6-28-2024

# Shattering the Mask: Unveiling the Destructive Force of Misogynoir

LeDominique Hubbard
*University of Missouri-St. Louis*, llrck7@umsystem.edu

# Shattering the Mask: Unveiling the Destructive Force of Misogynoir

LeDominique Lasha' Hubbard

M.Ed., Education Administration, Missouri Baptist University, 2010

M.Ed., Classroom Teaching, Missouri Baptist University, 2009

B.S. Early Childhood and Elementary Education, Missouri Baptist University, 2006

A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate School at the University of Missouri-Saint Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

August 2024

Advisory Committee

Thomasina Hassler, Ph.D. Chairperson

JaNae'Alfred, PhD

Robert Good, PhD

## Dedication

**“My ancestors are my greatest motivation!”**

**— Stephanie Lahart**

I dedicate this dissertation to the champions who have anchored my academic journey, particularly those who have transcended this earthly realm to become ancestors. First among them are my maternal and paternal grandparents, whose prayers, activism, and wisdom have been the foundation for me to fulfill my purpose and live my dreams.

Secondly, I salute my mother, Deborah Hubbard, a beacon of strength and my very first teacher. Mom, you shattered limits and carved a path as a first-generation college graduate, making me the inaugural torchbearer of a doctoral legacy. I can feel the warmth of your proud embrace. TWMA!

Third, to my father, Lee L. Hubbard, Jr., whom I am named after. The architect of my aspirations—your early encouragement and belief in the power of education laid the foundation for my academic and professional success. I will always be grateful for your sacrifice of military service. Daddy, thank you for your unwavering faith in me, your belief that I could surmount any challenge I set my sights upon.

Next, I extend my heartfelt dedication to my beautiful niece Sameena Muhammad Thomas, who embodied the essence of harmony and peace. Simmy Sam, you were my shining light of love and unwavering encouragement. You were instrumental in propelling me into my destined path and nudging me out of my comfort zone. I honor you as a source of inspiration and a guiding force on my journey. اشتقت لك

Lastly, a tribute to the late, great Dr. Janis Wiley, an esteemed mentor and co-conspirator in the fight for justice. Among the first to recognize my leadership potential, she fervently encouraged

me to tread the path of leadership. Her indomitable spirit continues to guide my journey. I will forever cherish the privilege of having served alongside you.

## Acknowledgments

To the department chair Thomasina Hassler, Ph.D., committee members Dr. JaNae' Alfred, Ph.D., and Shenita Mayes, PhD my department mentor, Robert Good, Ph.D. I express my sincere appreciation for their invaluable support, guidance, and feedback during this journey. I am grateful to my classmates and cohort members thank you for your candid and supportive feedback during our impromptu meetings and early morning conversations.

Dr. Albert Harold, the cultivator, planted the seed of my doctoral journey. Your knowledge, dedication to school leaders, and commitment to excellence have left an enduring mark on my scholarly endeavors. I extend my gratitude to all the superintendents, both past and present, with whom I have had the privilege of brainstorming throughout this journey. Your insights and collaboration have been invaluable. Additionally, to those who shared the doctoral path with me, serving as mirrors reflecting the possibility of achieving this degree.

Dr. Sharroky Hollie, your impact on my journey is profound, akin to a lightning bolt illuminating the path to freedom and inspiring a legacy of empowerment. Your contributions have sparked a flame that continues to burn brightly, guiding us toward a future defined by liberation.

To my two best friends, Sonja Clay and Dr. Lanor Payne, you have been integral parts of this significant chapter in my life. Sonja, your loyalty and friendship have provided me with the strength to share my story. Lanor, thank you for obtaining your doctorate degree first; it was an inspiration for me, showcasing boundless opportunities. I appreciate your listening ear and your encouragement to complete this journey.

**Abstract**

As a Black woman, my professional journey has been consistently marred by encounters with racism and gender bias. In this research, I employed autoethnography to shed light on my experiences and meticulously examine the challenges of misogynoir I faced while holding pivotal positions, including that of a detested team leader, an ingenious instructional teacher, and an anti-racist assistant principal across three distinct school campuses in two states. My narrative unfolds in various contexts, as the only Black female teacher and leader in a predominately white, female-staff rural district, and as the sole Black instructional leader in a majority-Black school district led by white principal. Additionally, I reflect on my time as an assistant principal in the South.

This research unveils how issues of sex and racism manifest in various forms within the academic sphere. By sharing my personal stories and amplifying my voice, I engage in acts of resistance against the entrenched structures and inequalities within the education system. "Central to my research is the core theoretical framework of 'misogynoir' (Bailey, 2021, p. 37). Coined by Dr. Moya Bailey, 'Misogynoir describes the unique co-constitutive racialized and sexist violence that befalls Black women as a result of the simultaneous and interlocking oppression at the intersection of racial and gender marginalization' (Bailey, 2021, p. 37)." This framework serves as the lens through which I critically analyze the multifaceted nature of discrimination and bias encountered throughout my educational career.

**Keywords:** *Misogynoir, Anti-Black misogyny, intersectionality, intersectional oppression*

## Key Terms and Definitions

**Autoethnography.** Self-consciously explores the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation (Ellis et. al., 1997).

**Intersectionality.** A lens through which one could see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects (Crenshaw, 2023).

**Misogynoir.** The specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women (Bailey, 2016).

**Microaggression.** A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a marginalized group member, such as a racial minority (Chinn et al., 2021).

**Oppression.** The unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power (Chinn et al., 2021).

**Racial gaslighting** is denying that racism exists or arguing that Black people 'always make it about race (Kwarteng, 2023).

**Racism.** The belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race or racial group (Kwarteng, 2022).

**Race-Based Traumatic Stress.** A set of consequences when someone of color deals with racism and discrimination. It encompasses the psychological, mental, and emotional harm from witnessing and personally experiencing racism and discrimination (Carter et al., 2020).

**Racialized trauma.** This is a psychological overwhelm that arises from the adverse events people experience and are more likely to experience because of race and racism (Carter et al., 2020).

**Tone Policing.** A tactic used to dismiss an idea being communicated because the person expressing it seems to be angry, sad, frustrated, or emotionally charged (Biddle & Hufnagel, 2019).

**white centering.** When white people make it about themselves, they do not have to be uncomfortable or hold themselves accountable for their actions of harming, hurting, or ignoring Black people or their feelings or actions toward them (Phillips & Phillips, 2017).

**whiteness.** To explore the Black body within the context of whiteness (Phillips & Phillips, 2017).

**white gazed.** Identified four mechanisms of the white gaze whereby whiteness is imposed, presumed, venerated, and forced on Black women's bodies (Carroll, 2021).

*In this dissertation, drawing inspiration from the work of bell hooks, a deliberate choice has been made to capitalize "Black" as a respectful acknowledgment of a shared cultural and historical experience within the Black community, affirming the significance of this identity. Conversely, "white" is rendered in lowercase to reflect the absence of a cohesive cultural identity associated with the term, recognizing historical power dynamics and aiming for linguistic equity in representation.*

## Table of Contents

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Leading in the Minority

In a café filled with new hires, the superintendent remarked, "You are fortunate to be one of the 180 staff members selected from a pool of 3800 applicants for the upcoming school year." I held my head high with pride, aware that I was among the mere 4% of individuals hired within the district. Moreover, I was about to embark on the journey of opening one of the district's two new elementary school campuses. While the superintendent provided an overview of the school district's operations, I engaged in a silent ritual-a survival tactic ingrained in me as a Black person navigating predominantly white spaces (Bailey, 2021). My first scan of the room was to seek out other Black individuals, which revealed only a few people of color at first glance. I then narrowed my focus, scanning for Black women, and found that we were just two of us.

Instantly, the café seemed to shrink, grow colder, and feel more threatening. The gaze of my colleagues bore into me with a sense of inferiority. I began to question whether I had dressed professionally, if my hair was acceptable, or had I prepared to code-switch my language if necessary. Once I could affirmatively yield to refute these worries, I turned my attention to scrutinizing the spoken and unspoken norms of those around me. In this room, there were staff who had roots in the district, individuals who held positions of power, and a minority like myself, new to the site and lacking authority.

A moment of relief came when the superintendent of human resources made eye contact with me. She was a white female native to the community with extensive leadership experience in predominantly Black student environments. Despite mispronouncing my name, her warm smile and friendly greeting provided me with some

comfort. Grateful for the temporary reprieve, I chose not to correct her mispronunciation. This marked the beginning of my journey toward conforming to the white-dominant culture within the district. Four years after joining the inaugural kindergarten team, the first Black male superintendent for the district and county was hired. This moment was reminiscent of my elation and hope on the night Barack Obama was elected president. My role allowed me to loop with my class back to my favorite grade level, first grade. Our campus was expanding to include first through fourth grades, leading to discussions about teacher reassignments.

Unbeknownst to me, conversations were unfolding among the grade team leaders and the principal about my potential role as the first-grade team leader. My first-grade colleague, whom I affectionately refer to as a friend, invited me into her classroom to share the campus buzz about teacher reassignments and the desire for me to lead a group of six teachers. Among these teachers were three current kindergarten teachers, one of whom was a tenured, experienced kindergarten teacher with no first-grade experience, but held a Master's degree. Another was a newer kindergarten teacher who had recently returned to the field, but still without first-grade experience. The last was a kindergarten teacher I had taught with since the campus's inception. All three were white females native to the community. My principal's expectation was that I would guide the two seasoned teachers, who rarely faced disciplinary action or reprimand for low performance, refusal to follow the curriculum, outdated discipline methods, or unprofessionalism.

At the end of the school year, I had to participate in an interview for the team leader role. Upon becoming the grade team leader, initial excitement quickly waned as I

began to set agendas and goals for the upcoming year. A team consisting of seven white females, three of whom had previously served as team leaders, grew increasingly discontent with my attempts to fulfill the responsibilities of a grade team leader. Soon, the team was divided, with one member uncertain about the side to align with. Three teachers demanded my removal from the position, but the district board policy did not permit the removal of a team leader at the teachers' request. It became evident that I was a team leader without power. Every day, I was ignored, excluded from lunch meetings, and treated as an invisible member of the school community. However, to safeguard my well-being and mental health, “misogynoir may impede Black women’s health by negatively impacting their physical, mental, and social lives” (Bailey, 2021, p.12) I remained “muffled, stifled and silenced” (Asare, 2020, p. 3) about the bullying and disrespect I endured from my colleagues.

## Historical Context

Racial disparities in education in the United States have a long history that dates back to the slavery era. The struggle for racial equality has persisted since the nation’s inception, culminating in the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision, which aimed to provide equal educational opportunities for children of all races and backgrounds. As Du Bois (1935) highlighted, integrated schools were meant to shield Black children from racism. However, the Brown decision inadvertently reinforced an inferiority complex among Black children and promoted the white savior complex. This decision proved detrimental to Black children and their parents given the responsibility of seeking a safe educational environment. It also reflected a society where white

dominance undermined the belief in Black teachers as capable leaders who could equip the children with the necessary tools for academic success.

Black children could receive the same quality of education as white children in integrated schools (Lutz, 2017). To create a safe space for Black students, white students must be able to accept the power shift and be willing to share the stage with Black students. The white savior complex must be overcome for the power structure to change and allow Black students to be seen (Austin, 2004). white families, teachers, and leaders were unprepared to understand the rich culture of the students they inherited. Thus generating a prototype for cultural identity neglect.

The white backlash to integrated schools and oppression has created more unequal opportunities for Black students. Black leaders continue to face "white supremacy and superiority" (Lutz, 2017, p. 20). Students and leaders were forced to deviate from Black culture and assimilate into white cultural norms. Anti-Blackness was the standard for language, appearance, and ways of being in school.

The cynicism that whites' wealth is in danger from Black empowerment worsened this situation. They believed there would be a power shift if Black students were educated to the same degree as white students (Shihadeh & Flynn, 1996). Black students were not prepared to handle the amount of power they had, and white families were not ready to share the stage. The white community felt the Black community would detract from the education system. Black teachers could no longer instill leadership principles and affirm their identity as brilliant; they could no longer teach, coach, or mentor Black students (Oluo, 2019). Similarly, Black students could no longer be in a

space where they could belong to and feel at home. The power once given to Black students in their community schools was diminished.

The white community was no longer prepared to accept the power shift. white supremacy is not only an issue in society, but also in education. It was a significant issue in education because of the way Black students were treated in the classroom, equally, reflecting how they were treated in the larger society (Austin, 2004). Suppose Black students could be in a space where they felt to belong to, being themselves and represented in leadership, and holding positions of power. In that case, Black students would be equally represented in leadership and power. Nevertheless, Black female leaders lived at the intersection of racism and sexism as they navigated leadership in educational systems (Park, 2021). Understanding and working continuously to remove these barriers remains paramount to eradicating the oppressive systems for Black women (Frye, 2022).

Black women have historically faced multiple forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, and classism. These intersecting forms of oppression create unique challenges and educational barriers in various aspects of life, including pay inequality (Crenshaw, 1991). On average, Black women earn less than white women and men, even when they have similar qualifications and work experience (Roux, 2021). Furthermore, Black women have higher maternal mortality rates, breast cancer, and other health issues than women of other races due to limited access to healthcare and the stress of systemic oppression (Chinn et al., 2021).

## Problem Statement

A combination of racism and gender-based discrimination significantly impacts the professional lives of individuals, subjecting Black women to a dual form of oppression. Due to the two damaging stereotypes, the first perceives Black women as barbaric and unconstrained and upholds the narrative of the “angry or strong Black woman" (Anyangwe, 2017, p. 4). Black women have been seen as a threat and therefore feared at the workplace. There has also been the “hypersexualization” and objectification of Black women seen as erotica (Anyangwe, 2017, p. 4). As illustrated, popular culture perpetuates negative stereotypes and leads to the sexualization and exploitation of Black women.

These two stereotypes are a double-edged sword for white supremacist culture, allowing it to silence the emotions (Asare, 2020) and voices of educational leaders. “A Black woman who challenges the status quo” is often met with pejorative treatment by those in power, thus upholding an environment of racial inequity and injustice (Anyangwe, 2017, p. 2). The pejorative treatment's origins are misogynoir and detrimental to people’s core values and mental health. This phenomenon is also linked to the concept of white centering, wherein opposition to racial justice is justified using non-racial arguments. This approach could be discriminatory against Black women and is often described as “whites plaining” racism to those who directly experience it (Kwarteng, 2022).

## The Rationale of the Study

This narrative represents an autoethnographic exploration where I delve into my personal experiences as a Black woman to critically examine the influence of institutional

racism on my life. Autoethnography, as a research approach, allows me to intertwine my own experiences with broader discussion of race and racism (Ellis et. al., 1997). The autoethnographic framework offers a thorough examination of race and racism, aiming to comprehend the influence of institutions and the effects of racism on my experiences as a Black woman. Ladson-Billings (1998) explained that Black people's pursuit of racial equality could only be supported when it coincides with white people's interests. Ijeoma Oluo's (2019) book *So You Want to Talk About Race*, emphasizes the heavy emotional impact of "microaggressions of the pain and oppression of racism" (Oluo, 2019, p. 3). Denying my racial identity and experiencing racism caused me to adhere to the expectation to code switch to the preferred language of the school culture and "dress like every day was a job interview" (Oluo, 2019, p. 3), limiting my hair choices to straight and nothing that could be considered "unprofessional" and expressing myself in meetings and on committees labeling me as "opinionated" (Oluo, 2019, p. 3). There was a constant requirement to avoid doing too much of anything. Avoid the "racist stereotypes that white supremacy uses to oppress Black women. These portrayals paint us as loud, angry, aggressive, hysterical, overly sexual, neck swerving, gum-popping cliches" (Bailey, 2021, p.37). I had to hide my authentic self for those who did not understand my experiences to accept me. I share my unique and painful experiences of oppression and racialized trauma. I offer ways in which racial trauma could be overcome and gradually healed.

Black women are expected to conform to the expectations of white womanhood. To improve representation and equity in education, there is a need to address the systemic issues that have led to the marginalization of people of color. This aspect includes

improving access to quality education for all students, supporting and mentoring Black teachers, and promoting diversity and inclusion in all facets of the system. Furthermore, opportunities should be created to empower leaders to make decisions supporting their students, staff, and well-being. Dismantling systemic racism and genderism ignores the toxic environment and trauma occurrences. Therefore, encouraging white educators to seek out ways to give witness to their whiteness, providing them with awareness and ways to make a systematic change in the educational system remains imperative (Nolan, 2020).

By acknowledging and addressing the experiences of Black women in educational leadership, a more inclusive and equitable education system for all could be established. Post-traumatic slave syndrome explores the repression of authenticity that African diaspora women are forced to enact to be accepted in white-dominated spaces (DeGruy, 2005). The academic and practical implications of the intersectionality of race and gender for Black women in educational leadership are widely discussed (Crenshaw, 2019). However, the experiences of Black women have been often ignored in the educational system, leading to their neglect in leadership opportunities. Hence, the importance of Black women's academic leadership is not often recognized.

## Significance of the Study

I chose autoethnography as a methodology to write about my experiences and how they relate to others (Chang, 2008a). This method's complexity and, in some places, unrecognized nature align with the uniqueness I bring to the field and allow me to no longer be silent about my personal experience. I will use myself as the subject of my dissertation topic to talk about the shame and pain that comes with being a woman with

melanated skin in a system not designed for success. As an autoethnography, I will write about my experiences on three different campuses in two states and the perpetuation of the old regime of whiteness and white gaze. Their processes, systems, and lack of awareness made it hard for me to be creative and silenced my leadership genius.

"In order to move forward effectively, one must accept their past and present situations and make a conscious decision to change" (Lewis, 2021, p. 1). My first-person story will show the education system's unfairness, outdated practices, and beliefs. Based on my personal experience, I will share the intentional way the system has been designed to derail Black female leadership. While I share my story of the mental and emotional implications of serving in the system for 17 years before my exit, the audience will gain a new perspective on the systemic issue of leadership development and retention in the education system. The audience will be able to relate to my story and experience.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review discusses key scholarship that clarifies the concept of misogynoir and explores its manifestations by examining its impact on understanding Black womanhood. It also covers misogynoir implications for broader discussions of citizenship identity and social justice. An exploration of literature regarding Black women's experiences in the field of education and how the theory of misogynoir might expand that literature is also discussed. The goal of this review is to contribute to a deeper understanding of racist misogyny that Black women experience and its far-reaching consequences for the lives of Black women. Indeed, "Misogynoir describes the racialized misogyny that Black women experience. It is the specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and contempt for Black women that is reflected in the larger society and culture" (Bailey, 2010, p. 76).

