

## ABSTRACT

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SEXUALITY AND EMERGENT RACISMS  
IN THE CONTEMPORARY UNITED  
STATES

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White guilt is a culturally and historically contingent emotion rooted in White people's recognition of unearned privileges and collective and/or individual roles in the perpetuation of racism. Situated within the context of neoliberal multiculturalism, this interdisciplinary dissertation investigates contemporary manifestations of White guilt in popular discourse and the lived experiences of young White adults in the United States. As a form of identity-based affect, White guilt may aid in the development of antiracist White people; however, because White guilt retains a focus on the White subject, it may offer limited potential to transform social relationships and systems of inequity. Three interrelated studies compose the methodological work of this project and undertake the task of empirically grounding White guilt so that we may better understand its forms, limits and consequences.

The first study interrogates journalists' coverage of three moments of controversy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century: Anderson Cooper's "emotional" reporting during the aftermath

of Hurricane Katrina, the Don Imus-Rutgers University basketball scandal and Isaiah Washington's firing from *Grey's Anatomy* after allegedly calling a co-star a "faggot." Reporting on these episodes illustrates how multiculturalism manages and defers racial guilt and shame while simultaneously eliding the intersections of identity that structure experience. The second study is the creation and initial validation of a survey-based measure of White guilt (the Test of White Guilt and Shame or "TOWGAS"), which attempts to reconcile several limitations of extant research on racial affect – namely, the persistent conflation of guilt and shame. The third study centralizes the intersectionality of White people's experiences through in-depth interviews with 10 White college students. A modified grounded theory approach is used to explore how gender, sexuality and race together influence how these White people a) perceive Imus, Washington and Cooper and b) conceptualize their own Whiteness and the feelings associated with racism and inequality. Finally, the concept of "emergent racisms" is posited as a critical, working framework with which to investigate White racial affect. This theoretical approach emphasizes the complex interactions between identity, affect, attitudes and context (i.e., situation) that co-constitute the phenomenology of White guilt and shame.

WHITE GUILT: RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND EMERGENT RACISMS IN  
THE CONTEMPORARY UNITED STATES

By

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Dedication

*To my grandmother, Eileen Callahan.*

## Acknowledgements

Though this dissertation focuses on unpleasant feelings, I have been fortunate to experience many moments of joy during the past five years of research and writing. The best parts of graduate school were the many people who selflessly contributed to my development as a scholar and person. I cannot name all of them here, but this is a humble attempt to recognize those who directly impacted my work and, in several cases, literally made it possible.

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## INTRODUCTION

*"There's only one thing more powerful than White fear – and that's White guilt. Now they say 'good morning,' but what they really saying is 'I'm not racist!'"*  
-Heylia James, *Weeds* (Episode 13, Season 3; Original air date: November 5, 2007)

I remember the first time I felt guilt.

I was approximately five years old, and I was watching television in the basement of my house. I called upstairs to my mother to ask if I could have a miniature Reese's peanut butter cup, which was sitting in a bowl on the coffee table. She called back down the stairs to say no, but that I could have one after dinner. A few minutes later, when she called me upstairs for dinner, she caught me. I reeked of peanut butter and chocolate (and probably had chocolate all over my mouth, though I like to think I was smarter than that).

"Paddy, did you eat a peanut butter cup?"

"No..."

She immediately knew what I had done, and I knew that I was wrong on two counts: eating the chocolate, and lying to her. Though I do not claim to understand my own five-year-old logic, I suspect that the lying was what made me feel guilty. My mother did not punish me, but that was irrelevant: I had lied, I felt guilty, and that was punishment enough.

Guilt – that emotional cocktail of remorse, frustration, anxiety and depression that infects and inflects when we do (or perceive that we have done) something wrong – is my object of study in this dissertation. Akin to other commonly referenced psychological constructs such as "identity" or "trauma," the ontology of guilt is highly contingent upon the social world or arena in which it is being discursively deployed. Guilt is: a legal

concept embedded in the U.S. Constitution, a psychological emotion, an identity label or characteristic, a central component of certain religious traditions, a phenomenological experience, a behavioral motivator, a cultural milieu and a potential disorder, to name just a few different constructions of the term. Despite the varying uses and definitions of the term, there are some recurrent themes that link any discussion of guilt. Guilt is made possible by the concepts of responsibility and blame, which imply that someone or some group of people has done something wrong. As observed in legal discourse, one does not have to accept any responsibility or blame to be labeled guilty – to *become* guilty. Furthermore, one does not have to acknowledge personal responsibility or blame in order to behave in ways that might be identified as guilty. Moreover, one does not have to actually do anything wrong to feel guilty; mere association with a group of wrongdoers is enough to produce guilt (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears & Manstead, 1998). Alternatively, people have been found to express feelings of guilt when they survive disasters, war or trauma in which others have suffered more or lost their lives (Leys, 2007). A moderate amount of guilt can be a strong motivator of positive social behavior, but abundant guilt can be emotionally paralyzing and devolve into shame, with its associated forms of depression, anger and self-loathing (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

