. This version of 'telephone' had essentially erased my identity and we did not discuss it that evening or any other evening.

Dialogues involving marginalized populations are difficult and often are limited by the ideology of a dominant hegemonic atmosphere of maleness and Whiteness that strive to retell, revise, reframe, and rearticulate the experiences of people within the marginalized populations

(Banks, 2015). CRT, CFT, and EFE theorists argue that stories, personal narratives, and counterstories assist marginalized populations to challenge and change this dominant narrative (Collins, 2010; Dillard, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Tate, 1995).

Using the epistemological lens of endarkened feminist within the framework of intersectionality based on the critical methodologies of critical race theory and Black feminist theory, this study calls attention to the hegemonic atmosphere of Whiteness and maleness in graduate schools of education through the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students. This dissertation gives an overview of the current literature written and research conducted on Black women: their identity, their experiences, and their struggles with dominant culture within the United States educational system. It then presents critical race theory, critical race feminism, and endarkened feminist epistemologies as the frameworks that support the telling and examining of the experiences of Black women doctoral students. The research conducted within this study presents the significance of the data collected from the namely invisible and marginalized population of Black women doctoral students. This work concludes with a call of action: more research, more discussion, and more focus on Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Education fascinates me. As far back as I can remember I loved learning. My first day of school each year was meticulously planned including a carefully selected bag with color-coded, themed supplies. My journey from pre-school to today has been paved with people who impressed upon me how important an education is to success, particularly my success.

My father, a Black medical physician from South Texas and one of twelve children all born before 1960, had three sisters who were teachers. He urged me to consider education as a career long before I was contemplating what to do with my life. When I was in elementary school, we would sit in his office and discuss the future of the world and education. Barbara Jordan was a name I knew well from our conversations; she was a friend to my father and a mentor of my aunts. Ms. Jordan taught my father during his master's program at Texas Southern University/. Although I never met her, she influenced my thoughts at the tender age of six and has been pivotal in my development as an educator. My father said Ms. Jordan taught him to understand that differences were our strengths. Reflecting on our conversations over the years, my father had no idea just how much he and Barbara Jordan were shaping a future educator.

In fifth grade, my life as a learner changed. My homeroom teacher told me that although I had the grades and the scores for the gifted program, she would not recommend me to be formally evaluated. She explained that because I was black (biracial to be exact) and female, I would not succeed. Despite her refusal, my parents convinced the school to allow me to test. I was accepted into the program. With the continuous support of my parents, I flourished and moved through fifth, sixth and part of seventh grade before my experiences as a student were shaken again. This time, a seventh grade math teacher told my mother I could not handle the work of Algebra I in eighth grade. And just as before, my grades and testing supported this move but the teacher did not. The difference was that parent input was not as influential in middle school. I did not proceed on the advanced math series. This outcome and experience with both a teacher and administration altered my path of learning for the remainder of my secondary education. I became a timid student and an outgoing peer. I subconsciously chose to excel in the arenas that I felt I could control the outcome. My focus moved from a lust for learning to a strategy of survival. Academics became the backdrop of my schooling rather than the focus of my learning.

In eleventh grade, I had an English teacher who found value in me, all of me. Mrs. Schwab made sure I knew how intelligent I was through comments on assignments, displayed work and genuine interest. Although supported by my parents and this amazing teacher, prior experiences clouded my aspirations. As a young woman of color, I reluctantly learned how to navigate a system that was created to ensure failure. A system that had never provided a reflection of me in the classroom. I only found images of myself in the cafeterias and the front offices; all which became places of refuge and safety when my days were difficult. However Ms. Schwab started to change my path in subtle but significant ways. She introduced me to James Baldwin and Malcolm X, changing the color of the landscape sparked a fire inside of me. My final two years in high school were a

transition of a lost student to a blossoming learner, eager to find more of what represented me as a woman, person of color, and activist.

My parents, English teacher, and Barbara Jordan all showed me how to be my own advocate in education and life. My love for learning kept me connected to education. Throughout college, I took education courses but ultimately declared two majors, neither in my chosen path. My senior internships were in social change, not education. In my final paper for undergraduate, I wrote that I enjoyed working in a non-profit but dreamed of teaching. I was still shaken from my educational experiences and because I have never seen a reflection of myself in all my years in the classroom, I was not sure I could be the type of educator I desired and longed for in my own early years as a student. The fear of failure was real and the negative influences were powerful. As a result, upon graduation, I did not return to a classroom for five years.

Upon graduation, a family friend, Patricia Holland, helped me secure an internship. Pat, a Black woman from the south, supported me through a rigorous application process to secure a position. She was my first Black, woman mentor who afforded me the space to start to find myself in the career world. My internship in Atlanta, Georgia with United States Representative Cynthia McKinney and the training in human rights I received with President Jimmy Carter at The Carter Center were the fundamental foundations of my desire to change the world. I was able to use a political platform and civic engagement to assist marginalized communities in finding their voice and their place at the table. I grew tremendously under the leadership of Representative McKinney and her lead staff member Philippa Brown. This opportunity provided me the core skills and key connections to start my career at Rockefeller Foundation. As a program assistant, I was charged with reading proposals for grants in school reform. It was a perfect match of activism and education.

At the young age of 22, I helped decide funding with over a six-million-dollar budget. This position required me to learn everything about school reform and teacher training, not only the proposed programs but also the established programs already funded. Through the foundation, I traveled the nation to observe school reform in action – DC, Flint, San Diego, and Boston to name a few. I attended conferences led by Jonetta B. Cole and Angela Blackwell Glover and heard practitioners from Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and Capital Hill. I worked directly with James P. Comer and Linda Darling-Hammond, who were changing schools on a national level. They were leaders in their community, they were of color, most of them were women, and they conducted the think tanks and policy meetings that shaped how national initiatives in education were implemented. They all taught me that true learning is in the relationships, particularly with children of color. Linda took the time to talk with me about ideas and concepts. Angela and Jonetta made sure that I understood the significance of the work I was doing and the access I had acquired so early in my career as a young woman of color. In their own way, each Black woman I worked with took the time to invest in me as a person, a young professional, and a prospective leader in the field. And each woman encouraged me to obtain a

graduate degree in education and return to the classroom for the youth could see me and I to see them.

All of my professional and community work centered on education. Through my work at Rockefeller Foundation, I connected with a group of young, professional, women of color and founded Sista II Sista, freedom school for girls of color. In our collective, I was able to use my newly obtained skills and connections. We wrote curriculum, partnered with local schools and trained youth. It was amazing. I applied the knowledge from my work in the foundation and universities to grassroots collectives with students and teachers. Just as my mentors led me, so did the young women. They taught me that leaders come from all walks of life and listening to the individuals that we work for is as important as the ones we work with. I saw them and they saw me. This connection of women of color transformed me, molded me, and forever changed me.

I made a decision to leave New York. I moved to Los Angeles and started working for the Anti Defamation League's A World of Difference. I wrote anti-bias curriculum for local schools for teachers and students. I developed a program where students trained educators within their school on the importance of diversity and multicultural curriculum. It soon spread and exposed the student trainers to other students and educators who did not look like them, live like them, or think like them. The program was a success and the experience of student leaders was transformative. I was introduced to the local politics of education, much different from the national platform. The leaders that I met at ADL taught me how to gather a constituency and educate them. On one particular project, I worked with Representative John Lewis and learned how the marches of the sixties were the student trips of the millennium. We did not see sit-ins or protests as much as we saw student groups in DC or Israel learning and sharing. In another venture, I worked with Leslie Green Lockhart at a local high school to train students to become trainers of their teachers on diversity and multiculturalism. Leslie, a Black woman, was instrumental in allowing me access to young people of color to lead them in becoming lifelong learners and self-advocates. All the knowledge that I had gained at the national level was now put to use locally. My struggle with ADL was there were no people of color within the organization. Again, I was faced with not finding a reflection of myself and having to go find connections outside of the organization to further my growth. I recalled the conversations with mentors from New York and contemplated enrollment in a graduate program but felt I still had not accomplished my original goal, teaching in the classroom.

While working with ADL, one student was killed by another at one of our public-school partners. The altercation was racially motivated. ADL was contracted to aid the community in the aftermath of such a violent ordeal. I went into the community to assist in rebuilding and growing. At the end of my work with the school district, I was approached by administration to join the school team. Not fully aware of the magnitude of this opportunity, I hesitantly accepted. I did not realize it yet but I was ready. Ready to return to where it all started as a three year old at Lamark Preschool. I was ready to teach. I was ready to work

with young people. I was ready to become an advocate, a leader, an educator, and a mentor.

Within the first year, I was thriving. The administrators commended my teaching by selecting me to develop the first annual sleep away camp for ninth grade students. The high school was on a clear path of moving forward but was still healing. I decided to use the opportunity to introduce social justice. We partnered with a local non-profit to design a student retreat recognizing diversity and multiculturalism, establishing inclusion and introducing social justice. Upon our return, selected participants, adults and students, trained others within and outside of the school district. This retreat shined a light on a new community willing to communicate with each other and take risks. It also illustrated the need for more mentors. I was only one of three Black women teaching at a school of over 2500 students. A teacher can only advise district administration on hiring practices so I had to devise another way to make change.

The following year, I assisted students in creating a youth led council to ensure that their efforts in social justice would become sustainable. It was not more mentors and educators, but it was a new voice to help lead the efforts within the district. After three years at the high school - including Most Inspirational Teacher Award, Teacher of the Year Award, my students earning highest marks on benchmark exams three consecutive years and a long-awaited Master of Arts in education - I had finally accomplished two goals, to become a teacher with a graduate degree. This success was in collaboration with family, mentors, student leaders, and community leaders. My work at the national, local, and community levels had become recognized, but most importantly, systemic. When I left the school, my work and influence continued. Social justice was there to stay.

After the birth of my son, I decided to take time off. It had been a busy three years and I had not taken any time to reflect. My new goals were to change the face of educators to become more inclusive and to earn a doctorate in education. Before I could proceed with a plan, Sacramento, California called me. My previous high school principals had submitted my name as a candidate to develop curriculum for administrators on inclusion and equity. In addition, I would need to travel California training principals and other school leaders on the implementation of new curriculum and institutional change at large. I accepted. I traveled to San Diego, Oakland and Inglewood. The trainings were well received and face time with school leaders was always welcoming work. As a trainer, I was able to start numerous conversations about the hiring of teachers of color; I spoke specifically about the need of mirrored representation and mentors. Two years later, I was still chasing the thought of earning the advanced degree that seemed to be so elusive.

After the birth of my daughter, I returned to education as an administrator. I was the new Coordinator of Diversity for a private K-12 institution. Working part time would allow me the opportunity to return to graduate school for my doctorate. Things did not go as predicted. During my first year, the position grew from part time to full time, a cubical to an office, and a staff member to part of the senior management team. By the second year, I was Director of Equity and Inclusion, which oversaw the K-12 initiative as well as a board committee

member. Outside of being an administrator, I traveled California as the lead west coast inclusion professional for the National Institute of Independent Schools (NAIS). I lead workshops, WASC accreditations, and trainings for inclusion and equity leaders. This work was hard, change was slow, and people were resistant. Many times I was the only face of color in the room. Most often, I was the only Black woman at the table. I leaned on a school board member, Laura Robbins, and a phenomenal Heads of School, Revita Bower for support. They guided me to find my voice and strength in learning. Through their contacts, I attended selective leadership seminars at Peabody and NAIS. Each mentor independently encouraged me to pursue my doctorate. I realized that I was becoming the mentor to many – students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and community leaders. I was the one that Black women were looking to for leadership and support.

This new role was not one that I anticipated and one I felt ill-prepared to hold without more education. I resigned from my position and returned to school. Again, I found myself in the role of student, a doctoral student. I chose a school with a Black woman as Dean, a reflection of me and my aspirations as an educator. My three years in the educational doctoral program have introduced me to a plethora of people and communities of learners. The dilemma however is still the same, finding myself in the classroom, a reflection of myself in the professors, and an affirmation of myself in the curriculum. It still was not there; I still had to find it on my own. Hence, my goals of inclusion, equity, social justice, and freedom remain the same.

My education, career, and life experiences have taught me that a leader is not one who gathers people to march to a single beat. But instead, the leader that I have sought out and the kind of leader I want to become are much more influential and powerful. These leaders change education at the core by surrounding themselves with brilliant people. I want to be an educator who continually learns, someone who studies people, institutions, and best practices as well as policy. With a drive to inspire those around me, I want to be in movements that encourage others to take notice, take charge, and make change.

I am ready. I hear the voices of my mentors encouraging me. I see the faces of young people, especially young women of color, watching me. I feel the fire burning to return to the classroom. But most important, I want to learn more, do more and give more. ²

² Narrative counter-story written by researcher and author of this study appears in italics throughout study.

The Identity of Black Women

Black women as humans.

If any female feels she needs anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already giving away her power to be self-defining, her agency.
bell hooks³

There is an old Caribbean saying that states nobody loves a black girl, not even herself. This concept of societal rejection and self-hatred are the precipitous of Black women in society. The business of being broken is very hard work, especially when a person has been broken from birth. Black people have sustained a history in the United States that questions their humanity and their personhood. In the twentieth century, DuBois (2015) calls attention to this phenomenon:

BETWEEN ME AND THE OTHER WORLD there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer a seldom word. (p. 1)

It is astounding that the experiences of DuBois as a Black person in the twentieth century still hold true to experiences of Black people today. It was so long ago, and still so today. The experiences that Black people have had and continue to have in the academy are the same as in society and have formulated images, labels, boundaries, and norms that Black people are expected to function within (Banks, 2015; Bell, 1995).

Author Toni Morrison describes this phenomenon in her Nobel lecture of 1993 in the terms of oppressive language as a vehicle that does not represent violence but that is violence

³ Introductory quotations at the beginning of the chapters and sections formatted in italics and centered to reflect theoretical frameworks and methodologies.

and that does not represent a limit of knowledge but it limits knowledge (Morrison, 1993). In conjunction with the violent, oppressive language and societal rejection and self-hatred, the contributing Black female also operates within the confinements of the difficult work of doing something which she has not seen done before. Morrison (1993) touches on this idea in that she herself wrote the types of books that she wanted to read because there were not books for her to read.

Political scientist Harris-Perry (2011) bears witness to the idea that Black women must intentionally work at holding on to their individuality due to societal functioning that centers the experiences of Black woman as 'misrecognized', denying their common humanity and citizenship with others in American polity and psyche.

Sociologist Collins (2000) postulates the lack of voice that Black woman have in their own development of personhood and humanity. She states that Black women have historically been represented at and spoken for in society with no inclusion of their own voice, their own identity, and their own humanity.

Theorist Fraser (2007) describes the experience of Black women as being a marginalized population prevented from interacting with society and institutions. This barricade is formed using hierarchical mechanisms based on cultural norms and values that deny Black women the right to be human (Fraser, 2007). This structural dehumanization results in Black women suffering from inequality and misrecognition with society (Fraser, 2007).

At what point will Black people no longer be an object to be defined by others within society, relegated to being a problem of American society? Black people have historically been assigned the identity of other than human (Bell, 1992). Recognizing our status as human, acknowledging our place within American society, and self-defining our role within the larger

institutions may influence our lived experiences. This study is a reflection of the way in which Black women are expected to adhere to ways of knowing and being without our histories, our realities, and our humanity is the belief system of the society that holds these expectations.

Black women and identity.

I cannot be expected to respect what somebody else calls self-love if that concept of self-love requires my suicide to any degree.

June Jordan

Black women have had to forge an identity that, until recently, has been separated by race, class, and gender. Each category that represents the identity of the American Black woman has been systemically isolated from another, not allowing a congruence of thought or experience being seen through an encompassing lens. Black Women have had to identify themselves as either Black or woman in many institutions, but rarely have they been afforded the opportunity to do both simultaneously.

There is a version of a story told about Sojourner Truth speaking in front of White women and White men at the Ohio Women's Convention in May of 1851 where Truth spoke about Black women living with the inability to define their own identity but living the identity that was placed upon them in society. She exposed her own self-identification in proclaiming aloud "arn't I a woman too?" in reference to being both Black and a woman. The interesting twist to this well-known tale as put forth by Theodora R. Berry at the 2018 opening speech for the Critical Race Studies in Education Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico is an ironic tale of misidentification. Berry (2018) spoke of the misreporting and inaccurate account of what Sojourner Truth said in May of 1851 because she was spoke in English with a Dutch accent. This illustrates the notion that society can misidentify a well-educated Black woman from the

North, with a Dutch accent, as an uneducated southern Black woman with limited ability to articulate her thoughts.

hooks (1981) describes the same struggle that Black women have faced in the midst of an oppressive society a century later. She ponders the idea of what the lived experiences of Black women would be if they themselves were able to define what it meant to be Black and a woman both separately and intertwined. Collins (1991) asks where Black women would be if the dominant narrative accepted Black women as uniquely immersed within numerous, larger group identities that were self-defined rather than arbitrarily appointed. hooks (1981) questions where would Black women be if their identities were less hinged on a single definition of identity set within one group and more a developed consciousness of a complex human.