## Theory of Intersectionality

Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) coined the term intersectionality, which was originally used in legal literature. Additionally, Black women like bell hooks (2014), Deborah King (1988), and Audre Lorde (2003) added their intellectual brilliance to the expansion of intersectionality theory. Crenshaw's (1991) pioneering work on intersectionality was a precursor to the critical race theory (CRT). She urged legal scholars to acknowledge and emphasize the significance of race. Furthermore, she stated that the law was not neutral; rather, the beliefs and values of those who create it impact it, in turn giving the system the power to overlook, shaping others' understanding and who can benefit from the law. The framework has been expanded beyond legal analysis to include various fields and disciplines.

Crenshaw's (1991) framework recognized that individuals experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously and that these different forms of oppression interact with each other in a complex way. Thus, intersectionality as a social theory was developed to explain how social groups are oppressed in society. Crenshaw used the metaphor of traffic flowing at an intersection to describe how people's identities intersect and interact. "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem here" (Crenshaw, 2023, p. 7). One identity might flow in one direction while another flows in a different direction, and the point of intersection could create unique experiences of oppression or privilege. This situation serves as both a means of identifying and examining power disparities and a method of addressing and eliminating those disparities" (Smith, 2020, p. 32). For instance, one concrete illustration of this concept is the systematic tendency to prohibit the simultaneous consideration of race and gender-related claims.

The theory of intersectionality acknowledged that these two forms of oppression are not separate but are interconnected and shape each other. While Crenshaw initially used gender to demonstrate this concept, intersectionality applies to all individuals who have multiple social identities that intersect and interact with each other (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality recognized that all identities are complex and multifaceted and cannot be reduced to a single category or label. This means that anyone who has multiple social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and religion, could be oppressed and privileged at the intersection of these identities (Crenshaw, 1989).

For example, an immigrant with a disability might face language barriers, discrimination based on their immigration status, and a lack of accessibility accommodations, making it difficult to find employment or access public services. According to DuBois (2000), Japanese American women during World War II experienced both racism and sexism due to their ethnicity and gender. These women were often subjected to harsh living conditions in internment camps and were expected to conform to traditional gender roles. Another example is the suffrage movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which was criticized for excluding women of color and working-class women (Catt & Shuler, 2020). Such led to the development of intersectional feminism, which recognized the unique experiences of women with intersecting identities.

Intersectionality provides a necessary structure for dialogue and "dismantles oppressive structures and how these structures are connected, intertwined, and mutually reinforcing (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). During the framework's introduction, Crenshaw (1991) used Black women's experiences as an example to illustrate the concept. Intersectionality has been used as the core of the intersectional feminism movement. This movement acknowledges that while all women face oppression, not all women are equally oppressed, and not all women face the same challenges (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

It is then equally important to establish the existing association between intersectionality and critical race theory (CRT). The CRT entails a framework and theoretical approach that emerged in the field of legal studies and has since been applied to various disciplines, including sociology, education, and social justice activism

(Delgado et al., 2017). Accordingly, CRT has its origins in the mid-1980s, when it was designated to provide a better understanding of the constructs behind racism. Kimberlé Crenshaw is one of the scholars engaged with the theory's development. CRT examines how race and racism are deeply ingrained in society's structures and institutions and how they intersect with other forms of oppression, such as class, gender, and sexuality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023).

The framework of intersectionality, a key component of critical race theory (CRT), encompasses the understanding of CRT and misogyny. CRT's core tenets are the constructs through which racism exists (Delgado et al., 2017). These were then impactful in further defining the concept of intersectionality and its applicability in interpreting racial-based constraints. The focus of CRT on understanding and challenging systemic racial inequalities allows for a broader examination of the societal structures that contribute to misogynoir (Crenshaw, 1991). By using intersectionality as a lens to analyze the experience of Black women, CRT could help identify and address the specific forms of discrimination and oppression unique to this group, such as prejudice against Black women based on their gender in education.

By examining how race and racism intersect with other forms of oppression, CRT provides a framework to understand and address the specific experiences of discrimination faced by Black women (Crenshaw, 1989). It includes recognizing the systematic nature of racism and sexism and acknowledging the historical context that has contributed to the marginalization of Black women in society. Therefore, through this lens, CRT aims to challenge and dismantle the structures perpetuating racial discrimination against Black women and other marginalized groups.

**Theory of Misogynoir**

Scholar Moya Bailey coined the term misogynoir is a portmanteau of “misogyny” the hatred of women, and “noir,” the French word for “Black” (Bailey, 2021, p. 1) The term misogynoir adds a deeper level of precision to Crewshaw’s theoretical framework of intersectionality. Using ambiguous and general language allows for the acknowledgment of some issues yet lacks the potency to comprehensively address them. (Bailey, 2016). Misogynoir is a concept deeply rooted in an individual's identity. Misogynoir describes the intersection of racism and sexism that Black women face (Anyangwe, 2017). The discrimination experienced by Black women introduces a distinctive array of obstacles and hurdles that can prove challenging to surmount. It also prompts a broader societal conversation about the importance of combating racism and sexism (Rodriguez, 2021). Misogynoir acknowledges the connection between racism and misogyny by recognizing their simultaneous existence (Bailey, 2016).

The concept of misogyny affirms the ways in which Black women are often erased or marginalized in larger society. By focusing on the experiences of Black women and examining their oppression as it intersects with racism and sexism simultaneously, creates a unique form of oppression that white women or Black men do not experience (Bailey, 2016). Black women are often misrepresented or underrepresented in leadership positions and the media, leading to a lack of role models and opportunities for advancement. The underrepresentation can be attributed to systemic barrier, discriminatory practice, and biases that limited the opportunities available to Black women to ascend to leadership roles. Thus, there is a lack of diverse voice and perspective at decision-making tables.

The media plays a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and influencing cultural norms. Black woman often face misrepresentation in the media. This misrepresentation can affect public attitudes, perpetuate stereotypes, and limit the range of roles Black women are considered suitable for. Leading to a lack of role models for aspiring individuals. The absence of visible Black women in leadership positions can result in fewer mentorship opportunities. When Black woman are overlooked or portrayed in limiting ways, it can contribute to biases in hiring, promotion decisions, and overall career advancement.

Black women experience negative consequences in personal and professional settings due to popular culture's portrayal of them (Rodriguez, 2021). The generalization of advances made within intersectionality is associated with the uncertainty of whether Black women's needs could be comprehensively addressed. A consequence of this occurrence is that there is no assurance of the relevance of intersectionality in addressing the problems specifically experienced by Black women (Anyangwe, 2017). There is a manifestation of intersectional invisibility when the unique experiences of Black women are not actively integrated with the strides made in advancing intersectionality within the working environment. Unfortunately, despite the promotion of methods aimed at prioritizing intersectionality, Black women still record significant levels of harm while interacting under given conditions (Rodriguez, 2021).

Bailey (2016) identified the limits through which the relevance of intersectionality could be recorded. The definition of which is entirely reliant on how one defines the various forms of interconnectedness reported over a given functional setting. The broad definition of "people of color" or "women of color" then removes the specificity of how

advances directed at intersectionality could be realized. With this, the interpretation of underlying considerations would take a broader outlook. Attention should be placed on how numerous sub-groups are defined under these primary terms. For example, "women of color" could be used to label African Americans, Africans, Latinas, Asians, among others. From this aspect, it is recognized that there is limited relevance in how intersectionality comprehensively addresses the needs of all these groups. Therefore, it is necessary to approach intersectionality based on the experience of precise populations. For the case of Black women, deliberation should then be made on how the idea of intersectionality can be advanced to accommodate the specific needs and experiences of Black women.

The theory of misogynoir offers the ability to examine the portrayal of Black women in media and popular culture (Rodriguez, 2021). It provides the capacity to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and shape the public's perception and attitudes towards Black women (Kwarteng et al., 2022). Misogynoir draws attention to the systemic inequalities that affect Black women across various domains of life, including educational leadership, sports, and corporate space (Bailey, 2016). There is a need to address these structural issues that contribute to the marginalization of Black women is necessary. While people could comprehensively understand systemic inequality and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society, the harmful and discriminatory realities need to be acknowledged and addressed. Misogynoir is a crucial framework for understanding the unique challenges faced by Black women due to the intersection of racism and sexism (Bailey, 2016; Rodriguez, 2021). It advocates for social and systemic

changes to address the discrimination and disadvantages facing the community of Black women.

### Limitations of Intersectionality and the Need for Misogynoir

Intersectionality and the concept of misogynoir both offer valuable insight for understanding the unique experiences of Black women. Intersectionality is a broader framework that recognizes the complexity of individuals' identities and experiences. While it acknowledges the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression, it can sometimes flatten the nuances of individual experiences and overlook the specific ways in which forms of oppression intersect. "The nebulous definition of intersectionality has been identified as a key element of its success" (Trip, 2023, p.2). It is important to note that intersectionality has certain limitations including that it could be difficult to apply in practice, especially in legal and policy contexts (Tripp, 2023). For example, it could be challenging to determine how to allocate resources or provide accommodations when individuals belong to multiple marginalized groups.

Similar to the way lenses in eyeglasses enhance people's vision, the intersectional analytic lens could be viewed as a tool for perception to understand the concepts of intersectionality (Tripp, 2023). However, employing this tool is not a neutral action, and it does not ensure perfect clarity of perception. Intersectionality can sometimes essentialize, identify, and overlook individual differences among groups. However, it does enable us to initiate the process of recognizing things that would otherwise remain unnoticed (Tripp, 2023). Engaging in ongoing discussions and critical analysis is essential to refine and improve intersectional frameworks, address these potential pitfalls,

and ensure that intersectionality remains a dynamic and inclusive approach to understanding and addressing social inequalities.

Another limitation of intersectionality is that those in power could co-opt it to maintain the status quo (Collins, 2015). For example, some corporations and governments have adopted intersectionality to appear inclusive and progressive without making meaningful changes to address the specific forms of oppression that affect Black women. As Collins (2015) expounded, these forms of oppression present themselves in the form of hatred, dislike, distrust, workplace discrimination, and prejudice specifically recorded due to the identified interaction with a Black woman. This can lead to the dilution or misapplication of Intersectionality's principles. Intersectionality is a valuable framework for understanding the complexity of individuals' experiences, but it also has limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed. There is, nonetheless, ongoing disagreement regarding how the concept should be defined, understood, and applied across numerous fields.

While both frameworks recognize the convergence of various oppressive forces, misogynoir centers on the distinct types of bias encountered by Black women. Bailey (2020) stated that Black women encounter singular varieties of bias, stereotypes, and violence due to their specific racial and gender identities. One prominent manifestation occurs in the realm of media representation, where negative and stereotypical portrayals of Black women prevail. Both intersectionality and misogynoir hold significance in comprehending the experiences of Black women and individuals of color. They aid in recognizing the manner in which different forms of oppression intersect and intensify one another. The more specific, the better "people of color," "women of color, Patriarchy,"

and “racism” can often be dangerously broad” (Bailey, 2016, p. 3). Misogynoir specifically highlights how racism and anti-Blackness are Kwarteng, 2022) “emphasizing their non-decomposable nature” of their oppression (Tripp, 2023, p.11). It provides an opportunity to measure and quantify the effectiveness of policies and interventions specifically addressing the needs of Black women (Rodriguez, 2021). In addition, misogynoir is effective in targeting interventions specifically to address systemic inequalities and the identification of the unique needs of Black women as a specific dual marginalized group.

The unique way Black women are pathologized in popular culture distinguishes their experiences from those of both Black men and women of other ethnicities (Crenshaw, 1991). While intersectionality emphasizes the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression, it could sometimes overlook how these forms intersect. Intersectionality provides a broader framework for understanding the interconnected nature of race, class, and gender, but it could also lead to overlooking the nuances of Black women's experiences (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Misogynoir helps to name and recognize Black women as targets of “anti-Blackness and misogyny” (Bailey, 2021, p.1)

**Manifestations of Misogynoir**

Misogynoir manifests itself in multiple ways through stereotypes, exclusionary actions, and political limitations (Tripp, 2023). Black women are often subjected to harmful stereotypes, such as being perceived as "angry" or "aggressive." In educational leadership, they are seen as ‘other’- not fitting the mold of a leader's appearance or act. Such can make it difficult for them to gain their colleagues' and superiors' trust and respect, limiting their ability to effect change (Burke, 2017). These stereotypes contribute

to a lack of trust and respect from their colleagues and superiors, making it difficult for Black women to be taken seriously (Davis, 1974). Additionally, Black women are often subject to harmful narratives depicting them as hypersexual, aggressive, and intellectually inferior, perpetuating the inequalities of misogynoir. Black women were not only viewed through the lens of the Mammy caricature, but also the Sapphire and Jezebel caricatures (Lewis et al., 2016).

### *The "Angry Black Woman" Stereotype*

Misogynoir can manifest in various ways, including stereotypes that depict Black women as hypersexual, aggressive, or angry, as well as the erasure or devaluation of Black women's contributions and experiences (Martin, 2018). It could be observed in media representations, interpersonal interactions, institutional practices, and systemic inequalities (Collins, 2015). The constant policing of their behavior, attitude, and appearance by the media conveys the message that Black women do not belong in these spaces as their authentic selves. "Black women in our society are frequently categorized into one of four roles: the 'sassy' Black woman, the 'angry' Black woman, the 'strong' Black woman, or the 'overly sexual' Black woman" (Davis, 1972, p. 81). On several occasions, Serena Williams was depicted as an angry Black woman (ABW) when she expressed frustration or dissatisfaction with the umpire's decision and treatment during tennis matches (Martin, 2018). Her advocating for herself on the court was decried as irrational, further perpetuating the racial stereotype that Black women do not have self-control.

Sometimes referred to as the Sapphire, the stereotype was "a loud and angry Black woman, impossible to satisfy, irrational with rage, and completely outside appropriate

femininity" (Bailey, 2021, p. 38) has had many characteristics and representations (Harris-Perry, 2011). The Sapphire stereotype does not recognize the complexity of Black women's lives or acknowledge the legitimacy of anger in a Black woman. In the interest of preserving a calm and rational dialogue, the issues of Black women are disregarded and muted (Harris-Perry, 2011). Thus, reinforcing the notion that whiteness and the white gaze set the standard against which all behavior is measured. Anything deviating from the norm of whiteness is labeled classless, disrespectful, or foolish. The perception of Black women as domineering, emasculating, and overbearing is at the heart of the Sapphire caricature (Bailey, 2021). It is linked with the experiences of Black people with slavery in America (Lewis et al., 2016).

### *Jezebel's Stereotype and Sexuality*

Black women are often subjected to objectification and are simultaneously presented as hypersexual and hypermasculine, a poignant irony in how they are perceived (Anderson et al., 2018). Along with the stereotypes of being promiscuous and seductive, they are used as justifications for their exclusion and dehumanization (Collins, 1990). Illustrating this phenomenon, in the 1915 film Birth of a Nation, directed by D.W. Griffith (1915), white women were depicted as pure and virtuous, while Black women were shown as hypersexual and aggressive. The Jezebel stereotype, in particular, is depicted in the film's misogynoir narrative. Lydia Brown, a mixed-race character, is portrayed as jealous and manipulative (Lennig, 2004). She is infatuated with a white character named Ben Cameron, which adds to the film's portrayal of Black women's supposed sexual desires for white men (Lennig, 2004). Lydia's actions and emotions are used to underscore the film's racist agenda and the supposed threat of miscegenation.

A prevalent stereotype associated with Black women is the portrayal of Jezebel, characterized as a captivating and sensual woman who is excessively sexualized and commodified, primarily valued for her sexuality (Anderson et al., 2018). This stereotypical portrayal of Black women was a constant during slavery when their bodies were viewed as sexual commodities to be accessed with or without consent (hooks, 1981). Black women are victims of sexual violence and abuse more than their white female counterparts (Anderson et al., 2018). Their survival of rape and abuse is often defined as sexual promiscuity, and they are less likely to notify the police of the incident (Anderson et al., 2018). The hypersexualization of Black women leads to victim-blaming in cases of sexual assault or harassment, where they are often blamed for their own victimization based on harmful stereotypes (Francis, 2017). For instance, Olympic gold medalist gymnast Gabby Douglas disclosed on social media in 2017 that former USA gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar had abused her. Some media outlets and social media users engaged in victim-shaming (Francis, 2017). Their attitudes further harmed abuse survivors, and their courage to speak out was not recognized. However, according to Gibson (2016), even amidst her historic achievement in the Rio Olympics, she faced criticism for her hair's appearance as not being kept as it is expected of women. The criticism Gabby faced about her appearance emphasizes the issue of sexism and double standards in sports, particularly among Black women athletes. The critical comments reduce her to a superficial understanding of her identity rather than acknowledging her athletic abilities. Such is a common experience for Black women, whose identities are often reduced to stereotypes perpetuated in the media (Williams & Hardin, 2018) .

### *Exclusion from Feminine Spaces*

The hypermasculine stereotype of Black women is often perpetuated in the media through depictions of them as aggressive and combative, which are regular aspects of masculinity. This stereotype reinforces the idea that Black women are inherently violent and aggressive, creating negative consequences for their interactions with law enforcement and other authority figures. Sandra Bland's case is an example that highlights how these stereotypes can have real-world consequences (Harris-Perry, 2015). Bland was a young Black woman who died in police custody in 2015 after being arrested during a traffic stop in Texas. Her case gained national attention and sparked discussions about racial profiling, police brutality, and the systemic biases that affect Black women during encounters with law enforcement. Bland's case is often cited as an example of how a Black woman's stereotype of hypermasculinity influenced the way she was perceived by both the arresting officer and the public. The vital video of her traffic stop reinforced the existing narrative of aggression, combativeness, and Black women as threats. The media and social media predominantly focused on the incident of Bland's arrest while addressing the broader concerns of excessive use of force, the criminalization of Black women, and the role of systemic bias in encounters with law enforcement.