A quintessential example of “material-semiotics” (Haraway, 1997), guilt is real but exceedingly difficult to establish, prove or touch; it is an intrapsychic, affective experience with psychological consequences, and it simultaneously operates on a symbolic and cultural level beyond individual psychologies.<sup>1</sup> Guilt is as surprising and

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<sup>1</sup> I do not intend here to create a binary between “culture” and “individual.” I use the phrase *cultural level* in this instance to question how White guilt operates in popular discourse in mostly invisible or hegemonic ways. Furthermore, this is meant to denote

unsettling to researchers as it is to all human beings who have felt the pangs of guilt at some (usually many) points in their lives. Guilt is “subjective” in both the popular and philosophical sense of the word: it is loaded with individual “bias” and “opinion,” and it exists only inasmuch as the self is conceptualized as a reflexive agent and social actor that has meaningful relationships with other people and things (Mead, 1934/2004). It is unpredictable but simultaneously associated with certain well-established behaviors and feelings. Psychologists typically posit guilt as a self-conscious and moral emotion, and many scholars have devoted their careers to developing more effective and accurate means of measuring or assessing guilt (see the battery of tests included in Tracy, Robins & Tangney, 2007). It is often conflated with moral attitudes (e.g., “I believe that cheating on your spouse is wrong.”), and getting people to admit to guilty feelings can be extremely challenging due to social and cultural pressures, as well as individual differences. As psychologists Tangney and Dearing (2002) describe, guilt is difficult to assess because it is an exclusively “internal” phenomenon that is not amenable to direct observation, and because “people do not typically have a clear sense of the distinction between shame and guilt, which poses problems for introspective accounts” (p. 3). Finally, other emotional responses, such as shame, detachment, anger, depression and externalization of blame, may indicate one’s guilty feelings or propensity for guilt even if there is no tangible evidence of guilt itself. In other words, guilt is powerful even in its apparent absence, and it may make us do things we fail to understand.

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that many groups of actors are involved in the social practices of White guilt, and that these practices have meaningful implications for cultural representations of difference and power.

This dissertation is an examination of a particular kind of guilt that is rooted culturally and historically in the United States, and is made possible by White people's responsibility for historical and contemporary forms of racial genocide, oppression and social inequality. "White guilt" constitutes a complex terrain of psychological experience at the intersection of identity, attitudes, affect and culture. Pervasively deployed, rarely defined and always elusive, White guilt refers generally to White people's negative feelings about unfair racial privilege and inequality. White guilt matters because guilt influences relationships with others (Tangney & Dearing, 2002); accordingly, White people's *feelings* about their own race and Others' affect relationships between racialized social actors and groups that are always negotiated within and by unequal relations of power. White guilt is not equivalent to a racial attitude, such as a prejudice or racism, but it is closely connected to attitudinal beliefs about race and may indeed partially shape or motivate anti-racist, as well as racist, attitudes (Swim & Miller, 1999; Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003). In dealing with *White* guilt as an object of study, scholarship from across the humanities and social sciences has arbitrarily compartmentalized the relevant issues such that: cultural context is treated as either everything or nothing; guilt and shame are conflated emotions; and race exists outside of other dimensions of difference, such as gender and sexuality. This project serves as a corrective to such reductionism and as a critical intervention into contemporary American racial discourse by embracing the complexity of White guilt as a historically specific phenomenon that moves through and between identity-based groups, individuals and cultural production.