Collins (1991) purposely speaks of Black women's reality being told through the lived experiences of Black women but that this does not infer that all Black women subscribe to these thoughts and that groups who identify outside of being a Black woman often play a crucial role in the production of these lived experiences. Collins (1991) continues that the crucial role of outsiders is not beneficial or appropriate when it undermines the freedom of Black women being able to self-identify in every context. The literature speaks to the important and necessary agency of self-identification in all aspects of the lived experience of Black women.

The question brought forth from the literature about Black women and identity is why do we still exist in a place that forces certain identities and identifiers on us as a group and individually? The literature also calls attention to where Black women are situated when compared to their counter groups of Black men and White women? Finally, I ask if it is not more important to process how society identifies who we are versus our own ability to pursue a path to deeper understanding of who we are for ourselves so as not to exist within a system that

disempowers us with fake labels and false narratives? It is time for us as Black women to find a new discourse that encourages and illuminates our diverse and complex lives and lived experiences.

Black women as women (black feminism).

*Do not live someone else's life and someone else's idea of what womanhood is.
Womanhood is you. Womanhood is everything that's inside you.*

Viola Davis

Black women self-identifying as Black women have documented roots that extend back to the late 1800's with activist such as Anna Julia Cooper and Sojourner Truth. Historically Black Americans have been given inappropriate labels, namely Black women (Collins, 2000). From its early beginnings, Black feminism has provided a stage for ascertaining the inappropriate labels and (re)told Black women lived experiences utilizing the voices of Black women. The emergence of Black feminism took shape from these collective voices. Cooper (1892) wrote about the daily struggles of Black American women in *A Voice from the South*, stating that she was adding her "little voice . . . to the already full chorus" (p. 2). Cooper notated the growing base of Black women activists and illuminated the prior exclusion of Black women's voices from the feminist movement. These noted exclusions were the foundation of the agency in lived experiences transforming into interconnected concerns of Black women on a larger scale.

The founding Black feminist were both resourceful and independent when engaging in their plight of Black feminism separate from the civil rights movements and independent of the early White women's feminist movement. They found a need to formulate a movement that would amplify the struggle of Black women in the context of Black women's lived experiences and unique voices. Once these new leaders, birthed in the 1960's, began a movement to speak to the triangular notion of race, class and gender, their self-reliance created a platform for the

emerging leaders of the future (Anderson-Bricker, 1999).

Through the years, Black feminist thought has continued to grow, emerging with a stronger, more unified front in the mid 1970's. June Jordan (1981) joined with educator bell hooks (1981) in defining the role of Black women as part of a hegemonic society that insists Black women are situated at the bottom of a classist, racist, and sexist society, equating them to being the objects of attention and not the subjects of attention. Guy-Shertall (2009) describes the formation of Black feminism as both Black studies and Women's studies comingling to examine the violent acts of silencing, erasure, and complexities engulfing the lived experiences of women of African ascension.

The Black feminist phenomenon kept its forward movement with the engagement of Collins (1986), Lorde (1984), and Crenshaw (1991). In collaboration with previous activist Jordan (1981) and hooks (1981), this choir of small voices shaped a new Black feminism heavy in research and scholarship that drew upon the knowledge and seminal work that pontificated the notion of a collective consciousness of lived experiences which rejected being defined as 'less than' and sought to create new definitions based on survival, empowerment, and the articulation of the lived experiences of Black women (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). With the emergence of growing body of literature starting in the late 1980's, scholars began to consider how issues of power within the identification of gender further explores the notion of race, class, and gender as intersecting faucets of complex identities (Blaise, 2005; Davies, 1989; Gallas, 1998; Thorne, 1993).

In recent research, Burke, Cropper, and Harrison (2000) write that the self-definition of Black women is central to Black feminism. They continue with the idea that the self-identification of Black women determines their lived experiences and their ability to survive and

thrive in institutions that continue to impose exterior identities and labels based on their specific needs and not the needs of the very people they are attempting to define. As Black women used terms such as self-defined and self-reliance as concepts that are expressed in full contradiction with the controlled labels that devalued Black womanhood, they controlled the narrative and used these concepts as mechanisms to strengthen their lived experiences (Collins, 1991). As these concepts are developed and nurtured, Black women have begun the process of taking actions, gaining control, and explicitly moving towards making societal changes.

Black women and beauty.

You have the power to change perception, to inspire and empower, and to show people how to embrace their complications, and see the flaws, and the true beauty and strength that's inside all of us.

Beyoncé

Another theme present in Black feminism was self-valuation and the respect of the Black woman a human being. This theme is important in the process of rejecting labels and images society placed on Black women then and now. According to Greene (1990) Black women are the antitheses of American female beauty. Collins (1991) discussed the significance of self-validation in the lives of Black women and the importance respect for self and respect for others in order to refute the negatives images and stereotypes that Black women had been subjected to for so many years and still continues today. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) analyzed the labels and stereotypes applied to Black women, specifically in America. Their seminal work on shifting identities purposely focused on the active roles Black women take on shifting between racial and gender identities within the confinement of the destructive labels Black men and White America force upon them.

Witherspoon (2008) proposed the redemptive nature of self-love informing the research of and about Black women, stating that Black women must love themselves regardless of

exterior oppressions of their personhood and their beauty. Collins (1991) and Harry-Parris (2001) spoke clearly of the negative stereotypes applied to Black women as being one of the fundamental forms of oppression towards them: terms such as mammies, breeders, jezebels, Aunt Jemimas as well as media and contemporary culture forms of the pervasive Black prostitute, ubiquitous welfare mother, and the angry Black women syndrome. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) underscored this oppression in their research identify the caricatures of Black women in American society as animalistic, grotesque, and masculine, all of which remained limited, inaccurate, and unfair.

The research of Collins (1991), Witherspoon (2008), Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2001) and Harris-Perry (2001) made self-love, self-valuation, and self-esteem pinnacle in the development of Black feminism and a key component in the expression Black women's lived experiences. Even through the depreciation of Black women in American society, namely oppressive institutions, media, and contemporary pop culture, Black women must overcome; learning the self-love themes of Black feminism to honor themselves, those who have come before them, and those who will follow.

Black women as mothers.

My mother's love has always been a sustaining force for our family, and one of my greatest joys is seeing her integrity, her compassion, her intelligence reflected in my daughters.

Michelle Obama

The act of mothering is historically situation within the structures and confinements of race, class, and gender; the children of the mother are afforded the same or similar opportunities as the mother (Collins, 2016). When examining the racial component of this research, it was observed that White mothers were afforded opportunity and protection where as Black mothers were relegated to the unknown fate of their children. Feminist theory and thought are laden with

Western societal thought and riddled with the same institutionalized racism and sexism prevalent in America; however Black women separate their professional and educational lives from their families. Walker (1983) comingled the outside world with the maternal world stating that “And so our mothers and grandmothers have, more often than not anonymously, handed on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see: or like a sealed letter they could not plainly read” (p. 240). In evaluating the significance of roles for Black women, motherhood and mothering are often center.

Black Women and the World

Black women and black men.

The most disrespected woman in America, is the Black Woman. The most un-protected person in America is the Black Woman. The most neglected person in America, is the Black Woman.
Malcolm X

There has been enormous research, particularly in education, as it pertains to Black males. This work has seen overrepresentation and over focus of Black males ‘in crisis’ in areas such as incarceration, suspension in schools, and retention in educational and profession institutions (Allen, 2014). The Black male ‘in crisis’ has demanded enough attention that Black women and Black girls have often become invisible because they are seen as the ones who are progressing more steadily within the defined societal norms.

The political atmosphere including access to education and jobs centered on the race and income from the early 1970s to the mid 1990s. However a political shift occurred in the late 1990s which transition the questioned the role of race and income in the access of education (college admissions) to a more complete intersection of race, class, and gender. This movement created a new conversation regarding the role of men of color and Black men more specifically.

Vincent (2014) discussed men of color being in a state of crisis regarding secondary completion, undergraduate enrollment and completion, and graduate enrollment and completion.

This phenomenon was also examined by organizations such as The American Association for Colleges and Universities (2010) and The College Board (2010), all of whom wrote compelling articles for illustrating the need to allocate more focus, resources, and funding to support men of color, namely Black and Latino men. During this same stretch of time, the political climate also began to focus on support Black men with initiatives like ‘Sons of Oprah’ Scholarship fund from Black male students attending Morehouse and President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper (The White House, 2014). The focus of these initiatives without upcoming initiatives which also focus on Black women are in danger of perpetuating the needs of patriarchy by muting, silencing and erasing the unique needs of other marginalized groups, mainly Black women.

A new conversation was sparked given the shift of focus towards Black men. Several political leaders pondered by 23.5 million Black women and girls were omitted from the national conversations regarding policies that directly and indirectly affect their lives (Watson Coleman, 2016). Then U.S. Representatives Bonnie Watson of New Jersey, Robin Kelly of Illinois, and Yvette D. Clarke of New York resounded a political response in the creation of the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls (CCBWG) giving a voice to the silenced notion of the exceptional challenges Black women encounter (Watson Coleman, 2016). The Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls gave Black women a seat at the political table to engage in courageous conversations on the political and educational policies impacting the lives of Black women (Watson Coleman, 2016).

The same momentum occurred within the educational sector beginning with the 2016 American Educational Research Association's (AERA) presidential session #AERABlackGirlsMatter: Public Scholarship Engaging with the Race/Gender Interaction in Schools. Black women scholars Drs. Melissa Harris-Perry, Adrienne D. Dixon, Bettina L. Love, Lori Patton-Davis exposed the global educational research base to the needs of Black women situated within education (AERA, 2016). These doctors pointed toward the deep-seeded historical, lived experiences of Black women pertaining to disproportionality of policy development, access within institutions, and the exclusion of the informative and transformative voice of Black women.

Scholars and activists Kimberlé W. Crenshaw and Walter R. Allen (2014) called upon political and educational institutions, leaders, scholars, and researchers, to develop a deeper and more broad approach to current policy development, research themes, and proposed interventions to include the equally urgent issues of Black women. With the researched knowledge that the intentional political and educational focus on Black men is warranted, the research also indicates that it should not be at the expense of focus, resources, or examination of Black women. The key to moving forward is in the intersectionality of intention, broadening the dialogue of and within Black people, purposely including Black women to the existing conversation of Black men.

Black women and white women.

I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.

Audre Lorde

For centuries, feminist thought and theory has been based on the issues pertaining to White, middle-class women, particularly in the workforce. This specific focus has lead to

problematic assumptions of the issues, concerns, and needs of Black women as an independent and marginalized group existing in but not thriving under the larger context of womanhood (Walker, 1983). American society has historically perceived Black women as deviant versions of White women (hooks, 1981). Black women, despite great advancements, collectively struggle to elevate their status in American society where the common personification of humanity has been constructed around Black or being a woman but not an intertwined construction of both (Collins, 2000).

Ladson-Billings (1997) identified the academy as an institution shaped by numerous social forces that often conflict with the identity of marginalized people. She clearly articulated the increased participation of Black women in defining and redefining the roles that they hold within the institution to support their specific needs as educators and scholars. Crenshaw (2014) spoke of the constant battle Black women face within the academy as they confronted racism and sexism and the work they were and continue to be committed to in order to change, disrupt, and restructure the existing power dynamic. Ladson-Billings (1997) called for innovative approaches to teaching and learning that provided the freedom and space for all women scholars to address preexisting assumptions about who can be in the academy and what it means to be a member of the academy.

Dillard (2006) underscored the need to add race to the connections of spirituality and feminism thought in her seminal work of the growth and expansion of Black feminist theory. Dillard introduced endarkened feminist epistemology as a contrast to enlightened spiritual feminism which answered the call of change from White women. The key distinction from its predecessor, endarkened feminism was the lived experience of Black women in feminism, spirituality, and culture. The intersection of these three identities created a new structural

formation that addressed oppression resilience, and perseverance of Black women within society (Dillard, 2006).

The academy and my scholarly life need not be in conflict with the community and cultural work I do and intend to do (Ladson-Billings, 1997). Womanhood cannot be seen through the lens of a singular idea of a raceless and classless view of feminism if womanhood is to secure the advancement of all women (Truth, 1851). Motherhood cannot be viewed as a role that exists only for women who enjoy the economic security and racial privilege that is afforded to a small, insular population (Walker, 1983).

Silence and erasure.

If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.

Zora Neale Hurston

Black women have suffered the same negative racial labeling, stereotyping, and consequences of internalization just like every other marginalized group (Collins, 2000). The specific forms of historical degradation of Black women evolved into issues stemming from disregard and neglect resulting in Black women ignored, silenced, and invisible within American society, professional domains, and educational institutions (Myers, 1989). Both the strengths and the weaknesses of Black women are ignored resulting in less support, evaluation and research of their specific lived experiences (Evans-Williams, 2005). A key factor of invisible or silenced Black women is the lack of attention their intersected identities of race, class and gender have on their existence and participation in a dominant American society (Holmes, 1982).

Black Women and Education

No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free.

Assata Shakur

Black women as students.

For me, education was power.

Michelle Obama

Black women enrolled in doctoral programs must engage in the survival of school, remaining whole and brilliant, stealing your knowledge from non-traditional sources, and not letting the curriculum, faculty, or institutional practices limit your education (Collins, 2002). The work as both a student and an educator begin with self-care. Black women are the only population that can (re)call and (re)tell their lived experience including their path, pain, and perseverance (Dillard, 2006). Black women must remain connected to their self-identity in order to reject dominant and elusive influences that are designed to negate their full participation in the academy (Gardner, 2008).

Educational research had traditionally taken up race had remained either neutral to or completely separated from gender, consequently ignoring any distinctions that gender posed on the research from the perspective of Black women's gendered experiences (Connolly, 1998). Many factors add to the infrequent accounts of and misrepresentation of the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students. Additionally, the lack of attention that the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students receive add to the deficit perspective of their capabilities in regards to race, specifically within the research (Collins, 2002).

hooks (2003) said that the inner life of the Black women cannot be ignored. She offered the idea that the only avenue toward the inner life was the exchange of teaching and learning which she called engaged pedagogy. In the evaluation of exchanged pedagogy, the academy

must consider the statistics. The research on women PhD students within graduate schools of education (*Journal Of Black Higher Education*, 2006) have shown less than half of 1% of Black and Latina women have PhDs, compared with just over 1% of White women, and almost 3% of Asian women. White women were almost twice as likely to have a PhD and Asian women were more than five times as likely to have a PhD than both Black and Latina women. When compared to Black men, the numbers reversed. Black women earned 65.7 % of all doctorates awarded to Black people, leaving less than half earned by Black males.

Gloria Ladson-Billing's (1995) explains that Black women do not have the luxury of doing academic work just for the academy, but rather they must also do it for themselves, other Black women currently in the academy, and the Black women who will take the torch in years to come. She uses Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to add vigor to other theorist that call for humane practices of teaching that utilize the cultural strengths of students. The discussions on the schooling of Black women rarely focus on the individuals the students or the structures and politics where the schooling takes place. Instead, the conversations are around the Black women as educators (Ladson-Billings, 1995). On the contrary, the academy must begin to address the inequalities within itself by focusing on the structures that cause the inequalities, the people that support those structures, and the marginalized communities that are deeply affected (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

There are numerous consequences to the deconstruction of the Black woman student in the academic world. Each individual challenge listed below is both a standalone struggle and a stacked, cumulative experience. The challenges detailed below are a truncated list compiled with the explicit purpose of defining the struggle of Black women in education as both students and educators:

- Compassion fatigue (Davis, Reynolds & Jones, 2011)
- Disenfranchised grief (Wolf-Prusan, 2014)
- Secondary Traumatic Stress (Hydon et al, 2015)
- Racial Battle Fatigue (Yosso & Solorzano, 2011)
- Compound Trauma (Wolf-Prusen, 2014)
- The Push Out of Black Teachers (Morris, 2016)
- Invisible Taxes (King, 2016)
- Lack of Leadership Opportunity (Banks, 1993)
- Culturally Responsive Professional Development
- Navigating an Inequitable System (Banks, 2009)
- Racial Micro and Macro (Sue & Constantine, 2007)
- Isolation (Gregory, 2001)

Johnson-Bailey (2004) postulated that lived experiences of Black women in doctoral programs have been consistently ignored in education. She also noted the importance of gender combined with the marginalization that race and class in affecting the academic lives of Black women. The misapplication of ignoring the Black female has caused a ripple effect in the way Black women operate within the academy.

Black women as educators.