The hypermasculine stereotype of Black women could further contribute to their exclusion from traditionally feminine spaces, such as the beauty and fashion industries. In these industries, Black women face stereotypes that label them as "too strong" or "masculine" to conform to conventional notions of femininity. This bias results in limited representation and opportunities for Black women within these sectors. For example, despite the significant economic influence of Black consumers in the beauty industry,

with an expenditure of $6.6 billion in 2021 accounting for 11.1% of the total beauty market (McKinsey, 2021, p.14), women of color are severely underrepresented in leadership positions. Only 4% of C-suite executives in the beauty industry identify as women of color, showcasing Black women being excluded from feminine spaces (McKinsey, 2020).

### *Impact on Political Agency*

Harris-Perry (2011) demonstrated that misogynoir also denies Black women political agency and full citizenship. She explored the lived experiences of Black women in the United States and the complex ways in which they navigate society's expectations and political frameworks. Black women are usually expected to perform a certain image of Black womanhood to be seen as competent and capable of political participation.

According to Harris-Perry (2011), the angry Black women trope stereotype is a product of the intricate intersection of racism and sexism, asserting that it serves as a mechanism to deny Black women their rightful political agency. This stereotype distorts perceptions of Black women’s emotions and perspectives, and perpetuates systematic biases that hinder their active engagement in political discourse, representation, and advocacy. An example and showcase of this would be the existing notion that Black women would bring hostile advances into the political landscape. An underpinning ideology is the assumption that a Black woman's priorities and objectives would be to rapidly initiate advances targeting racism and sexism that their population has been consistently subjected to. These are projected to be done with an 'angry voice.'

Addressing and dismantling this harmful stereotype is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and equitable political landscape where Black women would be recognized,

valued, and empowered for their individual and collective contributions (Harris-Perry, 2011). This trope has been deployed to exclude Black women from political and social discourse, perpetuating the marginalization and erasure of their perspectives. There are profound implications for social theory, identity, politics, and the pursuit of equality in contemporary society, as Harris-Perry's work illuminates the challenges Black women face as they strive for recognition, validation, and agency in a society marked by inequalities.

### Historical Roots of Misogynoir

The historical roots of misogynoir could be traced back to systems of oppression such as slavery, colonialism, and the ongoing legacies of white supremacy, which have perpetuated harmful stereotypes and devalued Black women's identities and contributions to society (Davis, 1974). Historically, Black women have been systematically marginalized, disenfranchised, and denied equal rights (Gilroy, 1993). These limitations included property ownership, limited access to education and employment, and the relegation of women to subordinate roles within society. Women's suffrage movements and feminist activism fought inequalities and sought to challenge patriarchal structures for white women. Another significant challenge arises when examining the historical context: the intertwined legacies of enslavement and colonialism. Enslavement, wet nursing, Sojourner Truth's ain't I a woman and the suffrage movement are notable historical occurrences that facilitate a better comprehension of the conditions Black women have consistently faced.

### *Enslavement and Colonialism*

The transatlantic slave trade, known as the African slave trade, involved the capture, transportation, and forced labor of millions of African people to the Americas, Europe, and other parts of the world. Enslaved Africans were subjected to brutal conditions, dehumanization, and violence, leading to the loss of countless lives and the destruction of families and communities (Domingues da Silva & Misevich, 2018). According to white (1999), Black women were subjected to extreme forms of exploitation, violence, and sexual abuse during the era of slavery. The legacy of this era deeply influenced perceptions of Black women's identities and societal roles (White, 1999). Their labor was pivotal in shaping global economies, especially in the Americas, where crops such as tobacco, cotton, and sugar were cultivated on a vast scale (Beckert, 2014). The experiences of enslaved Black women were compounded by the brutal separation from their cultures, languages, traditions, forced breeding, and division of families. This enforced disconnection from their African heritage resulted in suppressing or obliterating many aspects of their rich cultural legacy. However, within the confines of their enslaved communities, new forms of cultural expression emerged as acts of resistance and resilience (Gilroy, 1993). These women found ways to preserve their identities and traditions despite unimaginable adversity.

Wet nursing was the other form of enslavement that Black women were consistently subjected to. Black mothers were forced to breastfeed the babies of their enslavers for reasons associated with the benefits this would provide. Wet nursing started as a health measure. white mothers were presumed to have their babies breastfed by Black women (Black Breastfeeding Week, 2014, p. 2). There was the projection that such

would transfer better immunity levels to illnesses that Black babies recorded. Wet nursing, however, escalated to a method of advancing white mother's societal statuses. Identification was then linked to the idea that having a wet nurse would enable white women to maintain their preferred lifestyle and attire, simultaneously serving as a means to communicate wealth and social status. However, Black mothers recorded significant development of the feeling of dehumanization. A consequence of this was the trauma that was caused by being forced to breastfeed. The feelings and opinions of Black women are not in any way considered.

### *Jim Crow Era*

During the Jim Crow era in the United States (late 19th to mid-20th centuries), misogynoir was evident in various forms, one of which involved the exclusion of Black women from the broader women's suffrage movement (Lewis & Lewis, 2009). This exclusion meant that the experiences of Black women were not adequately addressed or recognized. Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation and discrimination against Black people (Holloway, 2013). The laws were enforced in public places, such as restaurants, schools, and hotels. Black women were often excluded from employment opportunities and educational institutions (Alexander, 2010). white people were often responsible for enforcing Jim Crow laws and segregation. The law was usually employed to control Black individuals and perpetuate white supremacy (Alexander, 2010).

Black women, in particular, were often subjected to violence and harassment due to their race. In order to enforce segregation and maintain control over Black individuals, white people sometimes resorted to violent tactics. Additionally, laws and segregation were implemented to limit the opportunities available to Black women, who were often

forced into domestic labor as maids or nannies (Jones, 2014). There are notable examples of these laws and their provisions. For example, there were laws that outlined how Black people were not allocated rights enjoyed by white people. There were outlines of the limitations of which kind of jobs Black people could secure. Specific provisions were engraved concerning when a Black person was allowed to leave a job. In other cases, there were laws implemented to direct which kinds of property could be acquired by a Black person. These cumulatively hindered progress and the establishment of Black women in society. It was an impossibility to make any advances that aimed at improving Black women's general quality of life.

The forced domestic labor that many Black women were subjected to during the Jim Crow period is an example of how they were devalued and exploited due to misogynoir (Collins, 1990). These Black female domestic workers were degraded and were in constant reminder of their inferior status (Small, 2020). They had to navigate the lack of dignity of separate living areas, limited access to basic hygiene amenities, and a lack of workplace rights. Under the rationalization of white supremacy, these women were undervalued. Understanding the history of slaveholders in Jim Crow, specifically those who employed Black women, domestic workers rationalized this exploration through the lens of racial hatred and prejudice (Small, 2020). They justified their mistreatment of Black women by viewing them as inherently inferior to maintain the portrayal of Black women as subversive, submissive, and devoid of agency. Such allowed white employers to maintain their position of power and privilege and perpetuate systemic racism (Small, 2020).

### *Suffrage and Civil Rights Movements*

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were considered leaders of the suffrage movement, but their leadership did not include Black women and women of color. The impact of misogyny on the suffrage and civil rights movements is a complex and varied issue. Black women played a crucial role in both movements, and their contributions have often been overlooked or erased (Collins, 2015). Black women were instrumental in organizing and mobilizing communities to fight for their rights, and their efforts were essential to the success of these movements. Similarly, Mary Church Terrell founded a suffrage organization in 1896, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) also in 1896 and was a leader of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA). She understood the misogynoir and exclusion of white suffragists. Terrell understood the intersection of gender and race in the fight for suffrage. Her expertise as an educator was vital in promoting education and increasing Black women's involvement in the political process (Parker, 2020). Sojourner Truth was most famously known for her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851 (Truth, 2018). She used her clever rhetoric and gift for people to share their real-life experiences of slavery. (Truth, 2018). The speech highlighted misogynoir and the importance of women's suffrage.

The intersection of racism and sexism poses significant challenges for Black women. Their exclusion from positions of authority and inclusion in decision-making were examples of intentional inclusion (Giddings, 1984). This perpetuation of misogynoir reinforced the idea that Black women did not deserve honor or acknowledgment. During the suffrage and civil rights movements, the voices and contributions of Black women

were often overlooked and marginalized within both Black and white communities (Jones, 2018). The focus on whiteness overshadowed their struggles for gender and racial equality on issues primarily affecting white women or Black men. However, the lack of acknowledgment of the contributions of Black women in the civil rights movements has resulted in a lack of historical knowledge, which has led to the erasure of Black women's contributions to these movements (Giddings, 1984).

## Contemporary Manifestations of Misogynoir

### *Employment Discrimination*

In the intricate tapestry of employment and the workplace dynamics, misogynoir takes center stage. According to (Wingfield, 2020), Black women contend with many obstacles that can significantly hinder their career trajectories. The persistent wage gap sees Black women earning less than their white female counterparts and limited access to higher-paying positions and leadership roles. The disparities often ripple through an inequitable status quo. In addition to economic disparities, Black women in the workforce often confront microaggressions, racial stereotypes, and biases that affect their day-to-day experiences. The burden of navigating racism and sexism is compounded, impacting their mental and physical well-being (Bailey, 2021). Discriminatory hiring practices and biased perceptions hinder their access to education and professional development opportunities, further restricting their advancement.

Black women face discrimination in the form of wage disparities and a lack of opportunities for advancement (Smith, 2020). They are also more likely to experience microaggressions from their colleagues and superiors. Crenshaw's (2019) use of Black women to illustrate her ideas behind intersectionality can be observed to extend beyond

the specificity of Black women, encompassing a broader understanding of how multiple intersecting identities contribute to social experiences. There is a consistent use of non-specific terms like racism and sexism. There are numerous groups affected by these issues. As such, the derived understanding of how such conditions are experienced is intertwined with the experiences of all racialized or sexualized groups, which would necessarily be Black women. Black women often feel compelled to suppress their true thoughts, emotions, and expressions, as they are not afforded a sense of safety to do so. The lack of safety further contributes to the silencing and misrepresenting of Black women. Thus, misrepresentation stereotypes rooted in anti-Blackness, racism, and misogynoir (Bailey, 2021). In a society rife with anti-Blackness, (Bailey, 2021) the contributions of Black women are often erased or undervalued. Misogynoir diminishes their achievements, struggles, and hard work while weaponizing their emotions to fit media narratives that dehumanize them (Williams & Hardin, 2018). Black women faced and continue to face discrimination in employment opportunities. Historically, they were relegated to low-paying, menial jobs and excluded from many professions due to gender and racial biases.

### *Pay Inequality*

Black women are consistently recording significantly lower pay when compared to white men and women. The underlying basis for this disparity is observed to be their racial and sexual identity. Relevant factors expected to impact how salaries are allocated are not consistently effective in the case of Black women. As Black women navigate the intersection of racial and gender bias, they grapple with pay inequity and encounter limited opportunities for career advancement. Even with similar education and

experience levels, Black women are frequently paid less than their white male and female counterparts (Crenshaw, 1991).

In a recent interview with Gayle King (Sirius XM, 2023) ahead of the release of "The Color Purple," Taraji P. Henson, a Golden Globe winner, candidly shared her frustration with the issues of being an underpaid in Hollywood. Expressing a sentiment that resonates with many Black women in multiple industries,

> "I'm just tired of working so hard, being gracious, at what I do (and) getting paid fraction of the cost, I'm tired of hearing my sisters say the same thing over and over. You get tired. I hear people go, 'You work a lot.' Well, I have to. the Math ain't Math-ing (Sirius XM, 2023)."

Henson's emotional sentiment conveys the level of exhaustion from working tirelessly, maintaining a professional demeanor, and yet receiving a fraction of the pay that a white counterpart receives for the same role on the same set. While Black women are not alone in the workplace, they face the specific challenges of being a minority and experience a higher level of discrimination and microaggressions. This financial discrepancy has far-reaching implications, adversely affecting their self-esteem, body image, mental fatigue, and overall quality of life. Moreover, Black women are at an elevated risk of experiencing violence, discrimination, and microaggressions stemming from the complex intertwining of racism and sexism.

The issue of pay inequality is further compounded by the challenge of negotiating for better wages and benefits. Black women often encounter barriers that hinder their ability to negotiate effectively, partly due to deeply ingrained biases and stereotypes that could undermine their confidence (Crenshaw, 1991). The concept of misogynoir sheds

light on the intricate intersectional oppression faced by Black women and femmes resulting from the entanglement of racism and sexism.

### *Violence and Harassment*

Violence and harassment in the workplace are pressing issues that disproportionately affect Black women, often exacerbated by the concept of misogynoir—a specific form of discrimination and bias targeting Black women due to the intersection of racism and sexism (Anderson et al., 2018). The impact of these challenges is profound, affecting not only individual well-being but also professional opportunities and overall workplace culture. Black women could be particularly vulnerable to various forms of workplace violence and harassment, including verbal abuse, physical intimidation, and sexual harassment.

The death by suicide of Dr. Antionette "Bonnie" Candia-Bailey (Gassam, 2024) at the age of 49, following her termination from the historically Black Lincoln University, highlights the feelings of isolation due to a lack of support and the harassment and bullying she endured from the university president. Her tragic suicide serves as yet another painful reminder of the way in which the institution of education does not adequately protect Black women. Despite numerous documented incidents and emails (Gassam, 2024) shedding light on the systemic realities of the challenges and hardships Black women face, the cruel realities of misogynoir impacted Dr. Candia-Bailey without the implementation of solutions or the provision of support. These hostile work environments create immense stress and anxiety, affecting the mental health and overall job satisfaction of Black women. They face challenges in accessing support mechanisms within the workplace, such as HR departments or reporting procedures (Anderson et al.,

2018). Fear of retaliation or not being taken seriously deters them from seeking assistance when faced with harassment or violence.

Workplace violence and harassment have severe implications for mental health. Black women might experience anxiety, depression, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to their experiences, affecting their overall well-being. These challenges negatively impact Black women's professional lives, leading to barriers to career advancement, being overlooked for promotions, or even leaving their jobs altogether due to hostile work environments. Violence and harassment in the workplace, exacerbated by misogynoir, present significant challenges for Black women. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach combining supportive policies, cultural competence, and a commitment to dismantling the intersectional biases perpetuating discrimination and creating hostile work environments.

### *Communication and Appearance Assumptions*

In the intricate landscape of the workplace, communication, and appearance assumptions play a pivotal role in the experiences of Black women, compounding the effects of misogynoir. Communication styles and appearance are often subject to biased perceptions and stereotypes that detrimentally impact Black women's professional lives (Crenshaw, 1991). The more a Black woman shares her voice and makes herself visible, there is a level of scrutiny with an attempt to extinguish it. Often, there are accusations of having an attitude, being too assertive, or being too loud. Black women find themselves navigating the expectation of adopting specific communication patterns or modifying their natural expressions to conform to predominantly white workplace norms. These assumptions might lead to a sense of "code-switching," where Black women feel

compelled to adjust their communication and appearance to fit prevailing workplace expectations. Code-switching is a complex and challenging balancing act that is emotionally taxing for Black women. Adapting communication to fit the expectations of the workplace compromises cultural identity.

For example, Black women's confidence in their natural and authentic hairstyles-afro, braids, twists, locs, and other textured styles-is met with disapproval or skepticism (Asare, 2023). This skepticism can manifest in questions of Black women's competence, qualification, or professionalism solely based on their hair (Gibson, 2016). The disapproval includes the perpetuation of microaggressions, including comments, questions, or jokes about their hair being weird and unprofessional. A hostile work environment can be created by actions such as petting or unauthorized touching of a Black woman's hair. Unfair dress code policies support this unfair bias and discrimination and can lead Black women to conform to the white standard of beauty. Thus, increasing pressure to straighten or alter their hair. The pressure to conform to this version of beauty limits Black women's individuality and self-expression. Black women may feel pressure to assimilate, compromising their sense of identity and authenticity. In the quest for justice and equity in workplaces, addressing and dismantling the discriminatory practices perpetuating misogynoir is crucial. This exploration delves into the myriad challenges Black women face in the employment environment, highlighting the urgent need for greater awareness, systemic reform, and intersectional approaches that recognize the unique struggles they endure.

## Black Women in Education

While the existing research on Black women in education may appear extensive, it is essential to recognize that within this vast landscape, the concept of misogynoir remains largely uncharted territory (Gassam, 2024). A large number of the scholarly research focus on Black women in higher education. This scarcity of research on misogynoir in the education sector has significant implications, perpetuating the marginalization and oppression of Black women in education. As Horsford and Tillman (2012) revealed, the impact is twofold. First, it hinders the development of effective strategies and interventions to address the discrimination and barriers faced by Black women in education. Second, it reinforces that their experiences are of little consequence, perpetuating systemic discrimination and harmful practices.

Black women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership positions, despite their invaluable contributions to the field. The consequences of this scarcity of Black women in leadership positions reverberate throughout the educational system, affecting students, educators, and the institutions themselves. Understanding the functionality of misogynoir as an ideological construct could help scholars and educators contextualize the innumerous ways that Black women and girls are subject to inequitable and harmful treatment in educational settings and broader society (Bailey & Trudy 2018). “Failure is not an option for Black women” (Dardenne et al., 2012, p. 1162). Black women leaders were evaluated more negatively than other groups, but only under conditions of organizational failure. Leaders' typicality, or possessing characteristics associated with leadership, mediated the effect of leaders' race, gender, and

organizational performance on their effectiveness. According to Dardenne et al. (2012), Black women face discriminatory disciplinary action for mistakes on the job.

Misogynoir has a significant impact on Black women in education and leadership. These challenges include a lack of representation: Black women are underrepresented in education leadership positions, making it difficult for them to advance in their careers (American Psychological Association, 2019). This has also an adverse impact on subsequent Black women who engage in different aspects of education and leadership. There is no functional framework that supports their establishment. Also, there are no mentors who would help in establishing a culture that eliminates any forms of prejudices Black women face in this domain.

Black women in educational leadership deserve freedom and safety. They deserve respect and representation that accurately reflects their character, values, and potential (Dardenne et al., 2012). They deserve spaces where they could be their authentic selves. Black women face and contribute to a broader understanding of the intersecting dynamics of race and gender in society (Crenshaw, 2019). It provides a lens (Tripp, 2023) through which scholars, activists, and individuals could critically analyze and address Black women's unique challenges and experiences. To understand the origins of misogynoir, it is critical to delve into the historical context of racial and gender oppression (Blackburn, 2020). Dr. Bailey’s literature examines the roots of misogynoir within the history of slavery, colonialism, and the ongoing legacies of white supremacy (Bailey, 2022). She examines how racist and sexist stereotypes have historically intertwined, marginalizing and devaluing Black women’s experiences and identities.