White guilt is found at the intersection of two discourses that are characterized by silence: first, the discourse of self-conscious, moral emotions that are deeply personal,

private experiences; and second, the discourse of Whiteness, the unmarked side of a racial binary that draws its strength from its ability to camouflage itself in discourse. Of course, the pain of guilt is palpable; guilt would be meaningless if it did not actually *feel* uncomfortable. Likewise, Whiteness would cease to exist as a meaningful social category if it did not possess visible, detectable characteristics that influence the movement of various forms of capital and bodies. But asserting that White guilt is discursively silent is not the same as saying that White guilt is inconsequential. To the contrary, silence is power. Notably, Foucault (1978) asserted:

Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies.... There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (p. 27)

White guilt may be an important motivator of anti-racist or compensatory behavior, as some psychologists have proposed (e.g. Swim & Miller, 1999; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004), and it may also be a powerful inhibitor of honest and explicit conversations about racial inequality (Tatum, 1994). It may – and likely does – go by many names and take many forms, some spoken and some hidden.

White guilt is even more amorphous and complex than other generic forms of guilt because it is constituted by Whiteness, an extremely powerful but necessarily “invisible” racial formation (Omi & Winant, 1994; Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007). More than a century after the end of U.S. chattel slavery, and 50 years after the start of

the African American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Whiteness commands immense, disproportionate material and symbolic power in the United States and globally. Today, as at other times in history, the source of this power is made possible and maintained because Whiteness continues to go largely unmarked and unarticulated in contemporary U.S. discourse (Lipsitz, 2006). In the social and historical context of what many scholars from across the disciplines now call “neoliberalism” (see Duggan, 2003; Melamed, 2006), Whiteness is particularly adept at invisibility. White people in the United States enjoy disproportionate and unfair access to material wealth, privilege, safety and comfort even as hegemonic movements, such as neoliberalism, and political ideologies, such as neoconservatism, have asserted that so-called assaults on American meritocracy – particularly “political correctness,” civil rights legislation and affirmative action – have made White people the targets of systemic discrimination (Lipsitz, 2006; Duggan, 2003; also, Roediger, 1998). These conservative movements have been successful at least in part because though White people have been forced to recognize their individual racial identities in the post-Civil Rights era (i.e., “*I am White.*”), the dominant culture of the U.S. has not reconciled what Whiteness means as a historical, structural, racial phenomenon that constitutes racial inequality (i.e., “*We are White, and that matters....*”). And though anti-racist academic discourse and many cultural arenas within the United States – especially those occupied primarily by racial and ethnic minorities – have extensive, well-established discourses that denaturalize and deconstruct Whiteness and racism, such a sophisticated and critical understanding of “White” remains largely absent from mainstream, popular American discourse. Evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that Whiteness continues uninterrupted and unquestioned in the



everyday lives of many young adult White people, as well. In this historical moment during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the extent to which White people experience self-directed racial guilt is unclear. Before questions about White guilt's effects can be explored, an empirically grounded understanding of the construct is needed.

Invisibility, unmarkedness and deferred articulation are endemic to the situation at-hand. Accordingly, any project that aims to offer an adequate account of White guilt must possess an appropriately “tricky” theoretical, linguistic and rhetorical strategy. Consequently, my account of White guilt is articulated in rhetorics of specters, haunting and discursive silence – linguistic strategies that are inherited from neo-Marxist, feminist, anti-racist, postmodern and poststructural theorists. By figuring White guilt as a haunting, seething presence in the culturally grounded, social psychologies of diverse White peoples in the United States (Gordon, 1997), I have attempted to allow the complexity of White guilt to emerge – to become visible, legible – in extraordinary and unexpected spaces and places. This analytic work happens across the following five chapters and is based in three years of empirical research, including qualitative and quantitative human ‘subjects’ investigations conducted at the University of Maryland with three samples of young college students and digital, archive-based analysis of contemporary print media coverage of recent controversies that invoked talk about race and responsibility. These data are situated within critical surveys of the academic study of guilt and shame in the social sciences (especially the areas of counseling and social psychology) and the humanities (especially history, literature and cultural studies). The knowledges that emerge from these interrelated studies are positioned throughout the dissertation as what feminist philosopher Donna Haraway (1997) named “diffractions”: critical, situated

social investigations that embrace the *differences* in human experience, as opposed to falsely inscribing similarity and cohesion upon an arena of inquiry (p. 273). Even more importantly, diffractions can, as sociologist Kelly Joyce (2008) asserted, “spark meaningful dialogues and interventions” (p. 19); in this sense, diffractions and diffracting are as much about the production of critical social knowledge and theory as the *effects* and *consequences* of such knowledges (Hall, 1997b).