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Marian Wright Edelman

Identifiers of culture can be classified but not limited to education, geography, gender, language, nationality, race, religion and socioeconomic class (Molinsky, 2007). These cultural identifiers can be applied individually or in any combination to enhance the levels of interaction

between humans. The most important expression of culture in this context is basic assumptions as it illustrates the relationship with people and society (Banks, 2015). Culture influences behavior and communications in all settings as well as constructs our thoughts about what we do, how we do it and how we think about doing it. The inclusion of many voices from varying background in the telling of stories increases levels of awareness, understanding and ultimately respect and trust for both the teller and the listener.

The studies of leadership and people in leadership began over a century ago; however Black women were not studied (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). It is only in the past decade that Black women began to rise to a visibility that compels researchers to study them (Ngunjiri, Gramby-Sobukwe & Williams-Gegner, 2012). Black women as educators have been keenly important to the community of any institution (Dillard, 2012). Their mere presence as educators has given the community an understanding of the importance of equity and inclusion, especially those who sit on the highest of leadership teams (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Alston (2005) called attention to the low numbers “in these United States, persons of color represent 10.9% of the nation's teachers, 12.3% of the nation's principals, but only 2.2% of the nation's superintendents” (p. 675). She goes on to state that the numbers of women of color are so low (less than one percent) that they are not counted.

It is crucial that educational institutions acknowledge the specific complexities women of color face, particularly those in inclusion leadership roles (Nixon, 2017). Educational institutions, particularly K-12 public education, are the training ground for the next generation of global citizens. When the highest levels of leaders in an institution reflect the values of equity and inclusion, all community members witness the skills needed to obtain, succeed in, and retain pivotal positions within the institution (Dillard, 2012). Until the numbers of Black women

increase, educational institutions will need to continue to allocate appropriate support to these leaders (Nixon, 2017).

Educational institutions are the training ground for the new generation of citizens (Horford & Tillman, 2016). When the leaders of the institution reflect a value of inclusion, the leaders in training witness the skills needed to obtain, succeed, and retain these positions. Cynthia Dillard described this process of one of difficulty and necessity.

Fundamentally, if we see research and teaching as both intellectual and spiritual endeavors, then the purpose of our research will be to more fully love and serve human beings and to serve life. In this way, the academic life of a researcher will not be centered in the long-standing ego driven rewards we've held up in the academy as so important, but instead on making the world a better place, on ending oppression, on becoming more fully human ourselves through the work we do in the world. (Dillard, 2006, p. 42)

There is a need to hear the personal narratives and stories of Black women, as educational leaders to better understand the journey towards and retention of academic positions (Scott, 2005). Education is one of the few institutions that promote Black women into leadership roles. However, these women rarely reach the level of a pinnacle position within the profession and they often times leave the organization within a 10-year period (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Women are scarcely visible as faculty members on most educational campuses. They are even less often part of the middle management infrastructure as K- 8 administration and chair level university positions. Women are almost never members of high school and district level K-12 administrative positions or dean, provost, and president positions of colleges and universities (Hortford & Tillman, 2016). This lack of executive level promotions and longevity seem to negatively alter the affects and sustainability of these women as change agents (Watson & Normore, 2016). Women of color, specifically Black women, have significantly lower statistics

in leadership and education. The lack of presence in the classrooms for students and educators as well as the absence around the administrative tables correlates directly with the lack of success as Black women as students and faculty (Banks, 1993).

Black Women and Their Agency

Black women and change.

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.

Harriet Tubman

Change is a central part of education, a part of the structure from inception. Education reform includes some of the most famous researchers such as John Dewey, Horrace Mann, and Jean Piaget (Waks, 2007). During the 21st century, new thought emerged with theorists Paolo Freire, bell hooks, and Che Guevara. They introduced us to critical pedagogies that demanded change in education by examining the treatment of the oppressed (McLaren, 2001).

In order to make real change, leaders are challenged with creating an environment of struggle and unrest. bell hooks (2004) proclaims progress is struggle. This serves true for initiatives on inclusion, equity, and social justice. Ladson-Billings (1993) challenges administrators, teachers, and researchers to reject deficit models and recognize the inherent strengths of social justice. She proposes that culture be the focus of pedagogy in communities and classrooms. Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that high expectations coupled with awareness and understanding of culture can create an environment that supports culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). The presence and implementation of CRP creates an academic setting that maintains the culture of the learner and the educator and transcends the numerous challenges produced by the dominant culture.

This work is revolutionary and the act of doing such work is subversive, difficult, and

dangerous (Dillard, 2006). It is a process of radical, disruptive change that challenges the very nature of an educational institution. To subscribe to this change; institutions must remain constant with the goals set and the inclusion of new voices, ideas, paradigms, and frameworks to the existing situation (Nieto, 2000). The traditional work of research in the academy helps to push and heal Black women as the fundamental base of research is the act of remembering (Ohito, 2016).

Educational institutions are complex systems with numerous moving parts (Fullan, 2001). Initiating change within a school system calls for leaders to develop a plan for said change (Nieto, 1992). When embarking on a change initiative, an educational institution can benefit from having a process that allows for leadership to frame and reframe the work as the change unfolds (Darling-Hammond, 1993).

Attention quickly fades once a change initiative is introduced. Success hinges on a definitive model, action plan, and acquiring the right people, working in the right position (Kenny, 2003). Change leaders must be engaged in all aspects of the work. Complete change demands a rigorous leadership approach to communicate critical information early enough to provide the time needed to make crucial decisions (Popkewitz, 1999). Communication and documentation are key to ensure the ability to conduct an evaluation.

In order to make real change, Black women are challenged with creating an environment of struggle and unrest. bell hooks (2000) proclaims we must teach young black folks that progress is struggle. For Black women to succeed as students and educators in the academy, a disruptive change must happen.

Ladson-Billings (1993) challenges administrators, teachers, and researchers to reject deficit models and recognize the inherent strengths of Black women learners. She proposes that

culture be the focus of pedagogy in multiracial and multicultural classrooms. Ladson-Billings (1993) explains that high expectations coupled with awareness and understanding of culture can create an environment that supports culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). The presence and implementation of CRP creates an academic setting that maintains the culture of the learner and the educator and transcends the numerous challenges produced by the dominant culture.

Culturally relevant pedagogy and teaching fosters the kinds of social interactions in the classroom that support the individual and the group context. Students and teachers feel a part of the collective effort designed to encourage academic and cultural excellence. As members of an extended family, the students assist, and encourage one another. The entire group rises and falls together. Thus it is in everyone's best interest to ensure that the others in the group are successful. (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 76)

Key components to facilitating this particular change method is to continually do self-assessments and constantly evaluate the role of the change agents and their effectiveness. In apply this change; both the academy and Black women must remain constant with the goals set forth and the inclusion of new voices, ideas, paradigms, and frameworks to the existing situation.

It takes a consistent effort to embed change throughout an institution. Implementing change is often a dangerous undertaking that can waste resources and erode trust if done improperly. Schools cannot afford to fail. The call and the delivery for change is clear however there is little evidence that evaluation methods have been used in a substantial way to analyze and utilize the lessons we have learned throughout the years (Simpson et. al., 2004).

Stories

The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken.

Audre Lorde.

Before words were writings in the form of a language, storytelling existed. It has potential to reach, teach and change both community and culture (Bonds, 2016). It communicates a history, transfers a base of knowledge and creates space to add value to ideas. Storytelling is an ancient art form that is a central cornerstone of communication for humans dating back to the first discoveries of interaction. The word storytelling originates from *ueid*, an Indo-European word which described the ability to see or envision an object (Benjamin, 2006). *Ueid* relates to storytelling by associating both written and oral traditions. The art form of transferring knowledge from one group to another has been a focal point of humanity from the initial stages of communication.

Storytelling was a response to the most primitive urges to explain, educate and enlighten (Anderson, 2010). Telling stories is a practice and an art form specific to humankind (Spaulding, 2011). Tales of human life began with chronological accounts of daily activities expressed through basic drawings (Davies, 2007). Illustrations such as hieroglyphics became more intricate, and a common use of symbols was developed, the stories became more detailed (Coulmas, 2003). It is believed that as forms of traveling evolved, so did oral communications (MacDonald, 1993). Movement, migration, and travel expanded and so did the communication of humans; the growth of each mirroring one another (Wilkin, 2014).

Although it is speculated that storytelling developed far before any documentation, from 15,000 B.C., caves in the Pyrenees Mountains of France held images that of hunting, rituals and other human practices (Benjamin, 2006). These and other caves hold the first discovered written

tradition of storytelling illustrating ways in which humans preserved and passed down traditions and values. As evolution took hold and progression was established, the Epic of Gilgamesh in Mesopotamia became the first printed story in 700 B.C. (Bonds, 2016). The next discovered stories we found in 200 B.C, Aesop's Fables, but it is believed that they were passed down orally for many years prior. Aesop's Fables are a compilation of stories in which animals are the voice of myths, legends and parables shared to express a virtue or value of humankind (Bonds, 2016). Similar to Aesop's Fables, the Old Testament, within the ancient and modern Christian Bible, is also a written work that was passed down orally for many years before it was written. All versions of the Bible were created from a compilation of people and communities who observed and recorded momentous human interactions.

The stories told in our first primitive illustrations pass rituals, daily routines, culture and history on from one generation to the next (Anderson, 2010). Drawings in caves, songs, poems, chants, and dances are specific examples of the first forms of storytelling. Soon it became important to traders and intellects to document forms of communication, making a more permanent record. As different populations of humans began to co-exist with one another, there developed a need to both understand and exchange beliefs, values, norms and resources (Solinzer et al., 2010).

Through the sharing of belief and value systems - oral histories, shared experiences and common bonds became part of the stories passed along. When each story was told, a bit of the storyteller was revealed (Benjamin, 2006). Storytelling evolved into communicating with others both the common experiences shared as well as the unique aspects of culture and the individual revealed (Bishop and Kimball, 2006).

Over time, storytelling became not only a way to pass on shared experiences, it also developed into a vehicle used to educate people, communities, and cultures (Crawford, 2012). Individual scholars could write down histories and lessons. However, it was a long and tedious process that was shared with the few who could afford it (Davies, 2007).

The art of sharing narratives was molded and shaped to address the needs of the audience (Simmons, 2006). Religious teachings, language development, math, science, and history were all taught through stories - mostly to young, identified leaders of communities (MacDonald, 1993). As storytelling evolved into lessons and travel expanded (Wilkin, 2014), it was paramount that stories were shared with more than a few people.

It was also important to document and record the stories for accuracy and future reference. Eventually, the telling of tales returned to the original form of written books (Davies, 2007). This time, however, books and stories were taught simultaneously, in classroom settings with groups of students learning (Solinzer et al., 2010).

In some arenas of education, stories are considered objective research; however certain stories can sustain racialized, sexualized, deficit beliefs about people of color and women (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The ideology of othering has long had a stranglehold in the historically marginalized and muted community of Black Women educational researchers. Briggs (2010) points out that "the reconstruction of the past of oppressed groups finds its ultimate value in the recovery of their voices" (p. 177). By participating in the process of storytelling, students and educators engage in construction knowledge, removing the walls and barriers of marginalization (Jehangir, 2010).

Lawyer and civil rights activist Richard Delgado (2012) defines storytelling and personal narratives as components of counter stories which are grounded in research and understanding

of the experiences of marginalized populations, particularly people of color. Authors of counter stories describe how their personal narratives are an expression of self that challenges sexism, classism, and racism to support the work of social justice (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Storytelling is an art form that has been a central cornerstone of communication for humans dating back to the first interactions. It has potential to reach, teach, and change both community and culture (Bonds, 2016). The art of storytelling has remained relatively unchanged from its early history (Denning, 2005).

Tales of human life began with chronological accounts of daily activities expressed through basic drawings (Davies, 2007). Illustrations such as hieroglyphics became more intricate, and a common use of symbols was developed, the stories became more detailed (Coulmas 2003). It is believed that as forms of traveling evolved, so did oral communications (MacDonald, 1993). Movement, migration, and travel expanded and so did the communication of humans, the growth of each mirroring one another (Wilkin, 2014).

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Humankind has evolved from community gatherings to physical classrooms and online chat rooms. Past arenas for storytelling in small, intimate community gatherings are becoming scarce; however stories shared in community centers, classrooms, libraries churches, and hospitals are thriving (MacDonald, 2013).

Storytelling is an ancient art form dating back to the earliest discoveries of communication (van Gils, 2005). This literature review explores how the ancient art form storytelling has evolved to a current practice of educators that promotes courageous conversations between the teller and the receiver that encourage the expression of identity and voice of authentic self. Education depends on narration to pass information from teacher to

student (Kuyvenhoven, 2009). The narratives between the listener and the audience are as important as the story itself (Benjamin, 2006).

Literature suggests that it has not changed drastically since its origin (Denning, 2005), it is still as relevant today as it was in ancient times. Literature findings suggest that storytelling can change history and culture in the most powerful and personal ways (Gottschall, 2012). Searching for a personal truth, path and passion can unveil the most powerful of life lessons. Storytelling is what truly changes a person, a nation, people, and mold ethics and our beliefs (Gottschall, 2012). In using storytelling to cultivating personal narratives in all levels of learning environments, educators can encourage and cultivate the sharing of lived experiences with everyone in the learning environment (Bond, 2016). With more research and more investigation, storytelling could be a vehicle used by educators to give voice to the search for our authentic self.

Counterstories.

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.

Maya Angelou

Storytelling is a powerful mode of communication for assigning meaning to experiences (Delgado, 1989). Lawyer and civil rights activist Derrick Bell (1995) described storytelling, narrative, and first-person accounts, as vital in challenging the traditional rationalizations of institutional structures and power relationships through the creation of meaning as a distinct role of the process. Dominant narratives transfer multiple layers of meaning through labeling and assumptions which provide filters to mask or silence discussions of racism, sexism, classism, and more. Delgado (1989) defined dominant narrative as stock stories, crafted by people in power to inflict dominance over an outgroup by devaluing a narrative based on anything but the identity of the power group. These stock stories are developed by the people in power to establish a

position of superiority created from a shared sense of identity and reality that often contradicts the reality of those outside of the defined identity of the power group (Delgado, 1989).

Stock stories strategically select available facts to paint a picture of a world that supports the power position of those who tell the story, eliminating or silencing any other identities or modes of communication that conflict with their created world (Delgado, 1989). Stock stories privilege White, heterosexual, middle and upper class men by naming the same identifiers as the normative point of reference. These stories invent a false neutrality which deflects all blame and responsibility for inequality and injustice (Delgado, 1989). Stock stories are powerful tools of oppression as they are repeated until they are canonized, making the story of the people in power a reality rather than an event; any version of stories that debunk this created reality are deemed as biased, self-serving, and not credible. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) further explain the notion that stock stories not only discredit people who are not in power, they also effectively negate, distort, silence, and erase the lived experiences of those who are dominated.

The purpose stories told by dominant culture is to speak reality into events creating a sense of authority, universality, and superiority in the experiences of one group. The opposing viewpoint, often disruptive in nature, is the counter story which serves to undermine the dominant narrative and introduce a reality which undermines racist, homophobic, classist, and sexist stock stories (Delgado, 1989). The outsider stories that oppose the dominant narrative assist marginalized communities to imagine a world with the outsiders on the inside. Narratives that are told from the perspective of the both recognize the lack of power and wealth do not limit the ability of a person to have access to and be able to communicate thought and language that is different from that of the most privileged, dominant culture writing the master narrative (Bell, 1995)..

Robert A Williams Jr. describes the stories as a tool to

Help us imagine the outside in America, a place where some of us have never been and some of us have always been, and where a few of us . . . shift-shape, like the trickster, asking the hard questions . . . without answers, questions about what it means to be outside, what it means to be inside, and what it means to be in-between in America. (Delgado, 1996, p. 5).

The outsider story had developed into what is now known as a counterstory; a method of telling stories by marginalized people whose lived experiences are not normally shared. Delgado (1989) presents the Counterstory as a counter-reality crafted and experienced by the outgroups who are the subordinates to the dominant racial and gendered hierarchy. Counterstory, then, is a method of telling stories by people whose experiences are not often told. Delgado and Stefancic (2013) suggest the use of counter narratives defined as powerfully written stories and narratives that begin the process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to the inequities of the academy and the movement towards social justice to benefit all of humanity.

Counterstories facilitate the communication of social, political, and cultural connections of marginalized populations as well as document the survival and resistance within the population; they do not need to be a direct response to dominant stories but rather grounded in a lived experience of people with the least privilege (Delgado, 1989). The context of counterstories is informed by the positionality and perspective of the teller and can be communicated as a testament of resilience, resourcefulness, and pain or it can bear witness to societal or institutional forms of dominant culture that minimize, deny, silence, or erase (Bell, 2003). Counterstory as methodology thus serves to expose, analyze, and challenge stock stories of racial privilege and can help to strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance.