Overall, the impact of misogynoir on Black women in education leadership is significant. It is important for organizations and institutions to actively work to address and dismantle systems of oppression that perpetuate this discrimination, including advocating for policies that protect Black women's rights, providing mentorship and support for Black women in leadership positions, and actively working to increase the representation of Black women in education leadership. The interconnectedness between misogyny and racism is undeniable; one cannot be effectively tackled without addressing the other. The two are intertwined, and they should be understood on how they intersect to create real change for Black women (Davis, 1983). However, it is crucial to acknowledge the resilience and resistance strategies employed by Black women in the face of misogynoir. They have developed support networks, created empowering narratives, and engaged in activism and community-building to challenge gendered racism.

Recognizing the implications of misogynoir for social change and policy interventions is essential. Phillips and Phillips (2017) highlighted the importance of centering Black women's voices, experiences, and expertise in decision-making processes as crucial for dismantling the structures of power that perpetuate misogynoir. Transformative justice, policy reform, and cultural shifts can contribute to greater equity, justice, and inclusivity for all (Hill, 2000). According to Crenshaw (1991), Black women’s leadership is essential for creating transformative change and achieving social justice.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## Introduction

This chapter is a critical juncture in my exploration of misogynoir within educational settings. I delve into autoethnography as the guiding methodology for my research, a pivotal choice for capturing the multifaceted experiences of Black women in education, where racial and gender-based discrimination intersect. Misogynoir, a concept at the heart of this study, represents the unique form of discrimination and bias that Black women face (Bailey, 2018). The challenges they encounter within educational spaces, both overt and subtle, are complex and necessitate a method that captures the depth and nuances of their experiences.

This chapter is dedicated to explaining and justifying autoethnography as the chosen research method. Aiming to understand the dimensions of misogynoir are the central goals to this investigation and shedding light on the distinctive experiences of misogynoir in education. Furthermore, it involved a critical analysis of the impact of race and gender on my educational experiences as a Black woman. I used my experiences within the educational system to uncover the deeply embedded systems and biases affecting the lives of Black women within educational spaces.

This direct connection granted an intimate and comprehensive perspective that traditional scholarly methods couldn't achieve. It encouraged a personal, authentic writing style that reflected my distinctive voice, enabling a richer exploration of misogynoir (Ellis et al., 2011). I provided a concise overview of the central elements related to my research problem and objectives. My goal is to shed light on the distinct challenges I have faced as a Black woman in the realm of education. These misogynistic

challenges include but are not limited to microaggressions, oppression, racial gaslighting, overt and covert racism, race-based traumatic stress, racialized trauma, and tone policing. I am dedicated to critically analyzing how the intersections of race and gender shape my own interactions within educational settings, offering a personal perspective on the complexity of misogynoir.

**Research Design:**

In detailing the theoretical and methodological framework, I emphasized Critical Race Theory's (CRT) various tenets, with a specific focus on counter-storytelling as a key element (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). This section expounded on how personal narratives and the researcher's role served as vital tools for dissecting and understanding misogynoir. Autoethnography, as a deeply personal research approach, offered unique advantages (Ellis et al., 2011). It allowed immediate access to the primary source: my own lived experiences as a researcher (Chang, 2008a).

Having adopted autoethnography as the primary research methodology (Chang, 2008b), I delved into the exploration and understanding of misogynoir in education. This approach systematically analyzed the social phenomenon through the lens of my own life experiences as an educational leader (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). By candidly sharing my reflections and personal encounters (Chang, 2008b), I illuminated the nuanced and emotional dimensions of misogynoir, often inaccessible through conventional research methods. This methodology, as outlined by (Chang, 2008b), provided distinct advantages by offering immediate access to my primary data source– my life experiences. This proximity allowed for an intimate and comprehensive perspective, granting a unique advantage of in-depth analysis and interpretation. Autoethnography encouraged a

personal and authentic writing style, distinct from traditional scholarly approaches (Chang, 2008a), enabling me to express my voice genuinely (Gergen & Gergen, 2002). In the realm of education, it was crucial for educators to actively acknowledge the presence of racism and gender bias. Equally vital was the commitment to dismantling oppressive systems.

**Researcher Positionality**

To understand the context and perspective underlying this research, I will explore the background and experiences that inform my role as a researcher in this study (Adams et al., 2015). My journey has been profoundly shaped by a career in education, during which I have held various positions within the educational system. These roles include serving as a team leader in a rural school district, where I gained firsthand insights into the challenges faced by students and educators in underserved communities. Additionally, I have worked as an instructional leader on a campus where the lack of Black female leadership was strikingly evident. These professional experiences have provided me with a unique vantage point within the educational landscape, particularly concerning issues related to race and gender (Johnson, 2018).

I employed the powerful concept of counter-storytelling with Critical Race Theory (CRT) in my autoethnography (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-storytelling aims to provide an alternative viewpoint to that of dominant narratives in education (Merriam, 2009). In my journey of exploring issues of race, equity, and social justice, I've found myself drawn to the powerful tools of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and counter-storytelling (Ladson-Billings, 1998). These concepts have not only broadened my

understanding of systematic racism but also given me a framework for expressing the importance of individual experiences within this broader context.

Counter-storytelling, an integral part of CRT, opened my eyes to the power of personal narratives in combating the discriminatory narratives that perpetuate racism (Merriam-Webster, 2009). This concept is important in elevating and amplifying the voices and experiences of marginalized groups (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These counter-stories challenge the status quo and help us question the narratives that have been ingrained in our minds as truth (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The narratives of those who have been historically oppressed offer a more accurate view of reality than that of the biased narratives (Merriam, 2009).

My deep dive into counter-storytelling led me to the research method of autoethnography (Delgado, 1989). This method allows me to explore my experiences within the larger context of Anti-Blackness and misogyny (Bailey, 2021). This process uses my own counternarrative (Merriam, 2009) of growth and empowerment. Autoethnography provided an opportunity to reflect on my personal experiences of misogyny and to analyze the impact this has had on my life, shaped by race and gender dynamics, both overt and subtle (Jones, 2018). Confronting biases and evolving inequities in education provided a tool [E4] for self-discovery and self-reflection (Chang, 2008). The methodology of autoethnography (Chang, 2008), as a deeply personal approach to research, enabled me to draw a connection between misogynoir and my own experiences in educational leadership.

Transitioning from an urban charter school to a rural district as a Kindergarten teacher marked a significant change in my career trajectory. This shift brought to the

forefront a profound experience of misogynoir. As I entered this new role, I found myself as the sole Black teacher among nine elementary schools in the district. This stark underrepresentation in the teaching staff evoked deep-seated feelings of isolation and the unsettling sense of being the token Black educator in the district. While my students and parents were welcoming, I felt a profound sense of alienation from my colleagues. There was a constant, distinct reminder I was not the original hire for the position, and the circumstances of my employment were not based on my qualifications. The knowledge that I was only hired because the original choice had been reported for posting a provocative photograph on social media was a stark reminder that I was not seen as a valued member of the team.

The situation left me lacking a genuine sense of belonging and connection with the staff. I often felt like an outsider, trying to navigate the dynamic of a tight-knit team that had established relationships and expectations. The stigma attached to my hiring overshadowed my track record of student achievement. There was a culture of whiteness and constant pressure to adapt to their ethnicity and gender norms[E5] . Feeling stuck and hopeless to change the dynamic of my working environment, I focused my energy into impacting the school community through students and parents. I adopted a tactic employed by those experiencing various forms of marginalization. This involved shifting negative focus away from myself by critiquing others (Bailey, 2021). I was more comfortable in the role of using my strengths to build relationships and expertise in culturally responsive teaching and learning to support my students. Being seen as the token teacher, I frequently found myself assigned classrooms with a higher concentration of students from marginalized backgrounds, including Black, biracial, those with

behavioral disabilities, and lower socioeconomic status. This distribution differed from that of my white female colleagues.

As a Black woman researcher studying misogynoir in education, my position is central to this research endeavor. My lived experiences have equipped me to navigate the complex intersections of race and gender. Throughout my educational and professional journey, I have encountered manifestations of misogynoir, ranging from subtle biases to overt discrimination. These experiences have profoundly shaped my identity and fueled my commitment to shedding light on this phenomenon. My positionality as a researcher brings authenticity and depth to this study, as I intimately understand the issues I aim to explore. This profound personal connection to the research subject enables a nuanced and empathetic examination of the experiences of Black women in education.

The influence of my identity and experiences as a Black woman extended throughout the research process and shaped my perspective as a researcher. They served as a guiding force, compelling me to approach this study with sensitivity, empathy, and dedication to amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals (Johnson, 2020). My background equipped me with a profound understanding of the systemic inequalities and biases that Black women encounter in educational spaces. It also informed the formulation of research questions, the selection of research methods, and the interpretation of data. As a researcher, I was acutely aware of the need to strike a delicate balance between objectivity and advocacy, ensuring that my research analyzed the issues and catalyzed positive change within the education system.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Being part of the 7% of educators who identify as Black (Pew Research Center, 2021), and one of the 11% holding leadership positions in schools (The Black Percentage, 2023), has meant enduring the pervasive reality of misogynoir throughout my professional journey. This dissertation delves deeply into my experiences as a Black woman in education. It serves as a deeply personal exploration of misogynoir, that challenging intersection where racial and gender discrimination converge and how it has intricately woven itself into my identity as an educator.

In this journey, I deliberately chose the path of autoethnography. This approach allows me to shine a spotlight on my own experiences, revealing how they've been shaped by my unwavering quest for liberation within a predominantly white educational landscape. However, it's important to acknowledge that while my story is indeed powerful, it is not universal. Our education system encompasses a diverse spectrum of experiences and perspectives, and liberation itself is multifaceted. Not everyone perceives it in the same light, and not everyone deems it a necessity, let alone a possibility. While I firmly believe that my story holds both relevance and generalizability, I do not presume to claim universality.

Autoethnography and the use of personal narratives are inherently subjective. They reflect the experiences, perspectives, and biases of the researcher. While this subjectivity adds depth and authenticity to the research, it can also introduce bias and limit the generalizability of findings. This is an earnest invitation to encourage the questioning of assumptions, the recognition of biases, and the cultivation of mindfulness when addressing the distinctive challenges encountered by Black women educators. Its

purpose is to empower not only the voices within the 7% but also to reach beyond, fostering a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the intricate intersections of race and gender within the realm of education.

**Data Collection**

My role as both researcher and the subject of study were interwoven. I documented my experiences, perspectives, and emotions within educational settings. I relied on various sources of data, including personal journals, reflective writings, and artifacts collected over time to capture the depth and richness of my experiences. This process wasn't merely about recounting events; this was about capturing the essence of my journey as it unfolded.

Through this intimate and self-reflective process, the focus shifted from the broader topic of misogynoir to the lived experiences of Black women within education. It enabled me to unearth emotions and insights that might otherwise remain concealed through conventional research methods. I strived to create a comprehensive and authentic record of my encounters with misogynoir, ensuring a more profound understanding of our impact within the system of education.

**Ethical Considerations**

Conducted research through autoethnography brought forth distinct ethical considerations, primarily concerning the ethical treatment of my personal experiences. I maintained the highest ethical standards throughout the research process. One critical aspect of these ethical considerations was the responsibility to protect the anonymity and privacy of individuals who might be identified in my narratives. This extended to students, colleagues, and other parties who might have played a part in my experiences

within educational settings. While my primary focus was on my own journey (Ellis et al., 2000), it was essential to exercise caution when mentioning other individuals, ensuring that their privacy and dignity were preserved.

Additionally, the ethical principle of transparency is of paramount importance. I must be candid about my positionality, motivations, and any potential biases. This transparency promotes trustworthiness in the research process and allows readers and evaluators to assess the authenticity and reliability of my study. Moreover, the ethical handling of personal experiences in research requires that I strike a balance between the obligation to share my narrative and the responsibility to safeguard the identities of those I may referenced.

# Chapter 4: Findings

I explore the findings of my research within the power storytelling in the methodology of autoethnography, particularly within the challenging landscape of the educational system. Approaching this chapter through the lens of misogynoir, I convey the idea that enduring hardships becomes more manageable through storytelling (Blixen, 1937). I embark on a personal journey of framing my sorrows within this narrative Counter-storytelling. By crafting my sorrows into a story, I reclaim the sense of agency that was stripped away as I moved positions and states in the systems. My counter-storytelling becomes a powerful tool for giving meaning to my experiences, offering a space for comprehension within the complex context of my lived reality. The structure of my narrative serves to validate and affirm, provide context and language for misogynoir and its complexities. Through the use of storytelling, I find not only a voice but a mechanism for resilience and solace in the face of adversity.

## Gross Contempt

Embarking on my educational journey in a rural-suburban district exposed me to the systemic inequities faced by Black women within the schooling system. The level of white privilege and racism inherent in the system impacting my educational experience, became apparent only as I delved into the research of Dr. Moya Bailey (Bailey, 2018). In an effort to navigate the traumatic misogynoir experience in the education system, I often resorted to dissociation to escape mentally (Music, 2021). I would disconnect from my thoughts, hide my racial, gender, and faith identity and consciousness to detach from the overwhelming emotions accompanying my racialized experiences. It allowed my mind to operate on autopilot, enabling me to teach my students despite the internal battle of the

experience. Navigating my role as a founding member and the sole Black teacher in both the new campus and among the nine elementary schools in a predominantly white rural district was an experience marked by racial complexities and difficulties. Transitioning from my position as a first-grade teacher to team leader, I became the token Black woman and faced heightened scrutiny. Unbeknownst to me, discussions unfolded among the grade team leaders and the principal regarding my potential role as the first-grade team leader. It was from my first-grade colleague, affectionately referred to as a "friend," that I learned about the campus buzz surrounding teacher reassignments and the desire for me to lead a group of six teachers. As I endeavored to fulfill the responsibilities of the grade team leader, discontent grew within the team. The team became divided with one member uncertain about which side to align with. While three teachers demanded my removal from the position, district board policy did not permit the removal of a team leader at the teachers' request. I held the title of leader but lacked the authority necessary to fulfill the associated obligations.

One day, while returning from a convenient store with a colleague, one of the teachers on my team approached me in the parking lot of our campus and questioned a leadership decision I had made earlier that day. As we stood in front of the school, she showed blatant dishonor for my humanity by spitting in my face. As the saliva dripped down my face my spirit left my body, and my mind began to race. I thought about the actions I could take at this moment. This type of violence would warrant a response, "should I spit back in her face? Do I defend myself or call the police?" (Hubbard, 2024). Each option gripped me with more fear of being the "villain" in the survival of a misogynoiristic attack (Bailey, 2021, p.92).

> We have been socialized to respect fear more than our own need for language. I began to ask each time: What's the worst that could happen to me if I tell this truth? Unlike women in other countries, our breaking silence is unlikely to have us jailed, 'disappeared' or run off the road at night (Lorde, 1984).

My principal walked out of the building as saliva trickled down my lips. I hoped she would say something to the teacher. Perhaps she would point out the violence in her behavior. Instead, they both continued in different directions to their respective cars. My colleague and principal remained silent, a clear indicator they did not value me as a member of the school community, as a human being, or as a Black woman. I was not respected or valued, and it was evident that my worth was considered less than the saliva on my face.

To spit in my face is a clear manifestation of gross contempt. The action was a deliberate display of disgust and contempt toward me. The deliberate nature of the act of violence demonstrated a willful disregard for my human dignity. In the historical context of Black women (Dillard, 2016), instances of violence, encompassing both physical and verbal abuse, involved the demeaning act of having condiments and beverages pour on them as well as being spat on. The act of spitting carried symbolic weight, representing the hurling of insults and disregard for dignity.

**Systemic Shackles**

I filed a grievance with the district's newly appointed white male human resources superintendent. He continuously expressed eagerness to share that his approach to processing grievances was different from his previous white female predecessor. However, he then proceeded to reassure me that I did not have to worry about retaliation

or fear of my grievance being made public. As he took my statement, I began crying and hyperventilating while recounting the gross contempt my teammate had for me to commit such a vile and repulsive act as disgracefully expectorating on me. The two-hour meeting seemed like an eternity with his consistent reminders to breathe and take my time. At no point was I asked to write a written statement of what occurred. The meeting concluded with him laying out the next steps of the investigation and a guarantee to end the hostile work environment.

After the HR superintendent conducted interviews with each of my teammates, I was summoned back to the central office to receive the investigation findings. Despite "friend" recounting the humiliating act of saliva being directed at me, with the repulsive sight of her spitting on my person, and my other teammate's statement about overhearing numerous race-related comments and insinuations that affirmative action played a role in my selection as the team leader, he dismissed my grievance. The meeting concluded with the suggestions I should improve my accountability with colleagues, develop my leadership skills, and conform to workplace expectations. Furthermore, he recalled an incident where my assertiveness led to the aggressor, responsible for the offense, shedding tears in his office. The tears of this white woman (Hamad, 2020) served as a powerful testament to the preservation of whiteness. Her tears not only symbolized a personal emotional response but also acted as a potent weapon, effectively reinforcing the destructive force of misogynoir within the context of the district. In doing so, these tears played a significant role in perpetuating the district's unaltered systemic inequalities, vividly highlighting the deeply entrenched nature of racial and gender-based disparities. In that heart-wrenching moment, it felt as though an ethereal departure occurred as if my

very spirit had detached from my physical form. Simultaneously, an overwhelming weight descended, pulling my heart downward until it nestled into my pulsating feet. The sensation was akin to an emotional implosion, a visceral experience that encapsulated the depth of despair and sorrow. As silent witnesses, tears traced delicate paths down my face, each droplet capturing the palpable impact of observing the perpetuation of systemic inequalities. In the aftermath, my mind instinctively sought refuge in survival tactics, dissociation, and adaptation. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, I concluded that my only viable recourse was to resign from my position as the team leader. Choosing the path of efficiency, I conveyed my decision to my principal via email, hoping to circumvent another unproductive conversation.