Chapter 1, “Guilt, Reconsidered” is a critical survey of the major academic contributions to the study of White guilt from across the disciplines. This chapter lays the groundwork for the empirical studies herein by reviewing and critiquing the relevant literatures that have constituted White guilt as an object of academic inquiry. Through a protracted critique of conservative social critic Shelby Steele’s (2006) important *White Guilt: How Whites and Blacks Together Destroyed the Promises of the Civil Rights Era*, I argue that, while Steele’s argument is almost completely reductive, essentialist and regressive, his thinking is reflective of broader discourse about White guilt. In this chapter, I argue that we must unhinge the concept of “White guilt” from the rhetorics and logics of the African American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s – where our thinking about contemporary White guilt finds its origins – are resituate it within the context of neoliberal multiculturalism and colorblind and otherwise aversive forms of racism (Duggan, 2003; Omi & Winant, 1994; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). My proposal is to take an *interactionist* and *intersectional* approach to White guilt that: a) refigures White guilt as a culturally constituted process and practice (Denzin, 1992), as opposed to an amorphous cultural milieu (Steele, 1990, 2006; Ellison, 1996) or quantifiable affective state (Swim & Miller, 1999); and b) centralizes the intersections of

identity, particularly race, gender and sexuality, that frame all affective experiences and produce structures of inequity (Collins, 1990/2000; McCall, 2005; Cole, 2009).

Chapter 2, “Finding White Guilt: Popular Culture and Three Moments of Crisis” posits three recent social controversies as archives of cultural information about contemporary epistemologies of race and responsibility. Over 100 print journalism articles are analyzed for evidence of talk about ‘race’ and ‘responsibility’ – not necessarily White guilt – so that we can better understand the cultural context in which individual affective experiences of White guilt are manifested. By employing strategies of Foucauldian discourse analysis and what Adele Clarke (2005) terms “situational analysis,” I argue that White guilt – more specifically, the threat of White guilt – operates subtly and strategically in moments of hegemonic instability, and that this process is evidenced by journalistic explanations of fault, blame and responsibility *vis a vis* social group membership. Primarily descriptive, as opposed to theory-building (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), the qualitative analysis in this chapter critically contextualizes the lived experiences that become the focus of the analytic work in chapters 3 and 4. By tracing the discursive talk about who is to blame when public figures behave badly – or when, in the case of Hurricane Katrina, hundreds of people die and are displaced – I argue that we can see some ways in which the hegemony of neoliberalism exerts its influence on the logic of race relations in the United States and their intersections with structures of sexism and heteronormativity.

Chapter 3, “The Differences Between and Within Guilt and Shame: Quantitative Perspectives,” centralizes three preoccupying questions of this research. First, what are the differences, if any, between White guilt and White shame? Second, how are these

experiences varied among White people and do sexual and gender identity correspond with these variations? Finally, how do we observe or best evaluate affective experiences of White guilt in ways that are repeatable, verifiable and systemic? Drawing upon moral emotions research on ‘generic’ guilt and shame that is exemplified by the work of psychologist June Price Tangney, I propose and offer initial data on the psychometric properties of a new Test of White Guilt and Shame (“TOWGAS”). Data collected from two samples of White undergraduate students at the University of Maryland are presented which suggest that White shame may be a distinct emotion from White guilt, with distinct behavioral and emotional antecedents and consequences (Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003). Whereas previous psychological measures of White guilt have failed to culturally ground the concept or adequately consider the challenges of assessing negative, self-conscious affect (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), my measure is designed to centralize culture (Gergen, 1973; Marcus, Kitayama & Heiman, 1996), subvert the artificial boundaries between identity, attitudes and affect, and allow respondents to assert ownership over simultaneous and even contradictory experiences of guilt, shame and related emotions. Statistical data from exploratory factor analyses, as well as correlations between my measure and hypothesized measures of convergent validity, constitute the majority of the analytic material within this chapter. However, theory-construction begins in this analysis, because the observed relationships between my hypothesized “factors” points to a constellation of psychological strategies that I call affect “negation.” I conclude by proposing questions about the relationship(s) between negation, White guilt and White shame that may help to explain why observed levels of White guilt in this and prior

studies are so relatively low, which sometimes contradicts data found in qualitative studies (see Spanierman et al., 2008).