Matsuda et al. (1993) describe counterstories as narratives, stories, first-person accounts, allegories, composite stories, and other creative means to capture the lived experiences of those

at the bottom of the power structure. Within the United states, this master narrative is based on the cultural and social history of the dominant race and/or the dominant gender. Bell (2003) positions this master narrative which is most often told by White people as a progressive history of a fair and just American society based on meritocracy which recognized and rectifies forms of injustice from the past. Therefore, marginalized populations use counterstorytelling as a way to debunk and defy the master narrative attempts at silencing and erasing the lived experiences of people who have and continue to challenge the dominant culture in the United States to uphold its democratic ideals.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) define counterstories as “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told ” (p. 26) including people of color, women, gay, and the poor. Counter-stories oppose narratives of dominance and erasure, a tool used by marginalized people to contradict racialized and genderized characterizations of society. Counterstorytelling attempts to uncover race neutral dialogue to disclose the way in which white privilege and power operate to support inequitable and unjust societal interactions between White people and people of color.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) underscore two characteristics of counterstories: theoretical and cultural sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity is the awareness and capability of the researcher to identify, interpret and give meaning to data. Cultural sensitivity is the ability of individuals to accurately read and interpret the meaning of those who are telling the counterstories. Researchers commonly use three types of counterstories: personal stories and narratives, other people’s stories and narratives, and composite stories and narratives (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002). Personal stories are descriptions of lived experiences of marginalized people and how they experience discrimination, insult, injury or disadvantage. Other people’s stories hold the power

to move and when they are retold they take on a ‘larger than life’ quality. What begins as a particular, individual experience gains validation through the act of re-telling. Composite stories or narratives represent an accumulation, a gathering together, and a synthesis of numerous individual stories. Individual experiences that people have with racism and discrimination cannot represent the collective experiences that people of color have with racism and discrimination. In this way, the composite counterstory (CCS) aids in demonstrating the way in which people of color have a shared history with racism, discrimination, and white supremacy.

Conceptual Frameworks and Theories

Critical race theory.

Just what is CRT and what is it doing in a nice field like education.

Gloria Ladson-Billings

With roots stemming from in Black, Latino/Latina, and Native American critical thought, critical race theory (CRT) was inescapably created by people of color from a need to move conversations of race and racism from experiential to ideological (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Tate, 1997). Racism has historically been understood as a willful act of aggression by singular people against singular people based on skin color and other phenotypic characteristics; until CRT, concepts of race and racism seldom addressed how race and racism are entrenched within the societal and institutional frameworks of American society (Omi & Winant, 1994). However, people of color have continually operated in theoretical terms about their specific conditions of social, political, and economic subordination where racism has not exposed for its full explanatory power within American society and institutions (Feagin, 2000). The lived experiences of people of color have been articulated in stories as have the master narrative of the dominant population.

CRT methodology strives to challenge dominant narratives by intentionally centering analysis on marginalized voices. Critical race theory as an epistemological and theoretical

framework utilizes storytelling and narrative as key components of its methodology (Bell, 1992). Bell (1995) describes CRT writing and lecturing as communication characterized by first person lived experiences expressed using tools such as storytelling, narrative, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of law, and the unapologetic, intentional use of creativity. Critical race theory is an oppositional framework which names and disrupts dominant White culture in legal, educational, and social institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT arose out of the need for a deeper, more specific description for persistent social, political, and economic inequity and its impact on people of color. At its core, critical race theory identifies racism as both prevalent and real, deeply rooted in the systems and institutions that guide the daily actions of individuals within the context of American society (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Solórzano (1998) states that race relations must be situated within a historical context that disrupts dominant culture and dominant views of marginalized people in order to fully understand it and its influence over policies and institutions. Critical race theorists explore meritocracy, neutrality, and colorblindness as mechanisms used to subjugate people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). In addition, these tools of domination do not account for the lived history, discrimination, and bias, of people of color but rather rest on the belief that hard work is the sole key to advancement in society.

Based on the understanding of critical race theory as a framework and a methodology, Matsuda et al. (1993) categorize the three themes of CRT: acknowledgement of the experiential knowledge of people of color and their communities of origin through the analysis of law and societal structures; is interdisciplinary from inception; and purposely strives to eliminate racial oppression in an effort to end all forms of oppression. Dixon and Rousseau (2006) categorize eight constructs within critical race theory as tools to analyze race and racism: (a) Whiteness as

property; (b) intersectionality of thought and identity; (c) dismissal of colorblindness; (d) culmination of interests; (e) racial realism; (f) expansive ideas of equality; (g) authentic voice and counterstories; and (h) institutional social change. As an articulation of both the themes of constructs of critical race theory, three main focused emerge: (a) storytelling and narratives as tools to examine race and racism in the law and in society; (b) race as a social construct which calls for the eradication of racial subjugation; and (c) identified relationships between race and other axes of domination.

Law and civil rights leaders Derrick Bell, Charles Lawrence, Kimberlé Crenshaw, James Calmore, Patricia Williams, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, Cheryl Harris, among others thought Critical Legal Theory did not encompass the persistent racial inequity and discrimination within the legal world (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Tate, 1997). Critical race theory founding theorists such as Bell (1988) and Delgado (1989) called for a deeper knowledge of race and racism which requires that racism is not singular, individual acts that can be eradicated but rather an epidemic within American culture that is deeply rooted in the historical and ideological consciousness of thought on race. These choices of thought have shaped the legal and educational institutions within the United States regarding race, racial categories, law, education and privilege (Harris, 1993). Critical race theory is rooted in the legal and educational files and has the potential to infiltrate a number of other arenas of study and of life (Lynn & Adams, 2002).

Following a similar path, Ladson-Billings and Tate contributed a significant body of literature and scholarship utilizing a critical race lens to evaluate a plethora of educational issues from pre-school to graduate programs. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated race had remained undertheorized in education without the application of CRT. They argued that the impact of educational inequity on students of color could be illuminated with a CRT lens to magnify racial

experiences and racial analysis in a deeper and more substantial manner (Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995). Educational scholarship has pulled from numerous CRT constructs to identify, evaluate, and analyze numerous educational issues, using critical race theory to shape research methodology (Lynn & Parker 2006; Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

Critical race theory adheres to a social justice agenda centered on eradicating all forms of injustice utilizing the lens of racial injustice. However, CRT has received for inadequately addressing the intersections of race and gender.

Black women and intersectionality.

There is no such thing as single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde

Critical race theory needed expand in several areas to become more encompassing to all areas of marinzation. One key area of distinction was feminism. Crenshaw et al. (1995) worked to intersect feminist legal theory with critical race theory to unveil the similarities in the to is empowerment on gender and race in the confinements of law and society at large. Crenshaw et al.'s (1995) research attempts to (a) expose Whiteness, its power, and its authority in American society to legal critique; (b) bring forth issues facing women such as domestic violence, gender role socialization, family leave, and child care, to expose their silence and their oppression; (c) focus on the marginalization of Black women in society and the law; and (d) identify connections for Black women and other women of color experiencing the same marginalization. Crenshaw (1988) stated "the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism . . . because of their intersectional identity as both women and of color, . . . women of color are marginalized" (p132). Epistemologies exclusively on race and gender have attempted to polarize themselves in many cases, this call for interactional analysis deepens the understanding of each individual case while discovering a

relational connection between both racism and sexism as symbiotic in nature. In returning to Crenshaw and her analysis of Black women, race cannot exist outside of gender which cannot exist outside of race. Black women do not have the luxury to choose one over the other.

Critical feminist theory.

Being oppressed means the absence of choices.

bell hooks

Critical race feminism (CRF), influenced by Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 2000) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989,1991) is a movement with origins in critical race theory that addresses critical theory which examines the complex identities and realities of women of color (Berry, 2010; Wing, 2003, 2015). It has arisen out of critical legal studies, critical race theory (Bell, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1998), and different variations of feminism, particularly Black feminist thought to encourage the understanding of the multifaceted nature of intersectionality, particularly Black woman and other women of color (Collins, 2000a, 2000b; Crenshaw, 1989). These women, with others joining, emphasized the notion that racial identity alone does not replace or eliminate numerous other shared identities of its members (Berry, 2010). CRF theory examines how identity influences access to power and individual identities themselves in numerous ways within the broader context of society (Sule, 2011).

CRF is developed in the concept that women of color occupy a liminal space. Crenshaw (1991) writes that “when the social and political practices expound identity as ‘woman’ or ‘person of color’ as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of non-White women to a location that resists telling” (p. 1242).

CRF was designed to frame the connections women of color can make across numerous facets of their identities but specifically as women and people of color, and their perceptions of

these intertwined identities within the frame of professional hegemony and societal interactions (Sule, 2011).

Chapter 3: Research Design And Methodology

This study will document and examine the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students to better inform the institutional practices, policies, and curriculum development of graduate schools of education from the perspective of the lived experiences of these women as well as to contribute to the larger body of literature on the subject of Black women in graduate schools of education. This study is designed to make meaning of the journey of Black women doctoral students within a graduate school of education. The exploration of this process is examined using a qualitative approach of storytelling, personal narratives, and counterstories as a means to capture and learn from their journey. This method allows for the understanding of participant experiences in a more intimate and meaningful way (Krathwohl, 2009).

The purpose of this qualitative research is to (re)cover and (re)tell the stories of Black women doctoral students via an endarkened feminist epistemological lens amplifying ‘whispered interventions’ into a loud and forceful cry to value Black women’s voices in knowledge production highlighting the perseverance, adaptation, and resilience during their tenure as students within graduate schools of education. The research design for this study is centered on the experiences of these women, particularly the epistemology and theoretical foundation brought forward through their lived experiences told in stories, personal narratives, and counterstories.

Research Questions

Following in the footsteps of previous scholars, the focus of this study is to explore the extent to which stories, personal narratives, and counterstories can be tools to assist academics interested in de-colonizing their research and their institutions to create a more culturally responsive, inclusive culture. In this light, the guiding research questions for this study are:

RQ1: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?

RQ2: What epistemological insights can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?

RQ3: How can the articulated lived experiences of Black women doctoral students impact, influence, and inform graduate level policies and curriculum and graduate level educators and leaders?

Research Design

When we as humans embark on research and the study of other humans, we bring with us a history of our experiences and education as our foundation of the work (Creswell, 2013). With the development of each research project, the design owns a unique integrity with specific methods and procedures to support the delineated course of the investigation, collection of data, and data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Research begins with philosophical assumptions and progresses with the researchers set beliefs and worldviews, all of which inform how the study is conducted (Parker & Lynn, 2002). The role that our beliefs and assumptions take within the research is a conscious decision that each researcher must make and document at the start of the study (Creswell, 2013). These philosophical assumptions help us as researchers to design our study, formulate our questions, and identify the type of study to be conducted (Creswell, 2013).

The research for this dissertation will be conducted using a qualitative methodological approach which specifies an organized outline placing the lived experiences at the center of the study (Creswell, 2013). Krathwohl (2009) postulates the necessity of a qualitative approach when the researchers are focused on the identification and development of new meanings and perspectives. This quest of new meaning compels the research to be grounded in a fundamental

base for qualitative research which is the comprehensive design that contains elements of substantial meaning (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Maxwell, 2012). The subjective experience encompasses the research of a qualitative study (Mertens, 2010) which identifies a phenomenon through the collection of data in open formats, such as interviews, and moves narrow units of data to units with broader mean to capture the essence of what and how the phenomenon is experienced (Creswell, 2013).

Participants of studies that focus on assumptions and worldview are often members of marginalized populations (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005). This qualitative study addresses the need to hear the voices of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education to challenge the racialized and genderized marginalization of Black women in the academy using the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminist epistemology. The research is situated within a hermeneutical critical race methodology that expressly relates the following themes to its study: (a) clarity of interest; (b) lived experiences reflected in the interest articulated; (c) a strong correlation between the phenomenon and the topic; and (d) interpreting the meaning of the lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). As the researcher of this hermeneutical study, I will use the data collected to reveal the important themes of the lived experiences of the participants; reduce the experiences to an 'object' of human experience; describe the development of the phenomenon as a philosophical search for wisdom; suspend judgement until founded intentionality of consciousness; and interpret the data to reflect the themes of the research.

Context for research. Interpretative frameworks of a study are often rooted in philosophical assumptions that can be linked directly to the participants. This study will utilize

social constructivist and intersectionality frameworks. A social constructivist framework guides the researcher to discover how lived experiences give meaning to the way in which the participants see the world (Creswell, 2013). This framework requires me as the researcher to position the perspective of the participants at the center of the research to extrapolate the theories and patterned meanings from the data presented in the interviews (Lester, 1999). Using a social constructivist framework within this hermeneutical study distinctively requires focus on the participants lived experience and their meaning of that lived experience simultaneously (Mertens, 2010). An intersectionality framework Assumptions, worldviews, and frameworks often overlap, supporting each other as the research develops and meaning is discovered (Stovall, 2005).

Black women in the academy have been studied at the community college, undergraduate, and faculty levels; however not much attention has been given to their roles as doctoral students within graduate schools of education. This study focuses on the lived experiences of this population using a critical race methodology as well as intersectionality and social constructivist frameworks to allow its participants to construct meaning of the world as they interact with it, participate in the said meaning of the world using historical and social perspectives, and identify the ways in which human interaction and community involvement play a role in meaning and perspective (Creswell, 2013). Glesne (2006) calls attention to qualitative research methods as a means to understand some social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved, to contextualize issues in their particular sociocultural-political milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions.

The issues examined from qualitative studies that are embedded with phenomenon often reflect specific focusses: exclusion of cultures or group, the inequitable power structure of

society manifesting in institutions, and the various outcomes stemming from these root problems (Fay, 1987; Morrow & Brown, 1994). In this study, the in-depth interviews will be used to document the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of the participants. The data from the interviews will use stories to examine the prevalence and penetration of institutional sexism and racism within a graduate school of education. Dowdy (2008) argues “telling one’s story in a safe space encourages an explanation for actions” (p. 5). Dowdy (2008) writes that the telling of stories

- (a) is a means of learning more about factors contributing to the events that affect African American women’s lives;
- (b) imposes order and meaning on the life events and interpretation of those situations experienced; and
- (c) allows us to take fragmented thoughts, feelings, and beliefs and create a timeline for events (p. 5).

Storytelling is a central part of critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminist epistemology. Critical race theory concentrates on the socially constructed and expansive nature of race and racism within society (Parker & Lynn, 2002). The use of critical race theory in a study means that the researcher underscores race and racism in all areas of the research process within the study to confront traditional research worldviews (Creswell, 2007). The use of CRT means that the investigator foregrounds race and racism in all facets of the research process and confronts conventional research texts and worldviews (Creswell, 2007).

Critical race feminism expands the notions of critical race theory with the premises of intersectionality, particularly race and gender to concurrently identify the lived experiences of women of color; more specifically the identity of Black women. The facets of this research design are based on the culmination of identity, culture, history, environment, and experiences that are key components in the lives of Black women (Crenshaw, 2003). Endarkened feminist epistemology takes the tenets of critical race theory and adds the physical and spiritual

intersection to enhance the understanding of the ethos that involve the lives of Black women (Dillard, 2003).

Role of the researcher. This research is rooted in critical theories that challenge traditional forms of research and writing. For this dissertation, I actively position myself in critical race theory (Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), critical feminist theory (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2000; hooks, 1991, 1989), and endarkened feminist epistemology (Dillard, 2006). The epistemological premise I take from endarkened feminism is the self-definition of being a Black woman (Collins, 2000; Dillard, 2006; hooks, 1981, 1989) and its importance to this study by providing the validation of experience as knowledge, theory, and critique of daily life within the academy. Critical feminist theory and endarkened feminism situate the research as personal, political, intellectual, and spiritual in nature and assumes that the researcher is entrenched in all aspects of the research (Collins, 2000; Dillard, 2006; Williams, 1998).

Critical race theory supports me in the process of interrogating my racial discourse and the implications this thinking has on how I do research in comparison to how traditional research has been conducted (Duncan, 2006). In using critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminism, I challenge myself to (re)consider what counts as useful knowledge and identify what knowledge has been stolen as a result of imposed silence and erasure.

In the process of becoming a researcher, I deliberately focus my understanding of and work within the academy as that of a Black female doctoral student. It is how I have previously and will continue to define my identity in academia. This study, my research, is situated in a critical race and endarkened feminist being. My role as a Black woman motherscholar consciously informs my research. My identity as a southern, working middle class, multi-ethnic Black woman influences the lens which I view context and meaning. The use of these theories

and epistemologies hold me accountable for research as a responsibility, not a privilege. To negate my identity, my role, and my responsibility would be an act of violence against myself, my colleagues, those who follow, and the academy as an institution.

Data Sources

Target population. The target population for this research will be people who self-identify as Black women doctoral students within a graduate school of education. These women will be bound by their articulated self-identity of both race and gender. These women will come from various geographical locations within the United States, who hold professional positions in numerous fields. Their ages, family status, and immigration status will be as individual as they are.