Following this pivotal step, I sought guidance from my mentor, seeking solace in her experienced counsel. She steered me toward a focus on my students' well-being and encouraged the proactive measure of updating my resume to explore job opportunities in a new district. This transformative experience compelled me to confront the subtle compliance with the "model minority myth," as articulated by Bonilla-Silva (2006). The burden of change was unfairly placed on me, underscoring a focus on personal improvement. There seemed to be an implicit assumption that the root of the problem rested on my perceived lack of interpersonal skills, deflecting attention from the urgent need to directly confront the systemic racial issues.

This approach effectively shifted the responsibility from the district to create a safe and inclusive work environment, unfairly making me the scapegoat for the district's failure. In hindsight, I realized the racial oppression and microaggressions I had endured were not isolated incidents; rather, they were symptomatic of the norm within the

district's culture. The act of being petted like a dog when I came to the office in the summer with braids in my hair represents a clear diminishment of my agency and a dishonoring of my identity (Asare, 2023). Being told to stop talking so loudly or use "that" language referring to the sociolects I spoke, as it was not professional. Being treated differently with comments like "you're so articulate." Colorblind comments including "I don't see color we're all the same," and "everything doesn't have to be about race" to comments such as "you need to be careful not to offend anyone."

The district operated as a hub of white supremacy and racial discrimination. This revelation highlighted my previous obliviousness to the pervasive systemic issues that had long been ingrained in the district's fabric. In that soul-wrenching moment, the realization dawned upon me that the true source of my oppression lay within the system itself (Bailey, 2021). Despite my academic achievements and adeptness at navigating predominantly white spaces, I lacked the explicit language to identify my experience as both racial and gender discrimination. The quote "Silence is what we oppose, and our voice is the tool we use to fight back" (Monae, 2013) powerfully encapsulates my journey, echoing the profound struggle against the systemic forces that sought to silence me.

Similar to an enslaved mother who had to endure the silent agony of witnessing her children being sold to the highest bidder (Williams, 2018a), my utilization of survival techniques, passed down through generations in my family, mirrored the system's effective suppression of my voice. Despite the inner urge to speak up, I remained mute. Instead, I turned inward, subjecting myself to self-criticism and constant questioning of my qualifications for the job. Misogynoir arises from the belief that Black women are

inherently inferior, stemming from ideas that are intertwined with race and gender (Bailey, 2021). This means that certain thoughts unfairly place Black women in a lower position because “racism and sexism not as discrete or separate forms of prejudice but as an inseparable amalgamation of toxicity” (Bailey, 2021.p38). This concept, connected to misogynoir, adds to talks about stereotypes, biases, and unfair systems. Doubts about my worth permeated my thoughts, leading me to wonder if there was an inherent flaw within me. Both my actions and self-worth underwent intense scrutiny. I questioned my ability to succeed in school, within the district, and in life as a whole. My value and self-image became sources of uncertainty, and I felt confined within a narrow box that stifled my strengths and talents. I found myself imprisoned by my own thoughts and beliefs about both myself and the school community. I was sentenced to blatant racism, microaggressions, and subtle slights that held my identity captive. The remarkable impact I had on students, parents, and teachers was overshadowed. Additionally, when Black women disclose instances of abuse, they often encounter skepticism, limited empathy, and conjecture regarding their supposed contribution to the mistreatment.

> I share this story here so that the reader might understand the often-silent sufferings of Black women who serve and lead, so that you might hear the quiet sufferings that are the racialized realities and experiences as we live them, the ways that we are perceived, heard, and sometimes (mis)understood by white colleagues who dismiss racism and racial violence as not really harmful. (Dillard, 2016. p3)

Sharing one's experiences may result in not being taken seriously or facing attempts to rationalize the abuse. Repeated exposure to such skepticism and stigmatizing

messages can lead to the internalization of these harmful stereotypes, causing individuals to perceive themselves through this distorted lens (Moore-Lobban & Gobin, 2022).

In the six years I dedicated to this campus, my efforts were instrumental in spearheading the celebration of Black History and Hispanic Heritage Month. This initiative expanded beyond the campus, eventually becoming a district-wide implementation. Notably, I facilitated the invitation of the school's first African American artist, Cbabi Bayoc, to join our campus as a distinguished guest. Cbabi led an incredible assembly and lent his artistic expertise to craft an impactful mural. I successfully arranged for the internationally award-winning Bobbi Norfolk to conduct a school wide assembly and introduce the captivating art of storytelling. In addition, I orchestrated the infusion of African drumming into our yearly celebrations, enhancing the cultural richness of our school community.

Beyond cultural celebrations, I played a pivotal role in leading a district-wide policy change that allowed our Jewish and Muslim staff to observe their religious holidays without utilizing personal or sick days. Despite receiving National and State awards for CSC and PBIS programs, a significant racial disparity (Hollie & Russell Jr., 2022) persisted in the discipline rates among students of color, with an overrepresentation of our economically disenfranchised students being referred for special education. In response, I took the lead in aligning the Positive Behavior Support and Intervention (PBIS), our Caring School Community (CSC) initiatives and cultural and linguistic responsiveness (CLR) teaching and learning to ensure equity for every student (Hollie & Russell Jr., 2022). I co-created the first district-wide Restorative Practice initiative, which established daily morning meetings and assisted teachers in moving away from

traditional discipline methodologies to a restorative approach. As a highly requested kindergarten and first-grade teacher, I earned consistent praise for my innovative instructional practices and deep knowledge of the curriculum. My commitment to equity extended to establishing the first after-school tutoring program at the leasing office for our most underserved students. I also designed the initial academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning (SEL) school-wide intervention program. As I continued my service, I continued questioning the system itself and soon realized that my experiences were not isolated. Sharing my story with other educational leaders revealed that many Black women had endured similar situations. The true intent of the system became apparent: it was structured to maintain white leaders in positions of power and relegate Black teachers to positions of servitude. The educational community seemed designed to instill in Black women a sense of unworthiness for leadership roles, creating a system rigged against Black individuals, engineered to break their spirit.

**Kinfolk and Karen**

Parker Curry, a young girl, captivated hearts worldwide when a viral photo captured her in awe of the portrait of Michelle Obama painted by artist Amy Sherald (Curry & Curry, 2019). This striking portrait was unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. As Parker stood mesmerized, the profound impact of representation became clear. Similarly, my own awe-inspiring moment came when I was hired as an instructional leader under the leadership of my Black female superintendent and Black male assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. The sheer astonishment and joy I felt reflected the profound impact of having Black senior leadership in education.

Upon finalizing and signing my contract, memories flooded back to the first time I learned of my superintendent's existence. Witnessing someone who looked like me, breaking traditional barriers as the youngest principal in the state's largest school district, left an indelible impression. She effortlessly navigated her career across multiple districts, becoming a local trailblazer and showcasing possibilities for students. The empowerment I felt knowing someone with my background could hold such a prominent position in school leadership was enormous. As the school year commenced, I eagerly anticipated working with my new superintendent, learning from her, and aligning myself with the mission she had established for the campus and district.

In the first leadership training session, all the district principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and junior leaders gathered in the room. It marked one of the most surreal moments in my career as I had the privilege of serving alongside the largest number of Black leaders, both male and female. Shortly after, I met my building leader, the other instructional coach on our campus, and the members of the junior leadership team. During our initial meeting, I should have been more conscious of her interactions with others and the professional relationships she had established. Despite a two-part interview where she correctly pronounced my first name, she continued to insist on me offering a nickname to make it easier for others. This moment signaled the beginning of a long and tumultuous professional relationship.

Our names transcend being mere tools for conveying individual identities to the world. They serve as the psychological underpinning of our being, establishing the context for our sense of self. I have always been a strong advocate for the importance of name pronunciation and identity awareness. The significance of being able to pronounce

my name correctly and understand its meaning has been ingrained in me. Fortunate to be born into a family of storytellers, I've always been intrigued by the name narratives of my family members. I take great pride in my name, considering it a special collaboration bestowed upon me at birth by my parents.

My initial euphoria was fleeting, as I swiftly discerned my building leader personified the archetype of a Karen. She was a middle-aged white woman, brimming with arrogance, adept at manipulation, enshrouded in a palpable air of entitlement. Her conduct often manifested in a bid to assert herself as the ultimate authority invoking her privilege. Consistently diminishing the opinions and actions of our superintendent and other members of the district leadership team, she tirelessly championed the school mantra's "we put our hearts into everything we do," all accompanied by a smile that failed to conceal its disingenuous nature. In her, I encouraged the most perilous archetype of a white woman savior wielding power and holding a leadership role, perpetuating misogyny in subtle yet profoundly impactful ways.

The fellow instructional leader and I occupied an office space tucked away in the basement, distanced from the principal, other leaders, and teachers we coached. It soon dawned on me that we were outsiders to the principal's inner circle, as her presence in our vicinity was a rarity. This made me hesitant to seek support from our principal. Our exclusion extended to the meetings designed for the teams we were meant to coach, presided over by the principal. Instead of participation, we were handed a list of tasks falling under the vague umbrella of "other duties as assigned," lacking alignment with the district's instructional leadership goals.

The principal made it clear that our top priority was the 2-hour recess duty three times a week, prioritizing it over district meetings, teacher observations, lesson modeling, or coaching conversations. My frustration began to change into despair when I discovered that recess duty was a job responsibility of the teacher assistants (TAs). Interestingly, one of the white female TAs, who happened to be a close friend of the principal, consistently exempted herself from recess duty. She justified her exemption by mentioning other tasks that required her attention or the cold temperature outside. This directive compelled us to integrate coaching conferences into the time gaps between or after regular school hours. The time constraints posed significant challenges in scheduling meetings or engaging in meaningful conversations with teachers. Many of the teachers I served were hesitant to sacrifice their time after school or be interrupted during their pre-school preparation.

When I was invited to attend grade-level team meetings, I was not provided with the chance to inquire about teachers' progress toward district curriculum goals and discuss questions related to their students' achievement data. My feedback was consistently reframed in a way that focused solely on highlighting the positive skills of the teacher. Her approach to feedback did not provide teachers with a sense of ownership or provide the opportunity to reflect on their own practice. Her primary focus was on pleasing people, avoiding conflict, and sidestepping accountability. In an effort to avoid conflict, she employed "kindness as an emotional tool of whiteness" to navigate structural racism (Picover, 2009, p.208). Inadvertently, this feedback strategy diminished the potential for the teachers to improve and for me to provide instructional coaching support

to each other to improve our practice. Instead, she was encouraging me to focus only on the positive aspects of the teacher and the school.

During our building leadership meetings, when I presented suggestions to the principal on how to enhance the classroom culture, I encountered a lack of receptiveness. Rather than considering my input, I was informed that the school was on a positive trajectory, and the teachers were deemed to be doing a commendable job. This response persisted even in the face of a notable increase in disciplinary actions of Black boys and the repeated activation of the crisis response team in the same classrooms. The principal seemed to dismiss my concerns, pointing out what they perceived as a negative outlook on the teachers and commenting on my perceived lack of a positive approach.

As the year continued, I was surprised to find myself increasingly excluded from the decision-making process. I was excluded from the process of identifying the instructional materials that would be used in the classrooms and from the process of identifying the teachers who would need additional support. There grew an increased level of tension between my principal, and I. I was no longer invited to add issues of concern to the weekly leader meeting agendas. In fact, my concerns were not even acknowledged. There was a consistent pattern of disrespect and disdain for my input. I was instructed to assume positive intent and to not make waves. It was difficult to believe that I was being ignored despite her continuous communication with district leadership about her level of autonomy and collaboration in leadership decisions. The portrayal of Black women in a misogynoiristic manner enables society to overlook them without feeling remorse (Bailey, 2021).

Her perception of my directness, accountability, constructive feedback, and dedication to advancing curriculum and instruction was a threat to her position as principal. Simultaneously, a shadow was cast over my confidence as an instructional coach. This raised doubts about my effectiveness, leaving me questioning my ability to deliver on my responsibilities and my own sense of worth. “The jeopardy of being Black and female in a racist society may well make one less afraid of the sanctions against success. A non-subservient Black woman is by definition a transgressive-she is the ultimate outsider (Moore-Lobban et. el., 2022). The lack of support and covert misogynoir left me grappling with a sense of failure and inadequacy. I was left feeling depleted, demoralized, disheartened, deflated and depressed as a result of the racial gaslighting (Asare, 2020). I felt like my commitment to the school was in vain and I was facing an uphill battle to advance the district vision for our campus. It was a difficult feeling that I had to continually justify my presence and contributions to the school.

At various stages, we will face obstacles in obtaining opportunities, advancing, and overcoming self-doubt. However, beyond those challenges lies the ability to seize opportunities and shape our own narratives (Abrams, 2018) In that moment, my personal aspiration to become a principal and serve as a change agent in the school community came to an end. The lack of clarity and support from my principal created a sense of isolation and uncertainty. I was forced to rely on my own judgment and act as a solo agent.

**Score gate: Inflation Scandal**

In an effort to make the most of the eight hours I spent on the “we put our hearts into everything we do,” campus, I took the initiative to volunteer and assist teachers in

various tasks, including conducting Development Reading Assessments (DRA) and providing individual support to students for their assignments. Many teachers appreciated the helping hand I extended to them. However, a veteran 2nd-grade teacher initially asserted that she did not need any assistance. Nevertheless, her stance changed as the deadline for assessments approached. While testing her students, I uncovered a significant data discrepancy. Students performing above their grade level consistently failed each DRA, and upon closer examination, I found that their DRA folders were absent from all previous assignments. In contrast, students below grade level were completing multiple DRAs swiftly and some students significantly above grade level were unable to pass their current reading level. Subsequent investigation exposed a recurring pattern of discrepancies in results, extending back to kindergarten. Recognizing this consistent irregularity became a red flag, prompting a need for a more thorough examination. Upon further investigation, it was revealed that all the students in the teacher's class had been taught by the same kindergarten and first-grade teachers. The glaring exaggeration and inflation of data discrepancies raised significant concern. Notably, these teachers, all of whom were white women, held influential positions and seemed to have favored relationships with my principal. This heightened the gravity of the situation and reinforced the imbalances in power dynamics.

Despite witnessing the misleading and unethical conduct, I hesitated to confront the teachers or report it to my principal due to fear of potential retaliation or being labeled as incompetent. Instead, I sought the assistance of my teammate and the reading specialist. Both concurred with my findings and supported the idea of reporting the matter to the principal. I presented my findings to my principal and shared the data

discrepancies with her. She questioned my ability to be objective, while also expressing concern that I was biased toward each of the teachers. She then proceeded to ask me to consider whether each teacher made a harmless mistake in their data collection. I was confused by her dismissive response; the discrepancies were clear and deliberate for three years. Unsure of how to proceed, I asked her what the procedure was for reporting data discrepancies. She did not have a clear answer for me and instead said she would talk with each teacher individually to get to the bottom of the matter. Then, she requested I not share the information with the other instructional coaches or district leaders. Also, I was required to retest each student to ensure their DRA data was accurate. I was overwhelmed by the thought of retesting over 35 students without support from the teacher as the deadline was less than a week away. I requested assistance from the reading specialist and my teammate as there were several other district tasks I was responsible for completing.

After meeting with each teacher, the principal did not share the information she had gathered from them. She focused on each teacher's teary-eyed response and heartfelt denial of inflating data. This was a clear indication of the power of white women's tears as a weapon against accepting responsibility. Their tears provided each teacher protection and privilege of emotional security (Hamad, 2020). The principal also stated she had been in contact with the superintendent, who agreed the teachers' intentions were not to maliciously deflate the data but to ensure it was accurate and fair. As I began retesting students from the 2nd grade teacher's classroom, she grew increasingly hostile and accusatory. She mentioned that, throughout her career, the integrity of the data has never been challenged. She informed me she would contact the superintendent. Soon after the

teacher took a leave of absence and filed her retirement paperwork. My principal blamed the teacher's retirement on me and insisted I sub in her classroom until a suitable replacement was found despite having two qualified TA's capable of serving as short, termed substitutes.

I soon learned the 2nd-grade teacher was involved in a similar incident at another campus in the district. Upon being informed of the incident that was reported, the principal confronted me with a denial, asserting that the incident never took place. Additionally, she emphasized the teacher's excellence as an educator, stating that the district had no concerns regarding her teaching abilities. The level of ostracism enhanced the presence of marginalization. The invisibility of my identity was belittling (Peters & Nash, 2021). My gut was telling me there was something wrong, but I was unable to articulate it. I was unable to find the words to express my concerns. I started discussing my concerns with teammates and close friends to confirm I was not mistaken. I needed to know that I was not alone in my observations. My teammate confirmed my institution and validated my feelings as she shared similar experiences as she served at the campus.

**Silent Struggles**

> Whether it's marked by tears, anger, fear, or numbness—understand that we acknowledge your presence and genuinely care about your recovery. Remarkable Black women, both well-known and unknown, spanning from ancestors to those living in this current season, share the identity of survivors (Bryant & Arrington, 2022).

During this period, the weight of my multiple responsibilities evolved into an emotional burden, intricately weaving a layer of distress into the fabric of my daily life.

As I confronted the challenges of being a caregiver for my mother, who was in the end stages of her battle with ovarian cancer. Each day carried a palpable heaviness as I sought to balance the surviving misogynoir with the profound emotional challenges of providing care. The juxtaposition of professional expectations and personal grief crafted a nuanced interplay of emotions, ranging from profound sorrow and helplessness to fleeting moments of resilience. In the midst of all my obligations, this heightened my level of stress, and I was diagnosed with high blood pressure. Misogynoir has the potential to be used as a tool to negatively impact the well-being of Black women. This diagnosis added to my emotional landscape and became a mosaic of conflicting emotions.

There were a few times each month when I needed to miss work to accompany my mother to doctor appointments or chemotherapy sessions. Periodically, I would check my email and work calendar, and respond to group text requests from my principal to ensure I did not miss any deadlines. I could not shake the anxiety about my principal's potential reaction despite these absences being expected and planned. She frequently brought up the consistent absences of a Black female teacher, framing it as an inconvenience while that teacher cared for her ailing father. My principal emphasized the strain that taking time off work caused her, and highlighted concerns about being short-staffed, especially during recess duty. She projected an attitude of arrogance and entitlement, confidently stating that she could easily balance the demands of work and caregiving for her parents. This demeanor implied that she believed her ability to handle these responsibilities surpassed my own. Additionally, she emphasized the inconvenience my absence caused for the staff on the campus.