Ten students who completed the online surveys that constituted the data in Chapter 3 were recruited to participate in one-on-one in-depth interviews with me throughout fall 2008 and spring 2009. Their experiences are presented in Chapter 4, “Upsetting Whiteness: Guilt and Shame at the Intersections of Difference,” which is an ethnographic exploration of how a group of young White people think differently about race, gender, sexuality and their own roles in systems of inequality. Each participant met with me twice and interviews lasted between one half hour and two hours; the semi-structured format of our conversations was organized around video clips of the three recent crises that were analyzed in Chapter 2. The qualitative data from these interviews were analyzed using the principles of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Fassinger, 2005) and Clarke’s (2005) recent ‘postmodern’ version of the methodology, situational analysis. Purposeful (or “purposive”) sampling was used to recruit a gender- and sexuality-diverse sample of participants, and I was particularly concerned with allowing the multiplicity of their experiences and reactions to the interviews themselves to emerge within my analysis and the construction of the theory. Though not generalizable, this group of young college students’ reactions challenged my thinking about White guilt and racism, while simultaneously reinforcing assumptions about the ideological contradictions inherent to 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberal perspectives of race and identity in the U.S. Their struggles, outlooks, reactions and personal theories of race coalesce into a grounded account of White guilt in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that demonstrates that a) experiencing – or not experiencing -- White guilt is dependent on

much more than a person's racial identity or attitudes, and b) White guilt may be as much about *denying* the personal experience of guilty or shameful feelings as it is about actually facing the implications of one's own situatedness within systems of oppression.

Chapter 5, "Emergent Racisms," takes up Leslie McCall's (2005) concern over the "complexity of intersectionality" and the challenges inherent to balancing complexity and coherence when conducting mixed-methods, intersectional analysis. This chapter serves as the conclusion of the dissertation and is composed of comparative analyses in which the qualitative and quantitative data from chapters 3 and 4 are placed in dialectic (as opposed to dialogical) conversation with one another (Collins, 2000). Special attention is paid to the issue of interdisciplinary methodology, including the knowledge making practices and specific procedures involved in the creation of this project. The goal here is to express the findings of the dissertation as a whole by highlighting moments of contradiction, similarity and discrepancy in the data from each chapter. In doing so, I discuss the strengths and limitations of the dissertation, as well as implications and plans for future research. A discussion of potential political interventions concludes the document, as I consider Seidman's (1997) call to a renewed pragmatism in critical social theory by contemplating applications of this research in real social environments. The chapter title "emergent racisms" refers less to actual attitudes than to the hegemonic instability of neoliberalism that constantly produces new challenges to substantive antiracist work.

The formal preparation of this dissertation was contained to my doctoral studies, which included three years of empirical pilot research with my students in the Honors Humanities Program at the University of Maryland and three years of official candidacy-

level research. However, one could argue that I have 25 years of formal training in the study of American White guilt, because I am a White adult who has lived his entire life in the United States and has been working toward and for antiracism since adolescence. That is not to say, however, that my relationships with my object of study are linear, transparent, or static. To the contrary, the auto-ethnographic, explicitly feminist, self-reflexive introspection involved in this project was the most complex and challenging aspect of the research (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007). I suspect that many readers will inevitably wonder: What do *you* think? Do *you* have White guilt? Do *you* feel guilty? Though I will challenge the specific formulation of these kinds of questions about emotion, which reinforce an ontology of guilt based in modernism and functionalist social psychology (Gergen, 2000; Orr, 2006), I also think that these questions are fair. My ability to answer them is indicative of the depth of my antiracist, feminist politics and the preparation of this document; my answers implicate my ability to engage in the construction of the kinds of critical webs of positioning that serve as the foundation of *feminist objectivity*, or what Haraway (1988) refers to as “situated knowledges.” Accordingly, each formal study (i.e., chapters 2, 3 and 4) of this dissertation begins with narrative recounting of my own experiences with White guilt. These interludes are organized by the three “factors” of the psychometric survey instrument developed in Chapter 3: guilt, shame and negation. The purpose of these ‘factor’ narratives is twofold: to make explicit my personal relationships with these emotions, and to offer an interdisciplinary audience the chance to engage with these emotions in a form (i.e., creative writing) that is not dependent upon or rooted in the quantitative/qualitative

binary that frames so much research in the social sciences – and arguably asserts influence on this dissertation.