Sampling method. This study will use in-depth, open ended interviews as the data source to support its purposeful, criterion, homogenous sampling. Patton (2002) pontificates that purposeful sampling is used by researchers to gain an in-depth understanding on issues of significant meaning regarding the purpose of the research and that the target group garners information about and has lived experiences about the issues within the study. This study will acquire the data from Black women doctoral students within a graduate school of education. Creswell (2013) discusses the need for all participants within the study to have lived experience of the participants being studied to qualify as a criterion sampling.

Participants. The Black women selected to participate all attend the same private, Christian university located on the west coast of the United States. Homogenous sampling takes the level one step deeper to include shared characteristics among the participants of the study (Patton, 2002). The participants to be interviewed will be from a specific track entailing 3 cohorts of students; all of whom began the same program together in the same year and ended

the coursework together in the same year. The participants of the study will be selected based on their expressed identity throughout the program.

Criteria for inclusion. In consideration of the detailed sampling, the selection benchmarks that are used in this study include participants who:

- are at least 20 years old or older
- self-identify as a Black person;
- self-identify as a woman; and
- enrolled in a same doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

Criteria for exclusion. In consideration of the detailed sampling and the criteria for inclusion, the selection benchmarks that exclude participation in this study are people who are not:

- at least 20 years old;
- self-identified as a Black person;
- self-identify as a woman; and
- enrolled in a same doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

Human Subject Considerations

To protect the human subjects involved in this study, guidelines must be established. In compliance with federal guidelines, the United States Department of Health and Human Services guarantees the protection of humans by requiring each educational institution to create an Institutional Review Board (Creswell, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Pepperdine University is under the Graduate and Professional Schools Internal Review Board (IRB) and they monitor the process with the clear goal of protecting the welfare, dignity, and safety of human subjects. Pepperdine University Institutional Review Boards' (2009) policy specifically states that, "all research involving human participants must be conducted in accordance with accepted ethical, federal, and professional standards for research and that all such research must be approved by one of the university's Institutional Review Boards (IRB)" (p. 1).

As the researcher of this study, I am in compliance with the IRB requirement of training through the completion of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online course for researchers. This study complies with the policies and standards required by Pepperdine University IRB. The outline of compliance includes ethical framework, respect for persons, and beneficence. This study and the research within will be submitted to the Pepperdine University IRB as an exempt application. The study qualifies as exempt in that all participants are 18 year or older, there is minimal risk to participants, and because the participants will be selected on self-identification of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education, permission from a specific organization is not required.

All IRB documentation is included in the appendices of this dissertation. Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board will vet the process of the research, the nature of research, the method of data collection, and the dissemination of the findings to ensure that the research

will maintain its responsible judgments and exercise the ethical considerations required. Before the start of this study, I will obtain the appropriate informed consent ensuring autonomy and respect for all involved (Sales, 2000). The informed consent form ensures the participation in the interview is voluntary, information on the purpose and the objective of the research is communicated, consent to record is granted, and confidentiality is secured through the removal of identifying markers and password protected data. The informed consent form also serves as a notification to all participants that anonymity cannot be guaranteed within the in-depth, open ended, semi-structured interviews. Within the informed consent form, I will disclose the potential psychological risks of emotional discomfort from (re)telling and (re)living the experiences within the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories being shared. Participants will return the informed consent forms to me prior to the scheduling the interview.

Data Instruments

Because this is a qualitative study, the researcher is the only tool for collecting data (Patton, 2002). I am the researcher for this study therefore I am responsible for (Creswell, 2013)

- designing the questions for the interview;
- enlisting the participation from the designated population;
- distributing the prerequisite materials (consent form, confidentiality form, interview protocol and questions) before the interview;
- scheduling the interviews;
- providing the platform to conduct and record the interview;
- conducting the interview;
- notetaking during interview;
- completing the interview within the designated time frame;

- securing the data; and finally
- sending a thank you note and items to the participant to close the loop.

I will bring my identity, assumptions, and beliefs to the study. To garner trust and authenticity of the research and with the participants, I must remain clear and acknowledge the significance of my perspective and my consciousness, also known as researcher's reflexivity. (Patton, 2002).

As the primary research tool, I will be the participant in the interview process. I will answer all the questions that I will ask of the participants complete with audio tape. Once my process as a researcher/participant is complete, I will conduct the entire process again with a pilot study of one identified prospective participant. I will note any problems or discrepancies with the prescribed method of data collection. Once all issues have been addressed and rectified. I will continue with data collection of from the remaining prospective participants.

There are several tools that will be used to support the documentation of the interview and the data analysis. My mobile cellular device will be used to record the audio, my personal computer will be used to take notes during the interview, the communications with participants, notes from the interviews, and audio recordings will be saved on a secure external drive. The data will be transcribed through an external, HIPPA certified transcription service, and the transcribed interviews will be stored, coded, and interpreted using a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) program.

All services, programs, and devices have been suggestions of doctoral students, faculty and staff of educational institutions, and recording professionals. Each recommendation has been corroborated twice and vetted through best practices statements of reputable review services.

Data Methodology

The data methodology of collection and management we chose to use as researchers reflect our understanding of the complexity of gathering data; this melding of the history, identity, and meaning create a story of both the research and the researcher (Dowdy, 2008). To clarify and enhance the research, critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminist epistemology ask the researcher and the participants to consider who they are in relation to race, gender, and culture and how these components of their being are embedded in the researcher (Milner, 2006). Through participatory methods, I will work with the participants to create a partnership of knowledge based on our collective gender, racial, cultural, and spiritual identities. I will continually cross-examine the data using the research.

Interview protocol - data collection. This study will request participation from the women that fall within the designed parameters, expecting approximately 3-4 woman to participate. The participant pool is limited to a little under 10 women making the sample size close to one half of the designated population which falls within the desired number of 3-15 participants for ideal data analysis in a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013). The data will be collected in March and April of 2019. The interviews will be conducted in California because I live in California; however the participants can reside outside of the state for the actual interview. The following criteria will be researched, evaluated, and implemented to collect data:

- research questions drafted, developed, and reviewed;
- interview questions drafted, developed, and reviewed;
- study process drafted, developed, and reviewed;
- IRB approval of study;
- participants selected to participate based on the study process;

- communication managed to request participation;
- relevant document distributed to participant and collected with consent;
- interviews scheduled, conducted, and recorded;
- interviews transcribed, corrected, and confirmed; and finally
- data reviewed, analyzed, and reported.

Interview protocol. The interviews will be conducted by me, the researcher, and will have one member of the participant population. Qualitative researchers illustrate the multiple perspectives and realities participants could have (Patton, 2002), therefore I chose to use an in-depth interview format to encourage the descriptive (re)telling of the participants realities. The interviews will consist of 6 open-ended, reflexive questions and will be semi-structured to leave time and space for the documentation of lived experiences. The questions are arranged in an order however it is not required that they be asked in a particular order. The interview format will follow the responsive interviewing model of Rubin and Rubin (2011) which allows for additional questions to be asked for clarity or depth. The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes to one hour and will be conducted either in person or by phone to be determined by the participants preference and geographical limitations.

A recruitment email (see Appendix C) will be sent out to participants' email inviting them to participate in a research study of stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education. Prospective participants who answer the initial email will be sent a second, explanatory email (see Appendix D) describing the research study, IRB information, consent forms, and a written, detailed guide of the process from start to finish for each participant. Included in the second email are the requirements for participants of the study. Once participants respond to the first two emails sent, a third

scheduling email (see Appendix E) will be sent containing confirmation of received consent forms, dates, and possible interview questions. Following the schedule and interview question email, a fourth confirmation email (see Appendix G) will be sent with finalized dates. The final pre-interview email will be sent to the participants the day before the interview to confirm (see Appendix H).

The interview call will begin with my introduction as the interviewer, the disclosure that the interview would be recorded, and the pre-interview protocol including expected timeframe of the interview, a thorough explanation of the research, confirmation of the electronic signed consent form with verbal confirmations of voluntary consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and copyright information. As the interviewer, I will disclose the risks of the study, particularly the anonymity and security of data. The participants will be informed of the prospect of dissemination of this study including presentations and publications. I will also notify the participants that they will receive a book and a coffeehouse gift card for participating. As the interviewer, I will confirm all the information that is provided is, in fact, understood and asked for any final question before the start of the interview.

Once the precursory information is complete, I will restate that the interview will be recorded and then conduct the interview with a series of six questions. After all the interview questions are asked and answered, I will conclude the interview portion of the interview by answering any remaining questions the participant might have. I will end the interview thanking the participant and confirmation of a final letter to be sent.

In the event that a participant schedules an interview but is unable to complete the process, I will send a follow-up email (see Appendix G) stating that the participant is removed from the confirmed list of study participants.

Interview questions.

Setting the Stage Q1: What was the catalyst for you choosing a doctoral program? Why Ed.D?

Setting the Stage Q2: What stage of the program are you in (ie classes, exams, dissertation)?

Setting the Stage Q3: What are your future professional aspirations and utilization of your degree?

IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

IQ2: Describe specific experiences that speak to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have learned and the insights you have acquired as a Black woman relative to the educational systems in support of your intellectual, ideological, cultural, and/or spiritual needs in a doctoral program.

IQ4: Based on these lessons and insights acquired, what might you recommend to future Black women doctoral students?

IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?

IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.

Closing the interview Q1: Would you like to make any additional statements regarding the questions we just discussed?

Table 1

Research Questions and Related Interview Questions

Research Questions	Related Interview Questions
RQ1: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?	<p>IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.</p> <p>IQ2: Describe specific experiences that speak to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.</p>
RQ2: What epistemological insights can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?	<p>IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have learned and the insights you have acquired as a Black woman?</p> <p>IQ4: Based on these lessons and insights acquired, what might you recommend to future Black women doctoral students?</p>
RQ3: How can the articulated lived experiences of Black women doctoral students impact, influence, and inform graduate level policies and curriculum and graduate level educators and leaders?	<p>IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?</p> <p>IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.</p>

Note. The table identifies the peer and expert revised research and interview questions.

Ethical Consideration

The graduate school of education is a small unit within a larger structure. The participants are cohort members of a group under 50 people who can make their stories identifiable to other cohort members within the smaller community; however not to the community at large. The primary consideration for this study is the privacy of identity of the participants in the study. The intent of the research is to examine the shared stories, personal narratives, and counterstories collected from the participants, however it is necessary to use a

data collection method that would protect the identity of the individual participants as much as possible.

Data confidentiality. I will ensure the privacy of all data by conducting a strategic process of the extraction of all personal identification and identifiers by utilizing pseudonyms for names and composite stories for the dissemination of the lived experiences. Developing and using composite characters in the telling of the participants lived experiences shifts the focus away from individual participants to the culture within the institution that Black women doctoral students faced as a collective group (Delgado, 1989).

Data management and storage. The data from each interview will be saved on my personal computer under a designated pseudonym for each participant. The audio recording of each interview will be sent to a secure facility for transcription using the same identified pseudonyms via password protected file. The transcribed interview will be returned from the transcription service via password protected file, combined with my audio notes, and saved via password protected file on the same external drive. I will review the data provided, make the necessary corrections, and send the file (see Appendix L) in a password protected email to the participant for final review of accuracy. I will make additional corrections if needed and save the final digital file with the same pseudonym on a password protected external drive stored in a key entry lockbox. I will then send a follow-up email (see Appendix K) to each participant stating that the interview as completed in its final format and if desired, they had the liberty to withdraw in their participation, in writing, until the date provided in the email.

Validity and Reliability

The data for each source will be analyzed individually and compiled to create a final product. As the researcher, I will code the qualitative data from interviews individually. Codes will be identified, categories defined, and themes established according to the tenets of CRT, CFT, and ETE to ensure the data can be reviewed and analyzed accurately. The individual data will be merged, described, narrated, and placed into a composite story and visual displays to communicate the final results.

Data analysis. Using a systematic approach to analyze the raw data collected from the interviews and audio observation notes, this study will utilize the framework of Huberman and Miles (2002) and spiral analysis from Creswell (2013) for qualitative data analysis. Huberman and Miles (2002) will help create a foundation to identify themes and patterns that complement research conducted and the data collected for this study. Creswell (2013) will present a detailed analysis of the data using a looped data analysis approach that provides both leveling and repetition to interpret the data and develop the codes. Saldaña (2015) addresses the notion that qualitative analysis is best completed cyclically rather than a flat, linear evaluation.

Coding. To initiate the data analyzation process, I will document my participation in the interview process as a Black woman doctoral student. I will then document my own preconceived notions to ensure that I am aware of and consider any bias I could bring to the study that has not previously been identified. Once my process as a researcher/participant is complete, I will conduct the entire process again with a pilot study of one identified prospective participant. I will note any problems or discrepancies with the prescribed method of data analysis. Once all issues have been addressed and rectified, I will continue with the analysis of the remaining data collected.

Once an interview is complete, I will listen to the audio recording and take notes. I will then send the password protected audio data for transcription. Once the transcription is returned, I will listen for both accuracy and cursory notes. Upon completion of the first round of edits, I will sent the revised transcript of the interview to the participant for a final phase of edits. Once the data is returned, I will finalize edits and store the completed transcript on a password protected drive.

The first round of analysis involves the creation of codes. In initial phase of coding, the questioning of the data and reflection of the emerging categories will be situated within the conceptual framework of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). These categories will transition from individual units to buckets, or groupings, of similar categories, a process known as descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2015). The identification of these grouped categories will enhance the coding process and initiate the second level of the process, data reduction (Creswell, 2013). This reduction of data into manageable portions will create an avenue to identify patterns and themes which organically develop.

The flexibility of this process allows for the (re)reading, (re)thinking, and (re)interpreting of the data which will help me to become intimately familiar with the inner workings of the unique analysis the data set from this study will provide (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). As the data become more familiar and fluid, In Vivo coding will be applied to document, enhance, and honor the words of the participants within this study (Saldaña, 2015). In Vivo is vital to the implementation of the conceptual, theoretical, and epistemological applications of critical race, critical feminism, and endarkened feminism as it can begin to eradicate the violent nature of data analysis that has systematically silenced and erased marginalized populations such as Black women doctoral students enrolled in graduate schools of education.

Once this is complete for each interview, I will combine all themes from each interview to show a connection between participants and develop a thematic story for the study. During this repetitive cyclical process, codes will be changed and sub-codes will emerge, my comfortability with the data will increase, which will open the analysis to the possibilities of numerous findings and alternative explanations for the analysis (Creswell, 2014). The themes which emerge will be analyzed based on how they corresponded with CRT, CFT, and EFE, particularly counterstories (bell, 1987; Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This phenomenological approach allows for the production of detailed descriptions of perceptions and lived experiences which can create a roadmap of transferability or applicability to similar qualitative data.

Crafting composites. The participants' individual stories will be used to create composite stories by procuring features of intersecting stories to design the foundation a common narrative. When analyzing the interview data for each participant, I will contemplate the following two questions: How does the participant discuss and comprehend what is transpiring in the program? How is the participant aligned with the tenets of critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminist epistemology while (re)telling? The composite story will be written and situated with the historical, legal, social, political, and spiritual conditions to explore topics of isolation, silencing, erasure, and frustration while pursuing a doctoral degree using larger critical race, critical feminist, and endarkened feminist theoretical understandings of race and racism, gender and sexism, spirituality and detachment.

Summary

During our second semester as doctoral students, our cohort participated in a qualitative research simulation using the Pruitt-Igoe housing project as a backdrop for our qualitative research course. Our table group consisted of four Black women and one White woman and we decided to take on the lens of the women in the documentary. The conversation moved through the intellectual motions of conducting research and then turned to ways in which we could support our findings. The conclusion of the group was to use lyrics from Tupac's Keep Ya Head Up (1993) and research from Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1968) and bell hooks all about love (2000).

When we completed our presentation to the cohort, several of our colleagues questioned our positionality of the topic, the validity of our experiences as women, and the appropriateness of the use of Tupac Shakur. It was a moment where each of us had a response but none of us responded. Our professor, a self-identified Black woman, stood up and moved from the back of the class to the front and reminded the cohort that individual people bring their own identity, assumptions, worldviews, and lived experiences to the research they study and the research they conduct. She thanked us for our bravery in revealing who we were as humans and as scholars. The resistance of positionality did not relinquish that night in class, in fact, it reached some of the highest levels that I have ever experienced that following summer.