Spending the entire day at the hospital, upon returning home, I felt both physically exhausted and emotionally drained. The immense pressure to be present at work the next day weighed heavily on me, and I grappled with a sense of guilt for being off work. Simultaneously, I harbored worries about my mother's well-being, which compounded my feelings of guilt for not being physically present to provide support during this challenging time.

Six months into the school year my world shattered with the passing of my mom after her long-term battle with cancer. Devastation engulfed me, but amidst the grief, several district leaders reached out with condolences and unwavering support. The superintendent bought me comfort food, reminding me I was surrounded by kinfolk or commonly referred to as fictive kinship (Perry, 2011). They provided comfort during the wake, contributing food for the repass and making heartfelt donations to the Ovarian Cancer Society in her honor. Grateful for their compassion, I expressed my gratitude, and it was a breath of fresh air.

When I returned to work after my bereavement leave, I became a target of the school principal. Her actions became more intrusive, and she started attributing teachers' inability to complete tasks to my bereavement leave. As I was adjusting to my new normal and trying to get back into the swing of things at work, we were notified by our senior leadership team we needed to make copies of two weeks' worth of work packets for students, as we would not be returning to school due to the global pandemic. Grateful for the peace and solitude away from my principal and the school, the usual hustle and bustle seemed overwhelmingly loud. It felt as though I was caught in a whirlwind of activity and noise. The full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of my

life was not immediately apparent to me. At that moment, my primary focus was on escaping the heightened levels of stress and misogynoir.

As our district commenced the creation of virtual learning activities, I received the news my teammate would be moving to a different campus within the district. Before I could fully process the emotions of losing a coworker who had been remarkably supportive and understanding, we were informed that interviews for the new instructional coach would soon begin. As we proceeded with the interviews for the top three candidates, I felt a mix of emotions—anticipation and excitement at the prospect of welcoming a new team. However, during the interview process, I discovered that I was not the principal's choice for the instructional coach position. She had a specific candidate in mind, and she was not willing to consider an alternative. Surprisingly, the chosen candidate was the reading specialist. Initially, we were told that the interviews would be conducted by our building leadership team, and the final decision would be mine. However, it became evident that the principal had a strong preference. Notably, the three candidates were all women— one Black and two White. The Black woman possessed the most experience, a stronger resume, and exhibited the highest level of preparedness during the interview.

One of the white candidates was an internal teacher, and the other was an external candidate, the spouse of a teacher on another campus. It was not surprising that the principal disregarded the team’s preference for the highly qualified Black candidate and opted to hire a different candidate due to nepotism (Wingfield, 2020). Fortunately, an instructional coach position became available at another campus within the district, offering the Black woman an opportunity to secure that role.

As I witnessed this shift, my heart went out to the candidate we had passed over, and I couldn't shake the feeling of betrayal by the principal. The pain of this betrayal deepened when I discovered that the two previous instructional coaches, whom I was hired to replace, were both women of color. It became evident that the impact of misogynoir was at play, underscoring the systemic challenges faced by qualified Black women in the education field. To assist women of color, we need to delineate their multiple identities, examine how those identities intersect to privilege or lead them to face discrimination (Wing, 2000, p.8).

One coach elected not to renew her contract at the end of the year as siting the campus was not a safe place and wanted to be able to coach teachers. The other was a Black woman who resigned mid-year citing the principal's inequity and disparate treatment. This involved holding the Black instructional coach to higher expectations and scrutiny compared to the white teachers. The principal did not appreciate her direct communication style, often labeling her as aggressive. The principal questioned her qualifications and asserted that she had ineffective instructional coaching abilities.

**Karen and Becky Unite**

My second year at the campus commenced with our continued remote work, as the world had not yet fully reopened. Eager to build a strong working relationship, especially since my new teammate was new to both the district and instructional coaching, I promptly reached out to her. She was receptive and appreciated my outreach as she was nervous about the transition to the classroom. We quickly established a collaborative connection to support our campus. Our weekly Zoom meetings became a valuable space for mutual support and discussions about our campus.

Upon returning to the campus under COVID protocols, our district launched culturally responsive pedagogy, leading to the formation of a dedicated cadre on our campus. My teammate expressed interest in leading the cadre, given her newness to this pedagogy, my principal selected me to lead the team. Despite my considerable experience in cultural and linguistic responsiveness and leading a team focused exclusively on pedagogical work, it became apparent that my selection to head the team was driven more by my racial identity than by my expertise. I was selected as another act of symbolic representation (Leong, 2017). There was an unrealistic expectation for me to lead the cadre, composed entirely of voluntold teachers of color. The team did not reflect the racial and ethnic demographics of the teaching staff. The school community itself was divided along racial lines, mirroring the broader racial climate. All the white staff members were uninterested in using culturally responsive pedagogy, while all the staff of color were enthusiastic about implementation. This divide did not align with the students' racial demographics, as the majority were Black. Racial reconciliation became an unfair responsibility for me as a Black woman. Despite feeling a sense of disappointment, I suppressed my feelings about the implementation and tried to perceive it as an opportunity.

Consequently, my principal found herself tasked with implementing this new support framework for students. As our district decided to phase out Response to Intervention (RTI) and transition to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Collaboratively, my principal and new teammate initiated the drafting of a comprehensive building-wide implementation plan for MTSS, aligning with the district's implementation of a new intervention system. Neither the principal nor the instructional

coach possessed experience in designing and establishing a building-wide intervention system. Leveraging my background and expertise, I contributed suggestions. While my principal and I initially collaborated on drafting the intervention system, I noticed a pattern where she would present my plans to other leaders without attributing my contribution. Eventually, I found myself solely responsible for designing the entire system. I was now responsible for leading two major initiatives. I had no time to focus on my work and was completely overworked absent of support.

My principal started micromanaging my daily schedule and dictating the tasks. Her questioning of my work diminished my autonomy and acknowledgement of my heavy workload. Additionally, she consistently made belittling comments and emphasized the district's initiatives were not aligned with my job description. Concurrently, I noticed a change in my new teammate's behavior. Communication dwindled gradually, with decreasing responsiveness to emails and text messages. Notably, she started copying the reading specialist in her responses. In-person interactions became brief and brusque, with an apparent avoidance of engaging in conversations. Surprisingly, she requested the discontinuation of our weekly Zoom meetings and stopped responding to invitations for team meetings with the grade levels to dual coach. This shift contradicted her initial request for collaborative coaching, citing her newness and discomfort with coaching. When I sought her input as a thought partner, she frequently prefaced her ideas with references to what our principal might convey and including direct quotes. She started observing and offering support to the teachers I was assigned to coach without my knowledge. Her directives to the teachers contradicted the suggestions I had provided. I observed a pattern: conversations between her and the

reading specialist consistently came to an abrupt halt whenever I entered our shared office space. This aligns with a historical example (Little, 2021) of exclusion and marginalization experienced by Black women within the Women's Suffrage movement. Conflict arises right from the start regarding the emphasis placed on these two requests, and Black women become marginalized in this scenario (Little, 2021). During this period (Little, 2021) Black women often found themselves sidelined and overlooked. In the Suffrage movement, they faced a formidable battle as they fought not only for the right to vote but also for the right to be heard and included in the movement. They demanded acknowledgement, representation, and an equal platform to voice their concerns pushing against both racial and gender disparities.

**Collaboration to Confinement**

My intuition strongly hinted that something was awry. Little did I know, I had unwittingly become the subject of her scrutiny and observations. A few weeks later, my principal called me into the office to discuss her concerns regarding how I was supporting my new teammate. She expressed worry about our coaching relationship, advising me to be mindful of my tone of voice and approach when expressing disagreements. She also emphasized the need to exercise caution in my interactions with teachers and to be mindful of their perceptions of me. She cited indirect communication and feel-good responses as the only best approach. The next week I was called into the office again to meet with the principal and discuss my interactions with my new teammate. She expressed concern that I appeared to be unapproachable, which was not the image she wanted me to convey. She stressed I needed to make my teammates feel welcomed at our campus and devoid of discomfort.

Her perception of me aligned with the Sapphire or ABW (Angry Black Woman) stereotype, portraying assertive and confident Black women as unapproachable, aggressive, or confrontational (Bailey, 2021). This stereotype, akin to the harsh portrayal described in "The Sapphire Caricature," extends beyond a mere characterization. It serves as a social control mechanism employed to penalize Black women who deviate from societal norms that prescribe passivity, servility, non-threatening behavior, and invisibility. Her insistence on upholding whiteness standards reinforced societal expectations, creating misogynistic pressure to conform to a narrow set of preconceived norms (Jim Crow Museum, 2008).

I was asked to detail conversations between my teammate and myself. As I began to detail our interactions, a sudden wave of physical distress overwhelmed me. My chest tightened, muscles tensed, and my mouth dried up. Panic and confusion set in; I was completely caught off guard by the abrupt shift in the principal's tone and demeanor. Uncertain about what was happening, I felt unprepared to handle the situation. The principal disclosed that my teammate had raised concerns, expressing discomfort that she wanted to address the matter promptly to prevent further issues or indicating she might quit. The principal suggested a meeting to discuss these concerns and find a resolution. When I inquired about the formality of the meeting, she assured me it was not formal, and I agreed, hopeful that this would be an opportunity to resolve issues amicably. However, the meeting took an unexpected turn. Instead of an open discussion, I faced a confrontational and aggressive demeanor as well as a forceful tone. My attempts to share my perspective or suggest solutions were met with a dismissive lecture. Overpowered,

my initial reaction was to freeze up and remain silent. Uncertain of how to handle the situation, my breathing quickened, and my heart rate increased.

I eventually interjected, expressing the meeting was no longer productive, and I wished to end it. I communicated my unease with the meeting and lack of safety. My teammate disregarded my response, asserting that I was overreacting and suggesting that I needed to exhibit greater maturity. The principal insisted the meeting continue, emphasizing I needed to listen to my teammate's concerns. Tears welled up, and I frantically searched for tissue in the office. Unable to find any, I resorted to using my shirt sleeve to dry my eyes. The principal then conveyed that my emotions were not genuine, and my perspective was deficient in legitimacy.

> Seldom granted the presumption of innocence and are rarely seen as deserving of empathy and assistance. When expressing anger, we are often labeled as aggressors; if shedding tears, we're accused of succumbing to victimhood; when composed emotions are deemed lacking, yet when emotional, we're unfairly characterized as less rational humans and more primitive beings (Hamad, 2020).

Confused and anguished, I asked if I was being accused of something, to which she did not respond negatively. She criticized the way I handled the situation and inability to restrain my emotional reaction. In the midst of the escalating tension, I spiraled into a full-fledged panic attack, struggling to breathe. Struggling to find gaps for air, I communicated to my principal that I could no longer bear being in our office or engaging in direct communication with my teammate due to the hostile environment. I conveyed my decision to communicate exclusively via email, copying the principal on all correspondence, and expressed my intent not to respond to calls or texts on our district

phones. The principal deemed this course of action as inappropriate, unequivocally asserting her authority. In the subsequent weeks, I actively avoided spending time in our office and chose to work in open spaces with witnesses present. When compelled to be in the office alone, I took precautions by locking the door and lowering the blinds. I initiated the development of my exit strategy, meticulously ensuring that I had all the necessary elements in place to depart from the campus and secure another job by the end of the year.

After three weeks, I was beckoned into my principal's office, a space that now felt oppressive and suffocating. Within those walls, she delivered news of a formal grievance filed by my teammate, alleging my presence made her feel unsafe, and the workspace had transformed into a hostile environment. The principal detailed the forthcoming grievance process, a daunting journey that involved collecting statements from both me and my teammate, eventually to be submitted to human resources. The option of having a union representative present during this tumultuous meeting was extended, but I chose to face the imminent storm alone. I was as my union representative would be a teacher in my building. By this point, the whisperings of my situation had spread like wildfire among the teachers, leading to their active avoidance. In this claustrophobic atmosphere, the principal expressed genuine concern about the shared office space becoming a potential threat. Desperate for a remedy, she sought guidance from human resources to sever our office-sharing ties. I reassured her that I had already taken the initiative to relocate, desperate to escape the oppressive confinement. I stressed I harbored no ill intentions and had no desire to inflict harm.

I was relocated from the office to what could only be described as a former storage closet—an airless enclave devoid of any windows. The moment I stepped into the space, it felt like the walls were closing in, confining me to a tight and constrained atmosphere. The dimensions of the closet were restricting, and tight quarters felt like traversing in solitary confinement. Each turn and step required careful consideration and precision. The air inside felt stagnant, carrying a faint mustiness that hinted at its former storage function. This compact haven provided me with minimal room to work with students. The inclusion of my microwave and mini refrigerator meant my need to step outside was limited to restroom breaks, establishing a semblance of autonomy within this constrained, jail cell environment. The absence of natural light casts a pall over the surroundings, rendering the atmosphere eerie and isolating. The ceiling seemed to press down, and the walls leaned in, intensifying the pervasive sense of isolation and discomfort. The stark contrast from the office's open, communal space amplified the feeling of entrapment. I found myself compelled to open the door periodically, just to allow a breath of fresh air to permeate the suffocating space. However, opening the door went against COVID protocols, introducing an additional constraint to my already confined reality. The necessity to seek moments of relief evolved into a small act of resistance against the restrictive nature of my new, COVID-compliant yet still confining environment.

The subsequent phase unfolded as I was summoned once more to the central office, where I convened with the Human Resource Director (HRD). In a solemn encounter, she meticulously delineated my rights as an instructional leader and laid out the steps of the grievance process. Following this, she conducted interviews with key

stakeholders—my principal, teammate, reading specialist, and myself. The period of anticipation during the waiting phase was rife with tension and uncertainty.

Several weeks later, I found myself back in the central office, facing the HRD. As we sat across from each other, the atmosphere thick with anticipation, the findings concerning the vague allegations were disclosed. The HRD, formal and direct, conveyed the superintendent was fully informed of the situation. Holding my breath, I absorbed the outcome. The language chosen for the findings was deliberately ambiguous, rendering me in a state of neither guilt or innocence. These elusive words offered no clear resolution, further entangling the already intricate web of indistinctness.

In that poignant moment, the realization dawned on me regarding the impact of white women leveraging their privilege and power in detrimental ways. My Blackness and womanhood predisposed me to experiences that lack empathy and understanding from others (Bailey, 2021). This realization went beyond the immediate circumstances, delving into the broader discourse on methods for dismantling the deeply ingrained constructs of whiteness and gender (Matias, 2019). The ambiguity of the findings not only left me in professional limbo but also underscored the urgency of addressing systemic issues ingrained within the dynamics of power, privilege, and accountability.

**Subversive Shadows**

On June 2, 2021, I packed up everything and relocated to my birth state, Texas. I informed my former colleagues, friends, and family that I was leaving Saint Louis for Dallas, a city in the Bible Belt. Many were supportive of my decision and excited to follow the adventures of my career as Assistant Principal of Instruction (API) at an

elementary charter school in Fort Worth, Texas. I was thrilled to secure a role that leveraged my strengths in curriculum and instruction.

I joined a team of four leaders: my principal, a Principal in Residence (PIR), another API, and an Assistant Principal of Operations (APO). Our team boasted diversity—the principal, a middle-class white male native to a small town in Texas; the PIR, a Black woman recently named founding principal for the next new campus launched in the region; the other API, a bilingual Mexican woman transferred from another Texas campus in the organization; and our APO, a wealthy bilingual Hispanic male with a strong friendship with the principal. The APO and I were of the same age, while the other leaders were several years younger. Except for myself, each team member resided in Fort Worth. At the time, I was oblivious to the racial divide and economic perceptions of Dallas versus Fort Worth. It resembled the Olive or Delmar divide in Saint Louis.

The Delmar Divide (Woodruff, 2021) in St. Louis signifies a longstanding socio-economic and racial gap between neighborhoods north and south of Delmar Boulevard. Southern areas tend to be more affluent and predominantly white, with better resources, while northern neighborhoods often face higher poverty rates and limited opportunities, primarily among Black residents (Woodruff, 2021). “It’s part of that ingrained, invisible, institutionalized racism kind of thing that you don’t even know it’s there, but it’s there,” (Abello, 2019, p.3) The divide reflects historical legacies of segregation and discriminatory policies, emphasizing the persistent urban inequalities (Woodruff, 2021).

A majority of our staff on the campus were bilingual, and Spanish was spoken throughout the building. This marked a stark difference from my experience in Missouri

schools, where staff and students were not encouraged to speak in their first language. Our student population was 65% Black, 30% Hispanic, and 5% white students. Our campus was considered an exceptional option compared to the failing neighborhood districts. The decor was beautiful and brilliant, with the organization's brand colors prominently displayed. There was a college display featuring pennants from various universities, with a majority representing Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Historically Hispanic Universities. Surrounding the campus were 10-foot Black gates with coded entrances for staff, parents, and students.

During my first visit to the campus in summer school, I was welcomed by the principal with a bag full of school swag. As I toured the campus, I noticed a culture of joy, and everyone I met welcomed me with open arms. I recall feeling nervous about bringing the fullness of my racial and gender identity to the campus. However, I met a teacher who would be assigned to my coaching team. Her hair was styled in a large afro puff, she wore a T-shirt that read "Black Teachers Rock," and she greeted me without code-switching. She epitomized a portrayal of Black identity. (Puwar, 2004). The principal spoke highly of her ability to connect with students, her enthusiasm, and her track record of achieving results in student achievement.

The moment was surreal; it signaled to me that I could bring my full Black and female self to work every day. I felt safe letting the locs of my hair flow freely, without worrying about maintaining a fresh retwist or covering the edges of my locs. No longer did I have to ponder over the clothes I chose to wear or the size of my hoop earrings to be deemed professional. I was thrilled to have the Principal in Residence (PIR) assigned as my mentor. She was an inspiration, slated to be the founding principal of the next new

campus in the organization. She proved to be an exceptional mentor; direct, honest, and intentional in training me.

In my role as Assistant Principal of Instruction, my primary responsibility was coaching and developing teachers. The campus was departmentalized from 1st grade, with students below grade level not attending special area classes like physical education (P.E.), Accelerated Reader (AR) and Hotspot. The Hotspot class allowed students to log on to the organization's math program to reinforce skills at their developmental level, while AR provided an opportunity for students to log on to the reading program and practice their independent reading skills. I was assigned ten teachers, two instructional aides affectionately referred to as Team Ambitious.