This project was guided by the following research questions: How do contemporary U.S. race relations, largely negotiated through popular culture and mass-mediated communication, influence contemporary White guilt at the cultural level? What are the distinctions between White guilt and White shame and how do these constructs relate to attitudes toward race and identity in contemporary U.S. race relations? How is the phenomenology of White guilt (i.e., *lived experiences*, specifically affect and affect-based behavior) co-constituted by gender, sexual and racial identity and their situatedness in hierarchical power/knowledge relations? There are many other questions that undoubtedly influenced my data gathering, analysis and writing, but which cannot be answered within the confines of this project. Because racism is ultimately the target of this research, I am preoccupied by questions about the social and political efficacy of White guilt, specifically what role(s) it may play in the production of antiracist people and antiracist cultures. The concept itself is quite ambivalent: though some psychologists suspect that some elements of White guilt may even be a necessary step in the development of antiracist consciousness and colloquial knowledge suggests that people who feel White guilt are less racist than those who have none of it, *guilt* has a negative valence. Guilt is also self-focused, as opposed to being directed at the “victim” of one’s wrongful actions. People tend to try to “fix” their guilt by making amends or correcting their behavior so that they can stop feeling guilty (Tangney & Fisher, 1995). Iyer et al. (2003) found that White guilt could only reliably predict endorsement of compensatory affirmative action strategies, not comprehensive diversity programs that are aimed at the



transformation of workplace environments and institutions. I similarly suspect that there may be some profound limits to White guilt's ability to motivate antiracism within a cultural moment in which discourse about race minimizes the structural import of unequal race relations and reduces differences in life experiences to personal choices rather than complex interactions between agency and structure (Lipsitz, 2006; Seidman, 1997).

In interviews with faculty who teach intersectionality that were conducted prior to and in preparation for this dissertation, I asked a Black feminist professor and mentor what she thought about White guilt. "I think guilt is very unpredictable," she said. When I followed up by asking if White guilt was a requisite part of antiracism, she told me that this was an empirical question – and one that I should try to answer. I do not have one single answer, but rather a series of propositions about White guilt that I hope complicate reductive thinking about the politicized emotionality of White guilt and which simplify confusion about the construct that has produced little practical knowledge about the relationships between guilt and antiracism. I am not prepared to say that White guilt is worthless *or* necessary, and I do explicitly question logics that insist upon its inevitability or insignificance. In the cacophony of talk about who is to blame for a United States that continues to suffer from profound racial inequity and that promotes this and similar forms of stratification worldwide, I am concerned about a White antiracist project that rests its hopes upon the guiltiness of liberal- or progressive-identified White people. What I am thinking is: what happens *after* guilt?

## CHAPTER 1:

### Guilt, Reconsidered

*“White guilt can be defined as the fantastic phenomenon whereby Caucasian Americans, as a result of their being indoctrinated to view slavery and wars of conquest as being unique to western man, are [sic] psychologically debilitated from taking up their own defense. Of course, feeling guilty about things you haven't personally done is ludicrous, particularly in this case. Foul acts like murder, slavery, and wanton destruction are ubiquitous to humanity, and were committed by peoples all over the world since the beginning of time.”*

-Bernard Chapin (2006), writer, in “Why Can't We Save Our Own Country?”

*“As a reader of this history, I have been overwhelmed by how much ‘emotions’ have been a ‘sticking point’ for philosophers, cultural theorists, psychologists, sociologists, as well as scholars from a range of other disciplines. This is not surprising: what is relegated to the margins is often, as we know from deconstruction, right at the centre of thought itself.”*

-Sara Ahmed (2004a), in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (p. 4).

Pinning down a stable definition of “White guilt” is so challenging for many of the same reasons that it is fascinating. First, as a compound subject, White guilt is dependent upon at least two other ontological questions: What is “Whiteness,” and what is “guilt”? Of course, one must also then take into account how the definitions of both Whiteness, which signifies the cultural construction of White racial identity, and guilt, a form of emotion, may shift in interaction when joined together as racialized affect. Secondly, White guilt is discursively constructed both within and outside of the academy. Though serious academic scholarship has been devoted to codifying, measuring and concretizing White guilt as an object of study, the construct is constantly evolving in popular cultures as the U.S. racial landscape shifts and discourses of race, responsibility