The telling and the (re)telling of stories, personal narratives, and counterstories within the parameters of research is paramount. A qualitative, hermeneutical phenomenological study has been chosen to investigate the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students in graduate schools of education to assign meaning to and gain deeper understanding of these shared experiences. This study used the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminist epistemology to align with the purpose and research upheld in the study. Using open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews allows me as the researcher to capture the essence of the experience of the participants in addition to how they describe their personal understanding of these shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This study addresses the need to hear the voices of Black women doctoral students to identify and challenge the racialized and genderized marginalization that they face within the academy.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to (re)cover and (re)tell the stories of Black women doctoral students via an endarkened feminist epistemological lens amplifying ‘whispered interventions’ into a loud and forceful cry. More specifically, this research is designed to value Black women’s voices in knowledge production highlighting the perseverance, adaptation, and resilience during their tenure as students within graduate schools of education. The journey of the process is rooted in the lived experiences of twelve women, all who self-identify as Black women doctoral students, however each woman represent varying ages, socioeconomic classes, geographic histories, family structures, and support systems both inside and outside of the academy. Each of these women have negotiated their multiple, intersectional, marginalized identities as they navigated a PWI (primarily white institution) founded on Eurocentric, male dominated ideologies.

This chapter begins with an overview of the results of the study: questions, participants, data collected. Following the overview, there are two additional sections: findings and analysis. The findings section examines this research using the lived experiences of the volunteer participants. The analysis section creates a structure of assessment by using the research questions and interview questions to illustrate and underscore the literature, theoretical concepts, data, and findings.

The role of this chapter is to explore the findings and analysis of the research by producing and examining the foremost themes that emerged for the volunteer participants. The study allowed the themes presented to develop using in-depth interviews with open-ended question. As a reflexive researcher, I was able to conduct the critical work of exploring meaning and assigning data driven value to the lived experiences of the volunteer participants. The

analysis of the lived experiences brought to light through the interviews made it possible to create composite stories that were the witnessing and sacred tellings of the participants. The sacredness of the tellings were in part due to the courage to tell and the courage to bear witness to the triumphant and challenging stories of the participants.

As the reflexive researcher, I observed how the lives of these Black women doctoral scholars rose up and took shape to form both an individual and collective identity of how the participants viewed themselves as independent from and connected to the academy. The research calls attention to the participants' shared experiences of feeling of silencing and erasure in the cohort by the infrastructure, faculty, and colleagues. These twelve Black women doctoral students trusted me, the researcher, with their lived experiences within a graduate school of education including personal elements embedded in the stories such as family, community, profession, and personal accomplishments and tribulations. This process purposefully allowed the voices of this multiply marginalized population to become privileged.

The Questions

The focus of this study is to explore the extent to which stories, personal narratives, and counterstories can be tools to assist academics interested in de-colonizing their research and their institutions to create a more culturally responsive, inclusive culture. In this light, the guiding research questions and related interview questions for this study are:

RQ1: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?

IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

IQ2: Describe specific experiences that speak to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

RQ2: What epistemological insights can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?

IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have learned and the insights you have acquired as a Black woman relative to the educational systems in support of your intellectual, ideological, cultural, and/or spiritual needs in a doctoral program.

IQ4: Based on these lessons and insights acquired, what might you recommend to future Black women doctoral students?

RQ3: How can the articulated lived experiences of Black women doctoral students impact, influence, and inform graduate level policies and curriculum and graduate level educators and leaders?

IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?

IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.

Participants

The volunteer participants for this research were self-identified Black women doctoral students within a graduate school of education (see Table 2). These women were connected only by their self-articulated race and gender. The participants came from various geographical locations within the United States, who hold professional positions in numerous fields. Their ages, family status, and immigration status were individually defined and related only by cultural

or situational circumstance. The Black women selected to participate all attend the same private, Christian university located on the west coast of the United States.

Table 2

Participant Identification and Self-Identity

Pseudonym	Self-Identified Gender	Self-Identified Race	Year in Program
<i>Dorothy</i>	Female	Black	Doctoral Candidate (year 3, final defense scheduled)
<i>Danielle</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 3, exams complete)
<i>Veronica</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 3, preliminary defense completed)
<i>Latasha</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 1, coursework)
<i>Ellysa</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 1, coursework)
<i>Tina</i>	Female	Black	Doctoral Candidate (year 3, final defense scheduled)
<i>Arnetta</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 1, coursework)
<i>Mariah</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 2, coursework)
<i>Donita</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 1, coursework)
<i>Keisha</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 2, coursework)
<i>Jeanie</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 3, preliminary defense completed)
<i>Kira</i>	Female	Black	Student (year 1, coursework)

Data Collection

As the researcher, I anticipated the response to the initial call for volunteer participants would be between three and six, however I planned to remain reflexive and interview as many volunteer participants as possible in order to acquire the deepest understanding of the participants' lived experiences. At the conclusion of the data collection, I interviewed 12 participants, a much higher number than anticipated and a remaining five who could not fit within the time constraints of the study. The interviews lasted for 20-60 minutes utilizing open-ended questions within a semi-structured interview to maintain some commonality across the individual interviews while creating space for clarification, elaboration, and personal stories to emerge within the interview (Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994).

The data collection began with the lived experiences of the volunteer participants. This study used in-depth, open ended interviews as the data source. The data was rooted in critical race theory, intersectionality, Black feminist thought, and endarkened feminist epistemology. The lived experiences of the volunteer participants were initially read using the 13 grounded tenets of critical race theory, intersectionality, Black feminist thought, and endarkened feminist epistemology (see Table 3). Each tenet, or category, was extracted from the literature within the study.

Table 3

Methodology, Framework, and Lens Associated with Tenents

Methodology, Framework, and Lens	Tenents (Category)
Critical Race Theory (CRT)	Racism In Ordinary
	Interest Convergence
	Social Construct of Race
	Counterstorytelling
	Centrality of Experience
Intersectionality Framework - Including CRT	Multiple/Mutual Identities
	Power and Privilege
Black Feminist Thought (BFT) - Including CRT, Intersectionality	Interlocking Oppression
	Standpoint Epistemology
	Everyday Knowledge
	Dialectical Images
	Social Justice Praxis
Endarkened Feminist Epistemology (EFE) - Including CRT, Intersectionality, BFT	Spirituality

Findings

Key terminology. The findings brought forth from the data began with identifying key terminology from the (re)telling of the lived experiences of the volunteer participants. The 13 tenents of research found within the methodology, framework, and lens of the study guided the reading and extracting of data from the interviews. The terminology was identified, named, and embedded with snippets of the stories told from the lived experiences of the twelve Black women doctoral students. The key terminology was charted and counted which allowed for the

data to define the connection of the tenets to the terminology and eventually to the developed themes linked to the guiding research questions of the study. Table 4 charts the tenets with the categories and the key terminology.

Table 4

Methodology, Framework, Lens Associated with Tenets and Identified Key Terminology

Methodology, Framework, and Lens	Tenets (Category)	Key Terminology
Critical Race Theory (CRT)	Racism In Ordinary	Colorblindness Meritocracy
	Interest Convergence	Status Quo
	Social Construct of Race	Citizenship Equal Opportunity
	Counterstorytelling	Stories, Perceptions Understanding
	Centrality of Experience	Lived Experiences
Intersectionality Framework <i>Including CRT</i>	Multiple/Mutual Identities	Informed Intersection Double Identity Double Consciousness
	Power and Privilege	Power, Dominance, Control, Privilege
Black Feminist Thought (BFT) <i>Including CRT, Intersectionality</i>	Interlocking Oppression	Racialized, Gendered Sexual, Beauty Color
	Standpoint Epistemology	Common Identity Victimization Judgement Insider
	Everyday Knowledge	Shared Understanding Wisdom, Authenticity Expertise
	Dialectical Images	Fluidity, Femininity Stereotypes, Media Good/Nice Girl
	Social Justice Praxis	Hierarchies Curriculum Scholarship/Research Leadership
Endarkened Feminist Epistemology (EFE) <i>Including CRT, Intersectionality, and BFT</i>	Spirituality	Spirit/Ethos Womanhood Self

Themes. The analysis of the data situated itself with the identification of four central themes and eight subthemes under the headings of the guided research questions. All analysis inherently links to the 13 tenets of critical race theory, intersectionality, Black feminist thought, and endarkened feminist epistemology. Each theme emerged from the lived experiences of the 12 volunteer participants. The themes call attention to the how the Black women viewed themselves within and outside of the academy under the self-imposed title of doctoral student, how they defined and described their multiple marginalization as Black women, and the ways in which the academy and their colleagues interpreted these known identities.

The first theme of the personal, including the subthemes invisibility and erasure are encompassed in the first research question: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?, and the first two interview questions: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education and describe specific experiences that speak to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

The second theme of the voice, including the subthemes language and isolation and silence also involve in the first research question: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?, and the first two interview questions: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education and describe specific experiences that speak to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

The third theme of the collective, including the subthemes friendships and mentorships and activists and allies are linked to the second research question: What epistemological insights

can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?, and the second and third interview questions: Discuss the lessons you have learned and the insights you have acquired as a Black woman relative to the educational systems in support of your intellectual, ideological, cultural, and/or spiritual needs in a doctoral program and Based on these lessons and insights acquired, what might you recommend to future Black women doctoral students?

The fourth and final theme of the academy, including the subthemes culture and outsider within are connected to the third and final research question: How can the articulated lived experiences of Black women doctoral students impact, influence, and inform graduate level policies and curriculum and graduate level educators and leaders?, and the fourth and fifth interview questions: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled? and Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program. In Table 4, the four themes, eight subthemes and three research questions are charted by association.

Table 5

Methodology, Framework, and Lens Associated with Tenent and Identified Key Terminology, Assigned Themes, and Research Questions

Methodology, Framework, and Lens	Tenents (Category)	Key Terminology	Themes	Research Question
Critical Race Theory (CRT)	Racism In Ordinary	Colorblindness Meritocracy	Invisibility	#1
	Interest Convergence	Status Quo	Culture	#3
	Social Construct of Race	Citizenship, One Drop /Jim Crow Equal Opportunity	Erasure	#1
	Counterstorytelling	Stories, Perceptions Understanding	The Collective	#2
	Centrality of Experience	Lived Experiences	Outsider Within	#3
Intersectionality Framework <i>Including CRT</i>	Multiple/Mutual Identities	Informed Intersection Double Identity Double Consciousness	Allies/ Activist	#2
	Power and Privilege	Power Dominance Control Privilege	The Academy	#3
Black Feminist Thought (BFT) <i>Including CRT and Intersectionality</i>	Interlocking Oppression	Racialized, Gendered Sexual, Beauty Color	Isolation/ Silence	#1
	Standpoint Epistemology	Common Identity Victim Judgement Insider	The Personal	#1
	Everyday Knowledge	Shared Understanding Wisdom, Authenticity Expertise	Friendship /Mentor	#2
	Dialectical Images	Fluidity, Femininity Stereotypes, Media Good/Nice Girl	Erasure	#1
	Social Justice Praxis	Hierarchies, Curriculum Scholarship/Research Leadership	Language	#1
Endarkened Feminist Epistemology (EFE) <i>Including CRT, Intersectionality, BFT</i>	Spirituality	Spirit/Ethos Womanhood, Self	The Voice	#1

Analysis

The analysis of education, particularly the research within this study, has been placed upon the same backdrop in which the study was created. Utilizing critical race theory, intersectionality, Black feminist thought, and endarkened feminism, a complete analysis has been conducted on the lived experiences of the Black women doctoral student volunteer participants. The critical perspective of which these theories are based can allow the research and researcher to explore the knowledge that is produced in the academy. McLaren (2003) emphasizes the social construction of the production of knowledge in the academy, which is rooted in power and dominance, manifests in what is taught, what is learned, what is honored, and what is valued. Using critical pedagogy as the foundation of analysis ensures that the how and the why of knowledge production is analyzed within the academy, underscoring both power and privilege within a larger context of our society and its dominant culture.

This dissertation uses critical race theory for the analysis of the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students within the academy as an antithesis of the vessel designed to sustain a master script of silencing and erasing the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students. The limited focus on the issues, needs, success, and achievements of Black women students perpetuate the dominant cultures narrative that devalue this same multiple marginalized community (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Intersectionality is another tool of analysis for this study and the experiences of Black women doctoral students in speaking directly to the racial complexities interwoven within the gender densities and the gender complexities intertwined within racial densities (Crenshaw, 1989). The research within this study also uses Black feminist thought to analyze the academy and the experiences of Black women doctoral students within academia. Collins (2000) positions that from a Black feminist lens, the academy is not just Eurocentric but also patriarchal hence adding to the marginalization of Black women. Finally,

this dissertation approaches analysis from the vantage of endarkened feminism by undermining the dominant narrative through valuing and trusting the knowledge base, spirit, ethos, and womanhood of Black women doctoral students as a form of survival and resistance (Dillard, 2017).

The analysis of this research is based on the lived experiences of 12 Black women doctoral students and framed within the 13 tenets of critical race theory, intersectionality, Black feminist theory, and endarkened feminism. The data was clustered, categorized, and sectioned into 50 key phrases/terminology. Four main themes emerged (the personal, the voice, the collective, the academy) with two subthemes per theme; each grouping of three rests under a specific research question and subsequent interview questions. The data is dense and rich in culture, history, struggle, and perseverance. The stories told are profound and enlightening. The voices of the Black women doctoral students are privileged and centered in the learning within.

The personal - invisibility and erasure. Academia rejects the individual and criticizes the personal in classrooms and in research. Black feminist thought and womanist theory propose a connection of political, social, and intellectual ethics with the experiential knowledge of Black women known as standpoint epistemology. Endarkened feminism asks the academy to position positive examples of Black women's experiences as key knowledge vital to the process of research (Dillard, 2017).

Invisibility. The counterstories are examples that the Black women doctoral scholars lived experiences of being the other. The existence of the experience of othering also created an experience of feeling different or being seen as different. Some of these differences include being seen as stereotypical, annoying, and aggressive by the classmates who are members of the dominant culture. These examples provided by the lived experiences of the volunteer participants

illustrate the mounting effects of present situations compounded by previous encounters. Morris (2016) describes the phenomenon of a push out of Black females referencing practices and policies that deliberately undermine the visibility of Black females through the hyper vigilance of the behavior (and bodies) of Black women. This mechanism serves to neglect Black women, rendering them invisible to the institution and the dominant culture within the institution.

Ellysa ponders her place within: I think this could go back to perception is reality. A lot of times when other genders or races work with black women they try to stifle them or tell them their opinions, or that their experiences weren't seen the way that they saw them. And that's not our reality as black women. And a lot of times, just based on expressing ourselves, we are the antagonists in a situation, when you're really just stating your opinion just like everyone else stated theirs, or, um, defending. And since we're taking all these courses on change management and, um, leadership theory, you wanna take those into consideration when dealing with people of different races and backgrounds, including the black woman who has to kind of digress your opinion or your original mindset at times of what you think about black women, and understand that they're in this program just like you're in this program. You all got to the same place so you all have something valuable to offer.

Dorothy recalls a group assignment: Because I was overlooked kind of right, you know, here I am sitting in the group and, know, assigning everybody group, I mean jobs to do and I had to say, you know, like well I can do this, you know, like wasn't even like included. And there was other things too, but I don't wanna get into it. It is difficult to explain and understand.

Erasure. Bell (1989) ponders the lack of standards for Black excellence within education and the need of the dominant culture to focus on the individuals who measure to the stereotypes of being Black and not those who exceed it. Ladson-Billings (1998) discussed the need of the academy to perpetuate the master narrative of the stereotypical Black woman to ensure they are silenced, muted, and erased. The majority of the volunteer participants referenced the inability to see themselves in the curriculum or in the faculty which resulted in an erasure of their identity, individuality, and ultimately their humanity. Over three quarters of the Black women doctoral student participants spoke of their disappointment in the lack of research

provided by the faulty regarding issues and topics pertaining to that of marginalized populations as well as the lack of Black professors: male or female. The participants described the lengths they went to and the measure they took to be seen: to included themselves in the research and to insert themselves in the curriculum.

Arnetta searched for herself within the academy: There is very little of myself in the program. I can think of three Black faculty that I have met on the stairs. Within the School of Education specifically, I have not had an African American teacher. The other African American teachers that I saw were within the School of Psychology. And as far as the curriculum, I would have to say no more often than not, no.

Latasha tries to interject a female perspective: Um, there was one class where I did bring up the- an issue with, um, wage disparity in relationship to gender, and, um, leadership, management, when there's a disparity between the leadership wher- uh- one woman and five men and, um, that was kinda swept under the rug by the professor, so that was a very interesting to me.

The voice - language, isolation and silence. Utilizing pedagogical and epistemological paradigms that value and support this (re)discovered knowledge production is crucial to the inclusion of marginalized populations. Dillard implores academia to bind education with integrity and hold the content of research fixed to the people it serves. Endarkened feminist epistemology expressly places new ways of understanding based on everyday knowledge and a centrality of experiences while removing the connection of the experiential phenomenon to Eurocentric, male dominated values of PWIs.