The PIR was co-assigned as my mentor along with the school principal. She was responsible for coaching and developing instructional capacity. I met with her twice weekly to discuss my progress with coaching teachers and to understand the operating mechanisms of the organization. Throughout the school year, she became my sounding board and confidant. I felt safe and supported by her, and we connected in ways that made me comfortable in my skin. During our discussions, I shared my experiences as a Black female educator, and she acknowledged and validated those experiences. She also embraced my innovative ideas, which were countercultural to the organization's previous practices. The PIR welcomed and supported my suggestions for implementing culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. The goal was to create an inclusive and effective learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of all students.

As students returned for the start of the new school year, we were in optional COVID protocols. I tested positive for COVID-19. Being in quarantine was a rough way

to begin the new school year. I was disappointed that I had to miss the second and part of the third week of school. As the symptoms progressed, I barely had energy to respond to group text messages and emails from my teacher team and lead team. Every day, teachers and students were testing positive for COVID-19. Upon my return, I was informed my coaching load had shifted. My principal assured me that it was not due my absence but the need to give me a balanced workload.

I prioritized creating effective systems for the unique 5th-grade team, the only one in our region. Collaborating with the team leader and math teacher, we revamped schedules, established a culture protocol, and fostered a student-centered learning environment. Despite concerns about breaking protocols, I assured the team leader she wouldn't face penalties. The positive changes in her classroom culture spread to other teachers and grade levels I coached. As fall break neared, the fifth-grade team leader's maternity leave preparation led to a less-experienced teacher taking over. This resulted in a surge of disciplinary issues, with an increasing number of students being sent to my office. Despite my role focusing on instructional coaching, I found myself handling a growing number of disciplinary matters, with daily referrals reaching double digits. Nearly a third of the students were on the discipline roster, and the grade level faced a crisis with disruptive incidents occurring every 30 minutes. I spent extended hours at the school, feeling constant stress and exhaustion.

During a check meeting with the principal and principal in residence (PIR), I expressed concerns about the number of students on the discipline roster without a plan to address the problem. The principal responded that he had limited awareness of the problem and would speak with the temporary grade team lead. The PIR offered that we

begin to implement the organization's protocol for leadership presence in the 5th grade hallway throughout the day. While this strategy may have had some impact in reducing the number of severe disciplinary issues, the overall situation remained unchanged. My presence in the 5th grade hallways was so continuous that I requested a standing desk and a standing chair. I conducted all my coaching conversations with other grade level teachers in the hallway. I was so inundated with putting out fires that I was unable to focus on my professional development, intellectual preparation, observations, and coaching.

Approaching our first holiday break, all region APIs joined a mentoring cohort led by a knowledgeable managing director, a recently awarded doctoral graduate in education. She was keen on developing leaders in the cohort, emphasizing the importance of instructional priorities and calendar management during our initial Zoom meeting. Despite her guidance to allocate 70-75% of our time to instructional priorities, I realized most of my time was consumed by handling discipline issues, making it challenging to adhere to the suggested focus on instructional matters.

After the meeting, I reached out to the director of the cohort and asked her how I could maintain my calendar, handle discipline, and provide instructional leadership. She suggested I create a new schedule and prioritize my calendar. I immediately thought to myself, my PIR and principal have not had to rearrange their daily schedule to put our fires in 5th grade. The director of the cohort began to ask about the 5th grade students and the root cause of the issue. She was surprised at the severity of the issues as she had check-in meetings with both my PIR and principal and was under the impression that the issues were minor. She encouraged me to use my skills and expertise to develop a

solution. I was determined to find a solution that was unique and tailored to my students and my campus. I was not interested in the one size fits all model our organization was trying to impose. I began to think about the root cause of the issue and determined that the largest number of students referred were Black and brown boys who were in reading intervention or received special education services. Students in reading intervention did not have an opportunity to attend special area classes. Their school day consisted of 7 hours of instruction and 30 minutes of lunch and recess.

When I presented my findings to my PIR, she was not surprised as this had been a gap the previous year at another campus in the district. She asked what tool I used to track the data as our organization did not have a referral system. I showed her the data from a tracker I created, and she was amazed to see the number of students referred. She encouraged me to pursue this further and share it during my check in with my principal. My principal did not seem as concerned about data and was more concerned with the volume of the work. He gave me the opportunity to implement my plan but did not give me the support.

Winter break was approaching, and my PIR shared with me that she would be applying for openings in our regional department. While I was thrilled about the possibility of her promotion, I was nervous about being primarily coached by my principal; he was not available when I needed support and directed me to the PIR. Apparently, I was not the only person concerned about the change of support. The PIR reached out to the director of our API cohort to offer additional support. At the time, I was grateful to have two leaders who care about ensuring I received support. I was oblivious to their indirect communication of my principal's willingness to support me.

As we returned at the start of the new year we celebrated the promotion of the PIR as a lead team with lunch. However, our celebration was short lived as I was immediately called to a 5th grade classroom as a student was in need of support. The student was upset about something the teacher had said and was refusing to work, shouting profanities and kicking his desk. The student and I had established a relationship over the course of the year, and he typically would calm down once I entered the classroom. However, I was not able to get him to calm down and had to call for help. As the PIR was entering the 5th grade hallway the student took off running toward the front of the school. We ran after him and called for additional support. The principal sent the Black male physical education (PE) teacher to take the student to the office. The student ran into the conference room, the three of us followed. The student still started yelling and throwing the chairs and other ideas around the room. We called again for support and the APO came in and attempted to restrain the student. After the student attempted to bite, we called for the principal to assist and notify the parent. When the parent arrived, she shared the student's mental health and medical history.

After the disclosure, I requested a meeting with the entire leader of the team to set up a plan of action. As we began to debrief about the situation, possible causes and who would be responsible for what, the principal said, "there was not much we could do for those types of kids." Several of the lead team members started laughing, the principal in residence (PIR), PE, and myself looked at each other with a blank stare. I responded with; I am not sure what type of kids you are referring to but I am concerned his eloping will escalate. Before we could have a clear plan of action the principal and APO exited stating it was time for their check-in meeting. The PE teacher and I stayed to create a plan of

action for the future. Then, I asked him about the micro aggressive comment the principal made, he looked at me and said “you have not seen anything yet. Why do I think we always get called to the classroom for the Black students?” I knew the principal’s white centering was no longer going to be hidden.

Two weeks later the student’s behavior escalated from eloping the classroom to eloping the school. He attempted to run to the house, headed in the wrong direction and 10 miles away. Before the principal could get out of the building, our APO and PIR were in separate cars trying to follow the students. The principal asked me to call the parents, the police and wait to meet with them at the school. As I stood shaking in the campus driveway with the secretary and other API, I could not help but think this could have been prevented. My biggest fear was I would lose my job because the student left the campus. The next day, the new hired Black male superintendent came to the campus to discuss the incident. I was relieved when he told me that incident had approved my pay grade and he needed answers from the principal. He asked me to give him my intervention plan and the principal response. The principal arrogantly exited the meeting and said it was no big deal. The parent was just “butt hurt” because her “goofball” son was suspended. Little did I know this was the beginning of my principal no longer hiding his white centering (Phillips & Phillips, 2017).

**Beyond the Surface**

I remember sitting in my office and reflecting on the racialized trauma I had experienced at previous campuses. I decided to take the advice of Angela Davis (1974) and refuse to passively accept things beyond my control; instead, I was actively working to change those aspects that I find unacceptable. I started engaging the 5th grade team

and disproportion of discipline with the Black boys. My first task was to coach the science teacher on the team with the largest number of referrals, suspensions, and homeroom reassignment requests. She was a bilingual, first year teacher, from an affluent background, who identified as Latinx and had a degree in Biology. When observed in the classroom she would often make sarcastic comments about the students and their behavior. She often compared the students' behavior to wild animals. She believed students should sit down, shut up, and listen to the teacher similar to the culture of the private schools she attended. On the recommendation of a college professor, I requested my principal to order Gloria Ladson-Billings's (2009) book, *'The DreamKeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* for the purpose of finding a way to engage her in a conversation about her beliefs and practice. We met for an hour and set up a realistic plan to read the book and have a conversation about it. The next meeting, the teacher did not come prepared to reflect on the book, so the meeting was rescheduled for the next week. The following week, the teacher did not show up, and she was not reachable by phone. When I discussed the issue with my principal, his first words were that we did not need to make a big deal about race, and I was being too sensitive. A month later, she was removed from my caseload and assigned to the new Black male API. The principal made it clear she had not responded well to being coached by a Black female. I was not surprised, but it was disappointing and an indication of the lack of awareness of white gaze (Carroll, 2021). It was very clear the principal's particular way of seeing the world was rooted in whiteness.

As the weeks passed the new API was supporting fifth grade. The grade team lead returned from maternity leave and resigned to stay home with her newborn. We had

several substitute teachers in the math class each struggling to manage the class. When we were able to get a long-term substitute teacher the class was able to focus, but she was teaching the content incorrectly. My principal made the decision to move her to another classroom level. I was called into his office, and he informed me I would need to take over the fifth-grade math class until a replacement was found. I was given a week to prepare for the move. I had three days to get the classroom ready and prepare for the state assessment. I was still responsible for my API duties and teaching four sessions of 5th grade math. As I prepared to end my first day of teaching, and walk students to dismissal, one of the fifth-grade teachers stopped me to tell me she was missing a student that went to the restroom. My heart sank, I was reminded of the student eloping campus. As I ran to the office, I located the student outside the door for parent pick up. I exited the door and discussed with the student and parent the scary incident. The parent was very apologetic, and the student was very concerned about the situation. I walked back inside, and the teacher's assistant began to tell me how the student leaves the classroom every day and runs out the door. I informed my principal, and he requested I call the parent to inform her of the dismissal time. I asked if the student was in trouble and was told no.

The next day the 5th grade ELAR teacher ran into my classroom visibly upset. She said that the same student had spit in another student's water bottle and the other student drank it unaware. A sub was placed in my room while I conducted the investigation. When I called the parents of the student who drank the water, she was concerned the issue was racially motivated. His son was Black and had been called derogatory names by the white male student in the past. I reassured the parent the incident would be handled appropriately, and I would inform the principal. When I called

the parent of the student who spit in the water, she informed me she was standing outside the dismissal doors. I told her I would meet her outside to discuss the incident. I walked outside and met the parents on the side of the building. We walked to an area clear of other parents and guardians. I explained the incident to the parent and informed her that her son would be suspended for two days for the incident. The parent was extremely upset and asked her son why he did this. He said another student told him to spit in the other student's water and thought it was funny until he drank it. I walked back to the office to enter the incident into the student information system. I then went to the principal to discuss the parent communication. The principal said he did not think there was a racially motivated incident since the student was the only white male in 5th grade and the incident was a "butt whole prank." While I was in the principal's office, the parent of the suspended student called me multiple times. Before I could get to my office to return her call, she started sending me long text messages about the incident. She said her son was being bullied by a group of Black boys and that our API's were not being supportive. She said it was unfair for her son to be suspended as the other student hit him first and should be suspended. She said she would be at school the next day to speak with the principal and that she would be calling the national director. My principal had left for the day, and I left him voicemail. I made sure to get all the students' and teachers' statements before they left for the day. I prepared my documentation for the meeting. I made sure to print my notes and the discipline referral for my principal.

The next morning the parent was waiting in the lobby for the principal and was very upset. She refused to provide her name and identification to the school secretary and insisted on meeting with the principal and not the Black woman API. My principal told

the secretary to inform the parent he did not have room on his schedule for a meeting with her. The parent demanded to talk to the principal and ignored every lead who tried to tell her she needed to schedule a meeting. After waiting for several hours, she left and called the national office. Our principal was informed he had 24 hours to set up a meeting with the parent.

Later that evening, I received numerous calls from teachers and staff members. The parent posted a picture of me and a horrendous comment on the campus Facebook page. When I asked the principal about the post, he told me not to worry as she was just using her white privilege in a mocking tone of voice. I was annoyed that her white privilege was a consideration and angrier that the principal did not see the detrimental impact. I was not able to sleep that night and I found myself wondering how this situation would end. Two days later, I was informed I would be joining the principal in a meeting as I knew more about the facts of the situation. As I entered the room, the mother, father and student were present. In an act of racial deflection, the mother asked why I was there as I was the one racially profiling the student. I did not reply and looked to the principal. He did not acknowledge her comment and asked her to share her concerns. She spent the first 15 minutes discussing my incompetence, questioning why I was hired, and sharing her feelings about my race, gender, and physical appearance.

Again, waiting on my principal to respond, I paused and told her I was going to interrupt her because my qualifications are more than enough to do the job. She could disagree with my consequence, but she would not continue to make disparaging remarks. Her husband interpreted and asked me to tell him what happened to lead up to the suspension. As I recounted the story, he shifted his eyes to his son and the son

immediately dropped his head. The mother interrupted me and retold the story shared at home. Then, the father began to interject and question why an assistant principal would lie about his son. He shared the son was removed from his previous school because he was doing mean and inappropriate things to other students resulting in an assault. After talking for 45 minutes, the principal interrupted and asked what they could do to resolve the situation. She requested the suspension be rescinded, and I apologize to her son for lying, commenting there was reason to hate her white son because of my Black skin. My principal agreed that the student did not need to spend another day at home as he missed school waiting on the meeting. Her insistence on a "proper apology" and the warning of repercussions, coupled with her identity as a white woman, reflect not only the enduring positional power of witness (Beech, 2020) but also underscored gendered and racial dynamics of power.

As I walked to my office, our secretary notified me that several parents had engaged in cyberbullying by making threats of bodily harm directed towards me under the social media post. The PE teacher walked me to my office and expressed his concern for my safety. I told him to share his concerns with the principal. After talking to the principal, the PE teacher returned to my office irate and teary. He said the principal dismissed his security concerns and told him to encourage me to not be "butt hurt."

The next morning, I arrived at work after the school day had begun. As I was swiping my ID badge to enter the campus gate, a car sped past me and entered in front of me. I pulled in front of the school with my flashers on to drop off drinks for my teacher team. Next, a Black car drove around me and pulled horizontally in front of my car blocking me in as I was about to reverse, another car pulled up and blocked me in. The

Black car driver got out of the car shouting you are that API referencing the post. She ran up to my car and attempted to open my car door and I quickly locked my door. As a teacher approached to get drinks, he called for the APO, who didn't respond and attended a scheduled meeting. Despite notifying the main office and trying to involve the principal, there was no immediate resolution. Angered, I sat in my car as more parents arrived, and someone threatened to call the police. The PE teacher intervened, clarifying the misinformation. Eventually, the principal and APO arrived, resolving the situation. Frustrated, I left for the day.

When I returned to campus, the PE teacher walked into the building and asked me to stay in a visible location to make sure I was safe. The superintendent came to campus to meet with my principal to discuss yesterday's events. When he came and talked, all I could do was stare at him in silence. I was trying to decide if I wanted to share the profane language or shed the tears I was holding back. He could sense my anger, and lack of regard for my safety. I was told his next course of action would be to ban her from the campus and encourage her to send the student back to his neighborhood school.

"Ask yourself what you are currently doing to amplify the voices of Black women. Lastly, consider how you are using your privilege, access and opportunity to uproot misogynoir any time it rears its ugly head" (Asare, 2020)

# Chapter 5: Conclusions

## Summary

This dissertation has undertaken a comprehensive exploration of the pivotal concepts of misogynoir and intersectionality, unraveling their profound significance in comprehending the experiences of Black women. This research explores the interconnected nature of various forms of oppression through the lens of misogynoir (Tripp, 2023). The discussion on the theory of intersectionality, originating from Kimberle Crenshaw's (2019) pioneering work, highlights its importance in recognizing the interconnected nature of various forms of oppression. The intersectionality framework provides a lens through which power dynamics and disparities can be identified and addressed. However, the term misogynoir acknowledges the limitations of intersectionality.

The theory of misogynoir, coined by scholar Dr. Moya Bailey (2021), adds depth to the discussion by specifically focusing on the intersection of racism and sexism that Black women face. Dr. Bailey created this term to detail "the specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women. "[E1] Anti-racism education and efforts must explore misogynoir, how it manifests and how it can be mitigated" (Asare, 2020). Misogynoir provides a more refined understanding of the biases encountered by Black women (Bailey, 2016), addressing the limitations of a broader intersectionality framework. "There's power in creating a word for something that already exists but, of the most port, remains nameless" (Bailey, 2016, p. 5). This scholarly work explores how misogynoir manifests through harmful stereotypes, exclusionary actions, and political

limitations, impacting various aspects of Black women's lives, (Bailey, 2010) including, sports, corporate spaces and educational leadership.

Furthermore, this academic study underscores the importance of recognizing the distinct contributions of Black women to society and challenging the harmful narratives that perpetuate their marginalization (Bailey, 2021). The "Angry Black Woman" (Williams & Hardin, 2018) stereotype and the Jezebel stereotype (Lewis et al., 2016) are discussed as examples of how misogynoir manifests in media representations, interpersonal interactions, and systemic inequalities (Bailey, 2021). In addition, to highlighting the need [E2] for social and systemic changes to address the discrimination and disadvantages faced by the Black women community, this dissertation contributes to depth and breadth of the current literature on misogynoir. It does so by employing this framework specifically within the context of the education system.

**Echoes of Self**

Serving as the sole Black female teacher in a rural district, as an instructional [E4] leader on a campus in a predominately Black school district, and as assistant principal of instruction in a southern state I leveraged my experiences to enhance the comprehension of distinct challenges faced by Black female educators. Notably, the journey from being a teacher to serving in a leadership role (Dillard, 2016) unveiled the enduring dynamics of misogynoir, transitioning from overt manifestation to more nuanced and insidious forms (Jones, 2018). "[E5] Bearing witness to the struggles of Black women-leaders and otherwise" -(Dillard, 2016, p.9) the prevailing whiteness (Beech, 2020) entrenched within the education system.

As an autoethnographic writer in this dissertation, I embraced dual roles as both the subject and the storyteller (Chang, 2008a). Narrating my personal experiences served as a source of liberation, empowering me to not only analyze and unveil the destructive force of misogynoir but also shatter the mask hiding misogynoir, whether subtle and overt. This dual role facilitated an exploration that allowed for an in-depth analysis of the intersectionality of my experiences, contributing to a deeper understanding of the Anti-Blackness misogyny (Bailey, 2021).