and emotionality intersect. The movement of White guilt in contemporary popular discourse will be explored more fully in Chapter 2; in this chapter, I will survey a diversity of academic literature that has shaped my thinking about White guilt, and then offer a critical analysis of these perspectives. This review involves a protracted critique of the work of Shelby Steele (1990, 2002, 2006), a conservative Black writer who is considered by some to be the most vocal scholar of White guilt in the humanities. Though Steele's work is highly problematic, its influence can be seen across the disciplines and is reflected in the ways in which scholars continue to conflate guilt and shame, divorce race from other dimensions of difference, treat White guilt as an emotion *or* an attitude and/or view contemporary race relations through the logics of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. I conclude this chapter with a proposal for re-thinking and re-figuring White guilt using the theory-methods of *symbolic interactionism* and *intersectionality* (see Denzin, 1992; Collins, 1990/2000). Accordingly, I propose a working framework for the study of White guilt that treats White guilt as a process and practice (Bourdieu, 1992, 1993; Goffman, 1959, 1963), and which takes into account the co-constitution of racial affect within intersecting discourses of race, gender and sexuality, among other historicized dimensions of identity and inequity (Collins, 1998; McCall, 2005).

### **Review of Literature**

The questions that guide this research necessarily implicate diverse fields of academic research from the humanities and social sciences, as well as interdisciplinary fields, such as Women's, African American, gender, sexuality and American studies. What follows is an introduction to these bodies of literature – a survey of the discourse on race, identity, culture and affect that informs the empirical contours of this dissertation.

This review is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive; however, these extant areas of research will be explored in greater depth and specificity when relevant at the start of each of the three following chapters, which each engage a specific dimension of White guilt and an accompanying methodological paradigm, including discourse analysis, psychometrics and grounded theory. I begin here with a summary and critique of Steele's work; then, I proceed into a discussion of theoretical perspectives, including poststructuralism, cultural studies and "critical Whiteness studies," that inform my critique. Notable contributions to the study of race and Whiteness from historians, counseling psychologists and social psychologists are also discussed to survey the contours of the academic terrain on which this project is constructed. Finally, I explicate the paradigms of symbolic interactionism and intersectionality that co-constitute the lens through which I interrogate White guilt and which shape my argument for a reconsideration of how we (i.e., researchers) think about White guilt.

### **Steele's White Guilt**

Readers familiar with scholarship on U.S. race relations will likely notice that the title of this dissertation is similar to a best-selling book by prominent African American public intellectual and self-identified "Black conservative" Shelby Steele, "probably the most well-known person currently arguing for the existence of White guilt" across the disciplines and in popular culture (Swim & Miller, 1999; p. 500). For example, all psychologists in this dissertation who have studied White guilt (Swim & Miller; Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; see also Doosje, Branscombe, Spears & Manstead, 1998) cite his work, even though they have no disciplinary responsibility to his writing, which is entirely divorced from formal psychological

concerns. His work is published by one of the largest global publishing houses (Harper Collins) and his many books on race in America have positioned him as one of the U.S.'s most prominent conservative Black critics, alongside Bill Cosby, Alvin Poussaint, William Raspberry, etc. Though I do not consider my project to be a direct response to Steele, this dissertation does offer a radically different approach to thinking about White guilt and is purposefully titled in a similar way to his *White Guilt* monograph. We come to our respective projects from divergent scholarly locations: he is trained as a literary critic and writes as a historian to a public audience, whereas I am neither engaged in literary criticism nor claim to be a historian, and I write to an academic audience. Furthermore, his *White Guilt* (2006) is based on no empirical evidence and is more of a personal manifesto about race relations. Whereas the subtitle of Steele's work is "How Black and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era," my subtitle points to my concern with White guilt's relationship to other dimensions of difference and contemporary forms of racism. Accordingly, this dissertation presents somewhat of a counter-argument, in that I attempt to move the conversation about White guilt out of the simplistic and vague terms of his configuration. Steele's work warrants careful attention and critique for multiple reasons, not the least of which is that his ideas have largely shaped popular and academic discourse on White guilt.

**White guilt, conservatism and the concept of "dissociation."** Steele's (1990; 2006) work is based on a perspective I would argue is characteristic of most popular historical and literary work on race relations that relies on "major" historical events, "influential" literature and anecdotal evidence to develop wide-reaching and essentializing claims about social forces and structures (Scott, 1988). For example,

Steele's *White Guilt* (2006) includes *no* references and the first page of the book features a misquoted remark from former President Bill Clinton during what became known as the Lewinsky scandal. Steele's work takes a psychological concept – identity group-based guilt – and uses it as a historiographic device to *explain* historical phenomena, just as traditional, Western historians are ought to do (Scott).