Language. Racially privileged people within the academy speak to teach others about the dysfunction of marginalized populations – slavery, one drop, unemployment, and prison during class discussions. Dillard (2012) states the need to adjust and reclaim academic language:

In defining an endarkened feminist epistemology, I have deliberately sought language that attempts to unmask traditionally held political and cultural constructions/constrictions, language, which more accurately organizes, resists, and transforms oppressive descriptions of sociocultural phenomena and relationships. In this vein, Asante (1988), Morrison (1993), Thiongo (1986) and

others have suggested that language has historically served and continues to serve as a powerful tool in the mental, spiritual, and intellectual colonization of African-Americans and other marginalized peoples. They further suggest that language itself is epistemic, that it provides a way for persons to understand their reality. Thus, in order to transform that reality, the very language we use to define and describe phenomena must possess instrumentality: It must be able to do something towards transforming particular ways of knowing and producing knowledge. (p.662)

Marginalized communities within the academy are ostracized and polarized on the assumption that difference is resistance and language is power. bell hooks (2000) asks that academia not just call for cultural diversity but purposefully and explicitly move towards a (re)thinking of knowing and knowledge production: a deconstruction of old epistemologies and a transformation within the classrooms as a revolution and a restoration of life of learning. Several volunteer participants articulated the presence of oppressive language within the institution.

Veronica experiences polarization: I think um, I just like think because I think you know ... You know as a black woman sometimes we're always, I think the black community as a whole is always kind of monolithic community and not realizing that we all identify with uh, blackness or our heritage differently. Um, and so there was an instance during the, a conversation or a class discussion in which I was speaking to my experience as a black woman in regards to working with other black individuals, you know in section eight and just kind of, um or utilize services of section eight, which is um, subsidized housing within the United States. Um, and you know another classmate had different opinions about what it means to, kind of, for food or work hard or rise above their individual circumstances. Um, and it would be really kind of frustrating experience because, you know, I think you know she was framing her truth as the only truth.

Danielle describes the need for language around conversations of race: There have been times in class when those discussions have flared up and the class is divided by race because of social issues. And my personal, um, belief is that I felt the professors could not identify with what, what would be, uh, stated and it, uh, uh, it made people feel isolated. So, it made them feel like they had hit, like, a brick wall and no one would listen, and that this was all new information. Uh, in reality it wasn't. This is something, you know, that it has been ongoing.

Isolation and silence. Although many marginalized populations imagine a world without struggle, navigating and negotiating through the struggle is necessary to both thrive and rise. Walker (2004) emphasizes the concept of self-love as revolutionary and necessary for human survival. This power dynamic places marginalized students in situations with no positive outcomes. This feeling of isolation and resistance is deliberate on the part of the oppressive powers within the institution to silence and discredit the voice of the “other”.

Many participants discussed instances where they sat in isolation and silence.

Veronica silencing herself: It's been hard in class to, so it's hard in class when we're speaking about issues in the workplace or issues with the leadership or various topics throughout our degrees program and which I felt there were times when I had to kind of filter or silence myself and the oppression.

Danielle speaks to social isolation: But the, the down side is that I have felt isolated, um, at some points and time, um, in, in this program. I felt isolated, uh, pro- probably more so socially in the program, uh, if, if anything.

The collective – friendships and mentorships, activists and allies. Lorde (1984) points out that oppression must degrade or disrupt the numerous sources of power within the structure of the oppressed that provide the energy for a change catalyst. Walker (2004) discussed the need for marginalized groups to create or find spaces that allow for the affirmation of other as non-negotiable when confronted with the intense pressure of conformity. Cultural epistemologies can be utilized to elevate lived experiences and enlightened voice to research worthy cultural productions. From this deepened experience comes the articulation of struggle, survival, and bell hooks love.

Friendships and mentorships. Forging meaningful relationships is very important to the Black women doctoral students. Participants actively worked within their cohorts to create family bond. One way that many participants dealt with the oppressive nature of the academy was to have another person be their confidant and sister in arms. The volunteer participants

found that friendships and allies were significant components to support each other to be engaged, stay connected and feel safe. It was a taste of home, a feeling of togetherness that embraced their culture rather than reject it.

Mariah seeks to find support: Um, whenever I see another black woman in the hallway, they're not in my cohort, and we just look at each other like, "I get it, let's keep going." We always speak to each other, it's very pleasant. Um, but it's- there's no mechanism for us to- to meet. And so someone, it could be myself, I could do it. Someone has to make some mechanism available. Support is so important.

Tina works to connect with others: So without getting too deep, I ... I just think that, we as Black women have to be supportive of each other ... you know, we probably live in environments that are not really conducive to that, especially in universities. It's almost like an unwritten rule, it can't be explained. Although I'm not that way, but I- I think some people, they don't want to correlate to one another, when it's a minority-majority scenario. Because maybe it's not cool. But that's what education teaches you that it ... of course it's cool. It's cool that we're even there so we can have conversation together, given the plight in the history of African people.

Allies and activist. The concepts of activism and allyship emerged when participants spoke about naming, identifying, and developing relationships with allies to support them in being seen, heard, and valued as a member of the academy. The role of the ally was one in tune with the role of the Black female activist in helping make the space within the academy safer, equitable and more just (Freire, 2000). Seeing the need for a radical change through the lens of activists, the volunteer participants discussed the necessity of establishing a community of allies to join in doing the work to challenge the dominant cultures racism and sexism. The participants remained consistent in placing their experiences at the center and privileging their voices all while recruiting the support of others who understood and aligned with the knowledge, beliefs, and pedagogies of critical race theory and Black feminist thought.

Tina reflects on living as activism: I believe that the black woman's plight is like no other. I think the ... I mean, when I see a black woman ... it automatically- I mean, I have to recognize her, because I know the plight of our mothers, and our

grandmothers, and our aunts, and our sisters ... and unlike any other woman, not to say that our story is any different, all the stories are different ... but I think our struggles are, are tougher. I mean ... just look at the news, what's happening to our sons and husbands, and brothers.

Arnetta finds connection in activism: And I would say another concept would be paying it forward, always remembering that even though I am doing this right now, having that picture thinking over that in life really helps tell others who I am and help other people who may not have made the realization that they want to be here, it helps their paths become a whole lot easier. And I think that in my experience so far, I have this experience with a few African American women, they have poured into me, they have encouraged me, they have assisted me as academically as well as just socially. And just getting the challenges that come with doing the paths like this. So I would have to say that those are the concepts that are truly important and really speak to all my experiences, so far, in this program.

The academy – culture and outsider within. Many Black women experience a school environment that maintains numerous levels of verbal, physical, and emotional assaults on their Black womanhood (Crenshaw et al., 2015). These abusive experiences imposed upon their being assist the dominant culture in producing a negative experience which can result in detachment from the institution and are directly related to feelings of personal failure (Crenshaw et al., 2015). When these acts of terror occur, the climate and culture of the academy send a clear message of who and what matters within the academy.

Culture. The culture of academia does not change, instead it demands the conformity of marginalized populations. Political and ethical tensions created in this culture are based upon the fact that institutions of higher education, particularly doctoral programs, historically excluded entire populations based on race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic standings. Updated, current policies still retain remnants of the past with the potential to exclude and silence Black women, their voice, and their experiences (Cole, 2009). Several volunteer participants of this study shared experiences of the culture within the academy.

Dorothy speaks of an act of terror in plain sight: Yeah, that happened in the group assignments. A person did not sit by me, got a whole table and moved it so they wouldn't have to sit in the seat next to me, (laughs). And the fact. You don't get eye contact, you know what I mean, you can tell when somebody's just, they're talking to the group but never giving you eye contact, you know what I mean, stuff like that.

Outsider within. These lived experiences are often expressed in what Collins (1986) identifies as the outsider within. This notion of being socially, emotionally, and intellectually removed from the very community that articulates your belonging can be put forth using constructions such as institutional policies, study group selections, and social interactions. The outsider within creates a play for power within the academy that is historically rooted in societal norms of group work and colleague interactions. Every volunteer participant of this study told of many moments in which they were singled out or excluded from institutional, social, and intellectual interactions.

Latasha discusses outsider within: And I think the hesitation was on my part, not you know, just being a black woman in- in- in (sighs) in- in a professional sense. You know, we're always told that we can be very aggressive or we come off very aggressive, so when I tell my story, it's very passionate, and that can be perceived as being, um, aggressive or angry. So that was my hesitation, but, um, now, it's- it's, you know, I'm very vocal.

Latasha is directed to speak for her race: When a subject such as race was brought up in class by the professor the classroom also seemed to refocus its attention to those of us of color in the room. We were asked to be the representative of our race. It was problematic because if we defended ourselves we were confrontational and angry but if we remained silent it was perceived that we agreed and it felt like a loss of self and a loss of opportunity to right a wrong.

Summary

Each volunteer participant in this research provided a deep look into how their multiple marginalized identities converge within the academy, and how these identities are lived, observed, and viewed. These experiences are not removed from the literature illustrated in Chapter 2, each theme and subtheme identified and analyzed was within the literature and provided the space and platform to encourage new research and new questions. The analysis was based on the methodology, framework, and lens presented in Chapter 3, all explicitly intertwined with the key terminology, themes, and subthemes. The ability of this research to privilege the voices of the Black women doctoral students in the center of the study gives the me, the researcher a platform to inform the participants, institution, academy, and research in a unique and meaningful way.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Critical race theory places the centrality of the experience as central noting that the lived experiences are the very essence of intuited knowledge (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The construction of this concept is essential to understanding everyday knowledge as the shared understanding of life and the connected experiences of people to culture set forth in Black feminist thought. The articulation of everyday knowledge is prominent in socialized cultural institutions such as beauty/barber shops and kitchens. However, if deliberately designed in the same fashion, classrooms and academia could possess the same qualities of comfort in personal truths.

As a reflexive researcher, the validation of the words of others has in turn validated my own voice, my own power within to resist oppression and rise up having survived. As I documented the spoken work and revealed truth of the volunteer participants, I validated their experiences and my own. This process removes the research from the personal into one of value and one that can hold mutual respect. Spoken truth transforms the lived experience into the validation that is so very vital for faculty and students in the classroom, it creates a safe environment to question one's own truth as well as the sources and the influences of that truth.

Using the lens of endarkened feminist epistemology, this study calls attention the hegemonic atmosphere of Whiteness and maleness in graduate schools of education through the stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students utilizing critical race methodology, and intersectionality framework. This dissertation presented the current literature written and research conducted on Black women: their identity, their experiences, and their struggles with dominant culture within the United States educational system. It then presented critical race theory, critical race feminism, and endarkened feminist

epistemologies as the theory, methodology, framework, and lens that support the telling and examining of the experiences of Black women doctoral students. The research conducted within this study presented the significance of the data collected from the namely invisible and marginalized population of Black women doctoral students. In this chapter, the research concludes with a call of action: more research, more discussion, and more focus on Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education.

Implications for the Institution

Who changes. Graduate schools of education must maintain the enterprise in which they were established and avoid disruptive change at all cost (Warren, 2019). The process of change must be about marginalized communities if change is to occur. Focusing on the change occurring within the institution will not result in change as the institution was built to keep marginalized communities out. The onus is not on the “pushed out” population but rather on the flawed system that continually silences and erases anything or anyone who stands in opposition. The first step to this change is to have the faculty and staff reflect the population of the city in which it resides in order to meet the needs on the community in which it exists. Patrick Oliver (2019) describes change as the ability to starve sameness and let the drive of intention move forward, the academy should head such advice.

Policy and procedure. There needs to be an expansion of existing policies and procedures to ensure that the inclusion of Black women doctoral students are addressed in policy research, advocacy, and programmatic interventions with graduate schools of education. The erasure of the concerns of Black women doctoral students within graduate school of education has marginalized their needs and silenced their voice. More resources must be allocated to

understanding the intersections of race and gender specific to their needs as a multiple marginalized population of students.

Financial support. There needs to be a commitment that an equitable approach to funding Black women doctoral students is supported by the academy and specifically graduate schools of education. Grants and aid in financial assistance must ensure equitable funding for supporting Black women doctoral students as it does for other specifically mentioned marginalized communities. This is pivotal to ensuring that research and policy will start to and continue to meet the needs of Black women doctoral students.

Research. Canons are pivotal. Syllabi are critical. Citations are political. Black women must be seen in the classroom as faculty who address issues of the marginalized in their syllabus, their research, and their curriculum. Black women need to be available for Black women on dissertation committees and serve as chairs. Black women should be required citations in research of students. This conversation is not limited to Black women but in solidarity with all marginalized communities, however this dissertation serves Black women.

Community. Black women doctoral students must create a scholarly community of people who they trust and who support them as a people and an intellectual community. The process of assimilating can be oppressive and violent therefore there should be a network around these women to share in the pain and work as a community to recover from the silence and erasure as well as resist assimilation in all of its forms. Discussion groups, support circles, and safe spaces on campus are needed now and far into the future.

Self Advocacy

In order for meaningful and sustainable alleviation of silence and erasure of Black women doctoral students, the voice of marginalized populations and academy stakeholders must

promote participation of the multiple marginalized in the development of solutions. Black women doctoral students should be given the platform to become change makers as the success of the marginalized communities within society directly connects to society at large.

Recommendations for Future Research

Critical literature and learning communities. Literacy is at the heart of education; everything students do in school is built upon the ability to read. This concept does not change for graduate level students, as a matter of fact doctoral students are expected to read constantly. The research within this study showed a need for doctoral students to see themselves in the curriculum. One volunteer participant suggested community reads with critical research. Exposing the community to monthly readings and creating platforms for students to interact with literature could be the key to the growth of a limited critical literacy within the graduate school of education. By (re)establishing the support of literature and bringing it to the forefront of conversations, graduate students will be able to fully participate in its growth of critical community literacy.

Cite a sister. Black women doctoral students need to find a way out of no way. There needs to be an academic agreement from the academy that qualitative research of the lived experiences of marginalized communities count regardless of whether it has previously been cited. Black women doctoral students must also cite each other and use their citations as the political power in which they are intended.

Pseudonyms. Pseudonyms can be a key component of qualitative research, however they are ubiquitous and garner limited published reflection. In practice, researchers often apply pseudonyms with limited to no consideration to the affect on the literature written, research conducted, or study published. There needs to be a scholarly discussion to introduce

transparency in the participant naming process. There are significant concerns surrounding the critical issues in the areas of power in participant naming and confidentiality.

Future of stories. Looking ahead, we as a community must learn how to listen, actively listen, to others as they reveal their truths, passions, and epiphanies. Storytelling can support this process. With personal narratives and counterstories we can learn to find our own voice, in conjunction with our unique identity and the perspective that it brings. Searching for a personal truth, path and passion can unveil the most powerful of life lessons. It is what truly changes a person, a nation, and a people.

Steadily evolving technologies and innovative approaches to learning have created a renewed interest in all parts of storytelling, personal narratives, and counterstories expanding our understanding and grasp of its complexity. With more research and more investigation in the role of digital technologies, storytelling could be a vehicle used by educators to give voice to the search of our authentic self. With the right growth, focus and attention, storytelling, personal narratives, and counterstories can change history and culture in the most powerful and personal ways.

Further Thoughts

In reflecting on Black women doctoral students in the academy today, we have a long way to go. There are authors and scholars who are now becoming elders in the field and it is time for the next generation to pick up the torch and make change in the world. Delgado and Stefancle (2013) suggest the use of counter narratives defined as powerfully written stories and narratives that begin the process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to the inequities of the academy and the movement towards social justice to benefit all

of humanity. Research must utilize the counterstories and document the silenced and erased. It is the next revolutionary act of a marginalized population.

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APPENDIX A

CITI Training Certificate



APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Certificate

Date: March 27, 2019

Protocol Investigator Name: Joelina Robinson Machera

Protocol #: 19-03-1003

Project Title: Amplifying Whispered Interventions Into Loud and Forceful Cries School:
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Joelina Robinson Machera:

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

Pepperdine University 24255 Pacific Coast Highway Malibu, CA 90263 TEL: 310-506-4000

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Email to Prospective Voluntary Participants



Dear Participant,

My name is Joelina L. Robinson Machera and I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am embarking on the data gathering for my dissertation study entitled *Amplifying 'Whispered Interventions' Into Loud and Forceful Cries*.

The purpose of this research is to (re)cover and (re)tell the stories of Black women doctoral students via an endarkened feminist epistemological lens amplifying 'whispered interventions' into a loud and forceful cry to value Black women's voices in knowledge production highlighting the perseverance, adaptation, and resilience during their tenure as students within graduate schools of education.

I am seeking volunteers to participate in my qualitative study. Participation in this study will require approximately 1 hour of your time. You will be asked to take part in one recorded interview that can be conducted on the phone or in person. If you chose the phone option, I will prove the telecommunication services that will work best for both of us. If you chose the in-person option, we will decide a location together.