> Then there's the vulnerability of revealing yourself, not being able to take back what you have written or having any control over how readers interpret it. It is hard not to feel your life is being critiqued as well as your work" (Ellie, 1999, p. 672)

One of my foremost anxieties throughout the dissertation process was rooted in the apprehension that my research could be misconstrued and, inadvertently, used to perpetuate racial gaslighting. The prospect of my work being misinterpreted and contributing to a harmful narrative weighed heavily on my mind.

**Limitations of Misogynoir**

I recognize that some readers might interpret my work as suggesting all education spaces subject Black women to misogynoir. It is crucial to emphasize the nuanced reality that while some Black women have indeed experienced systematic oppression, this does not apply universally. There are education institutions where Black women have been able to thrive due to a proactive approach in recognizing the structures rooted in whiteness (Beech, 2020) and addressing the existing disparities. Furthermore, when Black women courageously share our experience of misogynoir with the education

system, it is crucial that our narratives are not summarily dismissed as exaggeration or attributed to challenges in personality.

> The emotional harm experienced by Black and Brown colleagues through this careful, nuanced, and precarious service remains unacknowledged, unremunerated, and invalidated – gained through sometimes-painful lived experience (Picower, 2009).

The deep vulnerability inherent in Counter-storytelling released a rollercoaster of emotions, ranging from raw outrage and a sense of insult to deep feelings of gloom, smallness, fragility, and fright (Asare, 2020). There was no turning back; I was closer to completion than starting over. While the journey has been arduous, it has also been transformative, it was an integral part of my healing. Each word and sentence became a cathartic expression of the complex and painful feelings that emerged during my self-reflection. A colleague, well-versed in the complexities of navigating the education system as a Black female, shared a profound insight with me. She said, while it is a challenge to successfully navigate the educational system as a Black woman, it is an entirely different endeavor to eloquently write about the journey of survival within that system.

In an attempt to cope, I adopted avoidance as a mechanism, toggling between writing paragraphs and distracting myself with activities like cleaning, cooking, or reading an article. Seeking solace, I found comfort in indulging in junk food and seeking professional support. Attending weekly therapy sessions helped me to recognize and accept my feelings of shame, guilt, and self-doubt. My therapist offered both expertise and empathy, providing a safe space to process the pain of being stigmatized and

marginalized. I was able to look introspectively to dismantle beliefs about my own capabilities, gender and racial identity.

> "I choose to create in my daily life/ spaces of reconciliation and forgiveness/ Where I let go of past hurt, fear and shame/ And hold each other close/ It is only in the act and practice/Of loving Blackness/That we are able to reach and embrace the world/ Without destructive bitterness/And ongoing collective rage. (hooks, 1992, p. 1)"

**Future Studies**

The research on the experiences of Black women in K-12 education is notably limited, emphasizing the imperative for further exploration into their racialized trauma. Existing studies on misogynoir within the realm of educational experiences have been scarce. It is paramount to emphasize exploring misogynoir as a focal point in future research studies, particularly in com[E6] parison to broader concepts like intersectionality. There is a growing need for precision specifically in detailing the unique racial and gender experiences of Black women. Also, it serves as foundation for future research endeavors aimed at unraveling the complexities of discrimination and informing targeted strategies for empowerment and advocacy. This deliberate focus enhances the depth of our analysis. Future research should encompass qualitative studies delving into the intersectional experiences of Black female staff, including teachers, leaders, principals, and superintendents in the K-12 space. This research should specifically investigate how their race and gender identities impact their daily routines, relationships with peers and leaders, and their overall work experiences.

Additionally, it is crucial to explore the impact of stereotypes within the education system, analyzing how these stereotypes shape expectations, influence opportunities, and affect the perception of the abilities of Black female educators. Further investigation into the role of microaggressions or affirmations related to racial and gender identity is necessary to understand their contributions to the sense of belonging, academic motivation, and overall well-being of Black female educators. Capturing the perspectives of Black female educators through comprehensive studies in K-12 settings is vital. These studies should aim to uncover their unique experiences, challenges faced, and contributions made to the educational environment. Longitudinal studies tracking the educational trajectories of Black female educators and leaders over time can offer valuable insights into the factors influencing their career paths. Examining the effects of misogynoir on the advancement of Black female educators into leadership roles and their salary progression is crucial for understanding and addressing disparities. Moreover, encouraging Black female doctoral candidates to consider autoethnography as a methodology can provide a nuanced understanding of their experiences within the educational system. These proposed studies would contribute significant insights into the experience of Black women in K-12 education by exploring the impact of structural racism on their lives and careers.

## References

Abrams, S. (2018). Minority *leader: How to lead from the outside and make real change.* Henry Holt and Co.

Abello, O. P. (2019, August 19). Breaking through and breaking down the Delmar divide in St. Louis. *Next City.* https://nextcity.org/features/breaking-through-and-breaking-down-the-delmar-divide-in-st.-louis

Alexander, M. (2010). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness.* The New Press.

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Anderson, J. R., Holland, E., Heldreth, C., & Johnson, S. P. (2018). Revisiting the jezebel stereotype: the impact of the target race on sexual objectification. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *42*(4), 461-476. https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684318791543

Anyangwe, E. (2017). Misogynoir: Where racism and sexism meet. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/oct/05/what-is-misogynoir

Asare, J. G. (2020). *Misogynoir:* The unique discrimination that Black women face. *Forbes.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2020/09/22/misogynoir-the-unique-discrimination-that-Black-women-face/?sh=69d4f54056ef

Asare, J. G. (2023). How Hair Discrimination Affects Black Women at Work. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2023/05/how-hair-discrimination-affects-black-women-at-work

Austin, R. (2004). Back to Basics: Returning to the Matter of Black Inferiority and

White Supremacy in the Post-Brown Era. *Journal of Appellate Practice and Process*, 6(1), 79. https://lawrepository.ualr.edu/appellatepracticeprocess/vol6/iss1/7

Bailey, M. (2010). "They Aren't Talking About Me, Right?": A Black Feminist Reflection on Women's Studies and Feminist Studies. *Meridians*: *Feminism, Race, and Transnationalism*, *10*(2), 74-79.

Bailey, M. (2016) Meet Moya Bailey, the Black Woman Who Created the Term Misogynoir. *Mic*. https://www.mic.com/articles/152965/meet-moya-bailey-the-Black-woman-who-created-the-term-misogynoir

Bailey, M. (2018). Misogynoir and anti-Blackness: The intersectional approach. *Feminist Studies*, 44(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447395

Bailey, M. (2021). *Misogynoir transformed: Black women's digital resistance.* Boston: MIT Press.

Beckert, S. (2014). *Empire of cotton: A global history.* Alfred A. Knopf.

Beech, J. (2020). *White Out: A Guidebook for Teaching and Engaging with Critical Whiteness Studies.*

Biddle, C., & Hufnagel, E. (2019). Navigating the “danger zone”: Tone policing and the bounding of civility in the practice of student voice. *American Journal of Education*, *125*(4), 487-520. https://doi.org/10.1086/704097

Black Breastfeeding Week. (2014). Why We Need Black Breastfeeding Week. Retrieved September 1, 2023, from https://Blackbreastfeedingweek.org/why-we-need-Black-breastfeeding-week/

Blackburn Center. (2020). What is misogynoir? Retrieved from https://www.Blackburncenter.org/post/2020/02/12/what-is-misogynoir

Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically Speaking: Autoethnography, Literature, and Aesthetics* (pp. 11-33). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira

Bryant, T., & Arrington, E. G. (2022). *The Antiracism Handbook: Practical Tools to Shift Your Mindset and Uproot Racism in Your Life and Community.* New Harbinger Publications.

Burke, T. (2017). Black women in education leadership: Navigating the intersection of race and gender. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Practice*, *32*(1), 12-22. Retrieved from https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/podcast/knowledge-at-wharton-podcast/Black-women-leaders-navigate-intersection-gender-and-race/

Carroll, R. (2021). *Surviving the white gaze: A memoir*. Simon & Schuster.

Carter, R. T., Kirkinis, K., & Johnson, V. E. (2020). Relationships between trauma symptoms and race-based traumatic stress. *Traumatology*, *26*(1), 11–18. https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000217

Catt, C. C., & Shuler, N. R. (2020). *Woman suffrage and politics: The inner story of the suffrage movement*. Courier Dover Publications.

Chang, H. (2008a). *Autoethnography as a method*

Chang, H. (2008b). *Autoethnography as a Method: Raising Cultural Consciousness of Self and Other*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.* Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of*

*Sociology*, *41*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142

Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Crenshaw, K. (2019). *On intersectionality: Essential writings*. The New Press.

Crenshaw. K.W. (2023). Columbia Law School faculty profile. Retrieved from https://www.law.columbia.edu/faculty/kimberle-w-crenshaw

Curry, P., Curry, J., & Jackson, B. (2019). *Parker Looks Up: An Extraordinary Moment (A Parker Curry Book)*. Simon & Schuster.

Davis, A. (1972). Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves. *The Massachusetts Review*, *13*(1/2), 81–100 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25088201

Davis, A. (1974). Interview with Angela Davis *Ms. Magazine*, 3(2), 25-32.

Davis, A. (1983). *Women, race, and class.* Vintage Books.

DeGruy, J. (2005). *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome.* Joy Degruy Publications Inc.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory (Third edition) An introduction (Critical America,20)* Dev Publishers & Distributors

Critical America, 20. Publisher.

Dillard, C. B. (2016). To Address Suffering That the Majority Can't See: Lessons from Black Women's Leadership in the Workplace. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, *2016*(152), 29–38. https://doi-org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/10.1002/ace.20210

DuBois, E. (2000). Woman Suffrage: The view from the Pacific. *Pacific Historical*

*Review, 69*(4), 539-551. https://doi.org/10.2307/3641223

Ellis, C., Keisinger, C., & Tillmann-Healy, L. (1997). Interactive interviewing: Talking about emotional experience. In R. Hertz (Ed.), *Reflexivity and voice* (pp. 119–149). SAGE Publications.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 733–768). SAGE Publications.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, *36*(4 (138)), 273–290. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23032294

Francis, E. (2017). Gabby Douglas alleges she was abused by a USA Gymnastics team doctor. ABC News. https://abcnews.go.com/US/gabby-douglas-alleges-abused-usa-gymnastics-team-doctor/story?id=51313213

Gibson, O. (2016). Gabby Douglas's mother hits back at online abuse of Olympic gymnasts. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/aug/14/gabby-douglas-gymnastics-online-abuse-mother-interview

Giddings, P. (1984). *When and where I enter: The impact of Black women on race and sex in America*. William Morrow.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.

Gergen, M., & Gergen, K. (2002). Ethnographic representation as a relationship. In J.A.

Gassam, J. (2024). Academia Is failing Black women: A brief examination of

misogynoir within the academy. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2024/01/16/academia-is-failing-Black-women-a-brief-examination-of-misogynoir-within-the-academy/?sh=8f6dacc3adcd

Griffith, D. W. (Director). (1915). *The Birth of a Nation* [Motion picture]. United States: Epoch Producing Corporation.

Hamad, R. (2020). *white tears/Brown scars: How white feminism betrays women of colour*. Catapult.

Harris-Perry, M.V. (2011). *Sister citizen: Shame, stereotypes, and Black woman in America*. Yale University Press.

Harris-Perry, M. V. (2015). The killing of an "angry Black woman": Sandra Bland and the politics of respectability. *Feminist Studies, 41*(1), 232-237. https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/mabryaward/3

Hill Collins, P. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.

Hollie, S., & Russell Jr., D. (2022). *Supporting underserved students: How to make PBIS culturally and linguistically responsive (PBIS-compatible resources for culturally and linguistically responsive teaching)*. Solution Tree.

Holloway, J. S. (2013). *Jim Crow wisdom: Memory and identity in Black America since 1940*. University of North Carolina Press.

Holstein Lewis & J.F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (pp.11-33) Retrieved from https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-psychology/572

hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a woman: Black women and feminism*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

hooks, b. (1996). *Killing Rage: Ending Racism* (Unabridged ed.). Owl Books.

hooks, b. (2014). *Ain't I a woman: Black women and feminism* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/10.4324/9781315743264

Horsford, S. D., & Tillman, L. C. (2012). Inventing herself: Examining the intersectional identities and educational leadership of Black women in the USA. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 25*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.647727

Jim Crow Museum. (2008, August). Sapphire Caricature. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/antiblack/sapphire.htm

Johnson, A. (2018). Intersectionality in education: A critical analysis. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 7*(2), 45-62.

Johnson, R. (2020). Amplifying marginalized voices: The role of personal narratives in social research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 35*(2), 187-204.

Jones, M. (2014). The dual oppression of Black women in the workplace. *Journal of Pan African Studies, 7*(4), 243-257. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2022/01/the-angry-Black-woman-stereotype-at-work

Jones, M. (2018). The intersection of race, gender, and power: Examining the experiences of Black women in leadership. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 12*(2), 1-10.

Kwarteng, J. (2022). A focus on misogynoir – the anti-Black forms of misogyny that Black women experience. Retrieved from https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/race-and-ethnicity-hub/a-focus-on-misogynoir-the-anti-Black-forms-misogyny-Black-women-experience

Kwarteng, J., Perfumi, S. C., Farrell, T., Third, A., & Fernandez, M. (2022). Misogynoir: Challenges in detecting intersectional hate. *Social Network Analysis and Mining, 12*(1), 166. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-022-00993-7

Kwarteng, J. (2023). A focus on misogynoir – the anti-Black forms of misogyny that Black women experience. Retrieved from https://www.womenempowerment.com/misogynoir-article

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). What is critical race theory, and what is it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. John Wiley & Sons.

Leong, D. P. (2017). *Race and Place: How urban geography shapes the journey to Reconciliation*. InterVarsity Press.

Lennig, A. (2004). Myth and Fact: The Reception of "The Birth of a Nation". *Film History, 16*(2), 117-141. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3815447

Lewis, C. M., & Lewis, J. R. (Eds.). (2009). *Jim Crow America: A documentary history*. University of Arkansas Press.

Little, B. (2021). How Early Suffragists Left Black Women Out of Their Fight. History.

https://www.history.com/news/suffragists-vote-Black-women

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider*. The Crossing Press

Lorde, A. (2003). The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. In R. Lewis & S. Mills (Eds.), *Feminist postcolonial theory: A reader*. (pp. 25-28). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203825235

Lutz, M. S. (2017). The hidden cost of Brown v. Board: African American educators' resistance to desegregating schools. *Online Journal of Rural Research & Policy, 12*(4). https://doi.org/10.4148/1936-0487.1085

Martin, L. L. (2018). Double fault: Serena Williams and tennis at the intersection of race and gender. *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 42*(3 & 4). Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-beauty-market-in-2023-a-special-state-of-fashion-report

Matias, C. E. (Ed.). (2019). *Surviving Becky(s): Pedagogies for deconstructing whiteness and gender*. Lexington Books

McKinsey & Company. (2020). Beauty decoded: The rise of the beauty ecosystem. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-beauty-market-in-2023-a-special-state-of-fashion-report

McKinsey & Company. (2021). *Diversity wins: How inclusion matters.* Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters

Merriam-Webster. (2009). Semantics. *In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/semantics

Monae, J. (2013). *Hell you talmbout* [Recorded by Janelle Monae]. On *The Electric Lady*. Label.

Moore-Lobban, S.J., & Gobin, R.L. (2022). *The Black woman's guide to overcoming domestic violence: Tools to move beyond trauma, reclaim freedom, and create the life you deserve.* New Harbinger Publications.

Music, G. (2021). Resparking from flatness: New thoughts on shut-down states after trauma and neglect. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, *47*(3), 357–375. https://doi-org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/10.1080/0075417X.2021.2018482

Oluo, I. (2019). *So you want to talk about race*. Seal Press.

Peters, A. L., & Nash, A. M. (2021). I'm Every Woman: Advancing the Intersectional Leadership of Black Women School Leaders as Anti Racist Praxis. *Journal of School Leadership, 31*(1-2), 7–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684621992759

Pew Research Center. (2021). America's public school teachers are far less racially and ethnically diverse than their students. *Pew Research.* Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/12/10/americas-public-school-teachers-are-far-less-racially-and-ethnically-diverse-than-their-students/ft_21-11-17_studentteacherrace_1/

Phillips, K. W., & Phillips, M. G. (2017). *Diversity and inclusion: An overview for HR professionals*. *Society for Human Resource Management.*

Puwar, N. (2004). *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place.* Berg Publishers.

Rodriguez, A. (2021). Misogynoir. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *13*(6), 795-796. https://doi.org/10.4300/jgme-d-21-00699.1

Roux, M. (2021). 5 Facts About Black women in the labor force. *US Department of Labor Blog.*https://blog.dol.gov/2021/08/03/5-facts-about-Black-women-in-the-labor-force

Shihadeh, E. S., & Flynn, N. J. (1996). Segregation and Crime: The effect of black social isolation on the rates of black urban violence. *Social Forces*, *74*(4), 1325–1352. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/74.4.1325

Sirius XM. (2023). Pop hits countdown. *Sirius XM.*

Small, K. (2020). African American women in the domestic service industry during reconstruction: An intersectional analysis. *James Madison University*. Retrieved from https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/madrush/2020/women/1/

Solorano D.G., & Yosso, T.J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (1) 23-44 https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

Tripp, A. (2023). Abandoning inauthentic intersectionality. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, *44*, 514–533. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716423000139

Truth, Sojourner. (2018). Ain't I A Woman? *In Encyclopedia of African-American Writing.* Grey House Publishing.

White, D. G. (1999). Ar'n't *I a woman*? *Female slaves in the plantation South*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Williams, J., & Hardin, M. (2018a). Black female athletes, media representation, and the myth of the "Angry Black Woman". *Journal of Black Studies*, *49*(1), 5-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934717738514

Williams, J. H. (2018b). Child separations and families divided: America's history of

separating children from their parents. *Social Work Research, 42*(3), 141–146. https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svy021

Wingfield, A. H. (2020, October). Women Are Advancing in the Workplace, but Women of Color Still Lag Behind. *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/women-are-advancing-in-the-workplace-but-women-of-color-still-lag-behind/

Woodruff, E. (2021, May 7). What is the Delmar Divide? The Washington University Political Review. https://www.wupr.org/2021/05/07/what-is-the-delmar-divide/