The study is designed to gather data from a very specific population. The participants of this research will reflect the population and I have determined that you fit the criteria. Please note that to participate in this research you meet the following criteria:

1. You are at least 20 years old or older;
2. You self-identify as a Black person;
3. You self-identify as a woman;
4. You are enrolled in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education; and
5. You self-report knowledge of racism and/or sexism in personal lived experiences within the program.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to joelina.robinsonmachera@pepperdine.edu within 48 hours to schedule an interview. If you have any questions, please contact me using the same email address.

Thank you in advance for both your time and consideration. I look forward to your email.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera, Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

Invitation: You have been invited to participate in a doctoral research study conducted by Joelina L. Robinson Machera, Ed.D. doctoral candidate, and his advisory team, Dr. Ebony Cain, Dr. Barbara Mather, and Dr. Patrick J. Oliver. This invitation has been extended to you based on a series of qualifications required in the study, including enrollment in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education. Your participation throughout this study is voluntary. Please read the information below and inquire with me about anything you do not understand or is unclear before you decide to participate.

Study Title: *Amplifying ‘Whispered Interventions’ Into Loud and Forceful Cries.*

Reason for the study: The purpose of this research is to (re)cover and (re)tell the stories of Black women doctoral students via an endarkened feminist epistemological lens amplifying ‘whispered interventions’ into a loud and forceful cry to value Black women’s voices in knowledge production highlighting the perseverance, adaptation, and resilience during their tenure as students within graduate schools of education.

Focus of the study: This is a research project that focuses on the extent to which stories, personal narratives, and counterstories can be tools to assist academics interested in de-colonizing their research and their institutions to create a more culturally responsive and racially and gender inclusive culture.

Procedures and format of the study: Participation in this study will require up to one hour of your time. You will be asked to participate in one recorded interview that can be conducted on the phone or in person. If you chose the in-person option, we will decide a location together.

Possible risks and discomfort: There will be no more than minimal risks assigned to individuals participating in this study above the risks and discomfort assigned to daily living. In telling the lived experiences within the doctoral program participants could possibly encounter discomfort in the telling of difficult experiences.

Possible benefits to participant and society: There are no known direct benefits to the participants of the study, however there may be some cathartic outcomes to the telling of the lived experiences within the doctoral program. There are the anticipated benefits of this research to the educational community, current body of literature and research, and society in general

regarding a new, deeper, and more permanent understanding in the (re)telling, (re)membering, and (re)searching of the lived experiences of Black women doctoral students.

Participation and withdrawal: All participation is voluntary. Any volunteers who refuses to participate at any point in the process may discontinue without penalty. Once a participant withdraws from the study, there is no re-entry.

Confidentiality of participants: There will be no identifiable information collected in this study. All data collected will presented in summative form.

Mandated reporting: The written and recorded data will be kept confidential as far as allotted by the law within the United states of America. If the researcher is required by law to disclose information collected, the disclosure will occur in accordance with the law. An example of such an insistences would be elder abuse.

HSPP review: The written and recorded data may be reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) housed within Pepperdine University. The HSPP occasionally monitors and reviews research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Identity Protection: Once you agree to the interview, you will be assigned an identifier (pseudonym) which will remain with your data for the duration of the study. This identifier is assigned for the sole purpose of protecting your identity throughout the study, it each part.

Collection and processing of data: All collected data will be assigned a pseudonym. The audio files from the interviews will be assigned a numerical code and sent to a private, third-party transcription service to be transcribed into a written document. The transcription service is a provider which operates under both HIPPA regulations and a strict non-disclosure agreement. The service provider will not be given the name, personal information, or pseudonym of any participants within the study.

Storage of Data: The written and recorded data will be transferred from the researcher's personal devices to encrypted files on a password protected external digital drive immediately concluding the collection of said data. The drive will be stored in the researcher's residence: out of view, in a lock box, behind closed doors. All data and data analysis will remain on the password protected external drive. Once the study is complete, the audio data will be destroyed immediately. The written data (including but not limited to transcriptions of interviews and researcher's notes) will be saved for a minimum of three years.

Accuracy and analysis of data: Each participant in the study given the option to review the transcript once it has been returned from the service provider. All data collected will be deidentified using pseudonyms and numerical codes, transcribed, coded, analyzed, and written in composite stories using qualitative methods.

Emergency care and compensation: There is no anticipated injury for the participation of this study. Any and all injury volunteers experience will be the responsibility of the volunteer. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury during this study.

The researcher of the study does not provide any monetary compensation for injury during this study.

Contact and questions: Each volunteer can contact the researcher for the duration of the study regarding questions or concerns pertaining to the research. The following contact information should be used: Joelina L. Robinson Machera at joelina.robinsonmachera@pepperdine.edu or Dr. Ebony Cain at ecain@pepperdine.edu.

Rights of research: Any questions or concerns about your rights as a volunteer research participant, or any general research questions can be addressed by Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

Documentation of informed consent: You are voluntarily deciding whether or not to participate in this research study. By typing your name next to the I Agree button below, your consent to participate is implied. You may print a copy of this document for your records.

Signature of Volunteer Research Participant: I, as the volunteer research participant, have read the information provided above (pages 1-2). I have been provided with the opportunity to ask questions, and if I chose to ask any questions, they have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing below, I agree to be audio recorded. I have been provided with a digital copy of this form for my records.

I agree - *please type name here and return entire document in an email to the researcher at the provided address.*

Signature of Study Researcher: I, as the study researcher, have explained the process of the research to the participant in above (pages 1-2) and have answered any questions to my best ability. It is my conclusion that the above stated volunteer participant is knowingly and willingly to participate in this study.

I agree - *I, as the researcher will print and sign a copy to provide at the time of the interview.*

APPENDIX E

Scheduling of Interview Email to Voluntary Participants



Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate as a volunteer interviewee in my dissertation study entitled *Amplifying 'Whispered Interventions' Into Loud and Forceful Cries*.

As stated before, the purpose of this research is to (re)cover and (re)tell the stories of Black women doctoral students via an endarkened feminist epistemological lens amplifying 'whispered interventions' into a loud and forceful cry to value Black women's voices in knowledge production highlighting the perseverance, adaptation, and resilience during their tenure as students within graduate schools of education.

In scheduling our interview, I would like to reconfirm your receipt and acceptance of the consent from as well the ability to participate based on the following criteria:

1. You are at least 20 years old or older;
2. You self-identify as a Black person;
3. You self-identify as a woman;
4. You are enrolled in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education; and
5. You self-report knowledge of racism and/or sexism in personal lived experiences within the program.

In preparation of the interview, I have included (in an attachment) the six initial interview questions. Please note that I may change the order, ask for clarification, and ask additional questions as needed. As the researcher, it is my responsibility to de-identify as much data as possible for this research. I request that, when possible, you refrain from using your name, the names of others within your story, and the names of the institution to which you belong.

Can we schedule an interview for one of the following dates and time : *insert date and time here*. I will be willing to travel to you if you are local to the Los Angeles area, if not we can schedule a call.

Thank you again and I look forward to confirming our date and time. Have a wonderful day.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera, Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX F

Interview Question Attachment for Voluntary Participants



Researcher: Joelina L. Robinson Machera

Study Title: Amplifying ‘Whispered Interventions’ Into Loud and Forceful Cries.

Note to Volunteer Participant: In preparation of the interview, below are the six initial interview questions. Please note that I may change the order, ask for clarification, and ask additional questions as needed. As the researcher, it is my responsibility to de-identify as much data as possible for this research. I request that, when possible, you refrain from using your name, the names of others within your story, and the names of the institution to which you belong.

Interview Questions:

IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

IQ2: Describe a graduate school experience that speaks to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have taken from your experience as a Black woman doctoral student.

IQ4: Discuss the insights you have acquired as a Black women enrolled in the doctoral program of a graduate school of education.

IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?

IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.

Additional Information: Would you like to make any additional statements regarding the questions we just discussed?

APPENDIX G

Confirmation of Date Email to Voluntary Participants



Dear Participant,

Thank you for your response. Our interview is confirmed for

Insert date and time here.

The only requirement from you as the participant is that you attend, as I have your signed informed consent document on file. I look forward to the interview and the opportunity to hear your lived experiences.

Have a wonderful day.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX H

Day Before Confirmation Email to Voluntary Participants



Dear Participant,

Hello. I am anxiously anticipating our interview tomorrow at *Insert date and time here*.

Please remember that the only requirement from you as the participant is that you attend, as I have your signed informed consent document on file. I look forward to the interview and the opportunity to hear your lived experiences.

Have a wonderful day.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX I

Interview Process Form

INTERVIEW PROCESS FORM

Participant Pseudonym:

Participant Numerical Code for External Transcription:

Self-Identified as Female: Yes No

Self-Identified as Black: Yes No

Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in a Graduate School of Education: Yes No

IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

Notes:

Clarification Question:

Follow Up Question:

IQ2: Describe a graduate school experience that speaks to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

Notes:

Clarification Question:

Follow Up Question:

IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have taken from your experience as a Black woman doctoral student.

Notes:

Clarification Question:

Follow Up Question:

IQ4: Discuss the insights you have acquired as a Black women enrolled in the doctoral program of a graduate school of education.

Notes:

Clarification Question:

Follow Up Question:

IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?

Notes:

Clarification Question:

Follow Up Question:

IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.

Notes:

Clarification Question:

Follow Up Question:

APPENDIX J

Interview Script

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Contact: Researcher either places the call or identifies seating at the agreed upon location.

Permission to record (researcher): *Press record on the device.* Before we begin, I am going to start the audio recording for the purpose of creating a written transcript. Do I have your permission?

Participate responds. *Continue the interview if the answer is yes and stop the interview if the answer is no.*

Researcher: *Begin recording.*

Introduction (researcher): My name is Joelina L. Robinson Machera and I am the official researcher for this dissertation study - Amplifying ‘Whispered Interventions’ Into Loud and Forceful Cries. I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University’s Graduate School of Education and Psychology. This interview will be recorded and I, as the researcher, will take written notes.

Confirmation of consent (researcher): Before we proceed, I need you to verbally respond to the following questions

Question 1: Are you a willing volunteer participate of this study?

Participate responds. *Continue the interview if the answer is yes and stop interview if the answer is no.*

Participation and withdrawal(researcher): All participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time penalty or risk of injury to you. However, once a participant withdrawals from the study, there is no re-entry.

Question 2: I have the consent agreement that you returned to me, do you understand and agree to the content with this document?

Participate responds. *Continue the interview if the answer is yes and stop interview if the answer is no.*

Identification of self and others (researcher): As the researcher, it is my responsibility to de-identify as much data as possible for this research. I request that, when possible, you refrain from using your name, the names of others within your story, and the names of the institution to which you belong. If this occurs, I will redact the information from the transcription however it will remain in the audio recording. Can you agree to this?

Participate responds. *Continue the interview if the answer is yes and stop the interview if the answer is no.*

Begin the interview (researcher): Perfect! Let's begin with the scripted interview questions, however I would like to state that if I, as the researcher, need clarification or more information for a particular question, I will deviate from the scripted 6 questions. The process is referenced in the document as open-ended questions within a semi-structured interview. Can we move into the interview?

Participate responds. *Continue the interview if the answer is yes and stop the interview if the answer is no.*

Researcher: IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge.*

Researcher: IQ2: Describe a graduate school experience that speaks to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge.*

Researcher: IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have taken from your experience as a Black woman doctoral student.

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge.*

Researcher: IQ4: Discuss the insights you have acquired as a Black women enrolled in the doctoral program of a graduate school of education.

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge.*

Researcher: IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge.*

Researcher: IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge.*

Additional Response (researcher): Thank you for your answers. Before we conclude the interview, would you like to make any additional statements regarding the questions we just discussed?

Review of Transcription (researcher): Perfect. Thank you for participating in this interview. Would you like to review a copy of the written transcription of this interview once it is complete?

Participate responds. *Researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions for more knowledge here.*

Conclusion (researcher): Thank you again for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to the research please feel free to contact me at joelina.robinsonmachera@pepperdine.edu. We will now end the recording.

Researcher: *End recording.*

APPENDIX K

Thank You Email for Volunteer Participation in Interview



Dear Participant,

Thank you for your time today. I appreciate your willingness to share and exchange in your lived experiences as a Black woman doctoral student. Each interaction gleams more insight into the journey.

As requested, I *will/will not* forward you a copy of the transcribed interview for review. Again, thank you and have a wonderful day.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX L

Participant Review of Transcribed Interview Email



Dear Participant,

The following email will provide you with the written transcription of our interview on insert date here.

Please use this password, *insert password here*, to open the email containing the document.

Upon reading the document, if you have no changes, please send me an email stating as such. If you have any changes, please notate them on the document directly and return **only the sentences with changes** to me in an email. Please do not return the entire document in order to continue with the highest level of confidentiality possible.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX M

Receipt of Response for Transcribed Interview Email



Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the additional step of reviewing the written transcript of your interview. I appreciate your thoroughness and attention to detail. This is a confirmation that I have received your feedback regarding the written transcripts. No further action is needed from you at this time.

Have a wonderful day.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX N

Peer Reviewer Email Communication

Dear Prospective Peer Reviewer:

Thank you for considering the role of reviewer for my dissertation study, specifically my interview questions as they relate to my research questions. Your input is key to the validity of the questions I will ask the participants of my study. Below is a table that is designed to document your feedback of each interview question as it correlates to the research question.

Please document the following items on the chart below for each interview question:

- Does the interview question address the research question –
 - A – keep as currently written, the interview question correlates with the research question
 - B – remove completely, the interview question does not correlate with the research question
 - C – keep the interview question, revise as stated below for a better correlation

In addition to the charted interview questions, please add any newly drafted questions you would like me to consider at the bottom of the chart. All additional feedback is beneficial and can be documented at the bottom of the chart as well.

Upon completion, please return your finalized chart to

joelina.robinsonmachera@pepperdine.edu. As always, thank you for your participation and your support.

Joelina L. Robinson Machera
 Doctoral Student
 Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX O

Original Draft of Research/Interview Questions

Research Questions	Related Interview Questions
RQ1: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students?	<p>IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.</p> <p>IQ2: Describe a graduate school experience that speaks to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.</p>
RQ2: What recommendations do Black women doctoral students make for future Black women doctoral students as part of a marginalized population within graduate schools of education?	<p>IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have taken from your experience as a Black woman doctoral student.</p> <p>IQ4: Discuss the insights you have acquired as a Black women enrolled in the doctoral program of a graduate school of education.</p>
RQ3: What recommendations do Black women make for those in leadership roles within doctoral programs in graduate schools of education to help inform graduate-level educators and leaders of the importance of integrating critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminism into doctoral programs and curriculum?	<p>IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?</p> <p>IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.</p>

APPENDIX P

Peer Reviewed Draft of Research/Interview Questions

Research Questions	Related Interview Questions
RQ1: What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students?	<p>IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.</p> <p>A – Keep B – Delete C – Revise Revision:</p> <p>IQ2: Describe a graduate school experience that speaks to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.</p> <p>A – Keep B – Delete C – Revise Revision:</p>
RQ2: What recommendations do Black women doctoral students make for future Black women doctoral students as part of a marginalized population within graduate schools of education?	<p>IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have taken from your experience as a Black woman doctoral student.</p> <p>A – Keep B – Delete C – Revise Revision:</p> <p>IQ4: Discuss the insights you have acquired as a Black women enrolled in the doctoral program of a graduate school of education.</p> <p>A – Keep B – Delete C – Revise Revision:</p>
RQ3: What recommendations do Black women make for those in leadership roles within doctoral programs in graduate schools of education to help inform graduate-	<p>IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?</p> <p>A – Keep B – Delete C – Revise</p>

<p>level educators and leaders of the importance of integrating critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and endarkened feminism into doctoral programs and curriculum?</p>	<p>Revision:</p> <p>IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.</p> <p>A – Keep B – Delete C – Revise</p> <p>Revision:</p>
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APPENDIX Q

Expert Reviewed Final Version of Research/Interview Questions

Research Questions	Related Interview Questions
RQ1 What are the significant stories, personal narratives, and counterstories of Black women doctoral students within graduate schools of education?	<p>IQ1: Describe what it means to be a Black woman in a doctoral program within a graduate school of education.</p> <p>IQ2: Describe specific experiences that speak to your (self)identity as a Black woman doctoral student enrolled in a graduate school of education.</p>
RQ2 What epistemological insights can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?	<p>IQ3: Discuss the lessons you have learned and the insights you have acquired as a Black woman relative to the educational systems in support of your intellectual, ideological, cultural, and/or spiritual needs in a doctoral program.</p> <p>IQ4: Based on these lessons and insights acquired, what might you recommend to future Black women doctoral students?</p>
RQ2 What epistemological insights can Black women doctoral students provide for future Black women doctoral students?	<p>IQ5: How does your graduate school support the Black women doctoral students enrolled?</p> <p>IQ6: Discuss the most important concepts the leaders of doctoral students in graduate schools of education should know about the lived experiences of Black women enrolled in the program.</p>