Steele's *White Guilt* (2006) is at least partially a memoir, and he even describes the book's development as inspired by the Native American story-telling method of Chautauqua. This book is preceded by more than a decade of Steele's writing on White guilt that includes a prominent 1990 piece in *The American Scholar* and a 2002 essay in *Harper's*; 2006's *White Guilt* serves as a culminating treatise on the topic. To build his argument, Steele narrates the development of his racial identity as a process of a) recognizing the differences between how White people treated him and other Black people in the U.S. before and after the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and b) imagining Black politics and racial uplift across historical contexts. In the process, he considers events of historical significance, including high-profile court cases such as the O.J. Simpson murder trial, in which he views the verdicts as racially motivated and evidence of culture-wide shifts in racial attitudes. But most of his argument is drawn from personal experiences, such as conflicts with fellow academics, childhood memories of racism and encounters with Black political figures.

Steele (2006) defines White guilt as:

...Something very specific: the *vacuum of moral authority* that comes from simply *knowing* that one's race is associated with racism. Whites (and American institutions) must acknowledge historical racism to show themselves redeemed of

it, but once they acknowledge it, they lose moral authority over everything having to do with race, equality, social justice, poverty, and so on. They step into a void of vulnerability. The authority they lose transfers to the ‘victims’ of historical racism and becomes their great power in society. This is why white guilt is quite literally the same thing as black power. (p. 24)

According to Steele, White guilt is defined by a lack of something – moral authority – that is caused by a cognitive process: the knowledge of White racism. White guilt is figured as an emptiness endemic not only to White *people* but *organizations* and *institutions*. White people and American institutions were formally defined by explicit and overt (“actual”) racism that characterized the “Age of Racism” (roughly all of U.S. history before the mid-1960s). Now, in the “Age of White Guilt” (the mid-1960s forward), White people and American institutions, specifically large private corporations, all levels of government and educational institutions, are shaped by the lack of moral authority that is White guilt. “Because white guilt is a vacuum of moral authority,” he explains, “it makes the moral authority of whites and the legitimacy of American institutions *contingent* on proving a negative: that they are not racist” (p. 27). White guilt is a powerful social imperative that, Steele argues, functions through stigma, like racism. White people are stigmatized by their skin color, because Black people may suspect them of being racist on account of their White skin. This stigma (and threat of being further stigmatized as racist) causes all White people and organizations, from political parties to museums, to prove that they are not racist by promoting diversity and using racial preferences to increase the visibility of minorities. Black people are largely free from experiencing racism today because of the new social morality – that White racism is

shameful and immoral – that exists because of White guilt; indeed, this new social reality was paradoxically both created by and solves the problem of White guilt. Though Steele spends most of his time criticizing White guilt for its effects on race relations and especially African American politics and culture, he does attribute “possibly the greatest transformation in American history” to White guilt (p. 28).

Steele’s ontology of White guilt expands to an epistemology of contemporary race relations. Whereas “actual racism” was the hallmark of the historical period called the “Age of Racism,” during which White people maintained their moral authority, today’s “Age of White Guilt” racism is a myth Steele calls “globalized racism.” Globalized or “global” racism is defined as follows, but has nothing to do with transnational or hemispheric politics:

...Racism inflated into a deterministic, structural, and systemic power. Global racism seeks to make every racist event the tip of iceberg...It is a reconceptualization of racism designed to capture the fruit of the new and vast need in white American for moral authority in racism matters. True or not, global racism can have no political viability without white guilt. What makes it viable is not its truth but the profound moral need that emerged in mid-sixties white America. (pp. 35-36)

Global racism was made possible as an idea by a social determinism that defined Black politics during the latter years of the Civil Rights movement and was loosely derived from Marxism, though Steele claims most Black leaders had no formal or tangible relationships with Marxism (Angela Davis, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.’s connections to Marxism are, not surprisingly, omitted from this history). This social



determinism is a *story* about relationships of power that has no basis in reality; it is a perspective that is used to prey upon White guilt and is invoked by two main groups: Blacks looking for power (remember that White guilt is the same as Black power) and White people, driven by White guilt, who are deferring the stigma of racism. Steele posits that this perspective is a political-rhetorical logic of race relations that sees inequalities of power everywhere and attributes one racist incident, such as the beating of Rodney King, to structural racism; it enables Black university students across the country to effectively make up stories about racist educators and institutions without evidence or experience of discrimination; and excuses Black urban rioters from consequence because Black rage is figured as the direct result of so-called invisible and undetectable social forces. The Marxist notion of structure was deployed by Black political figures and White apologists and became ingrained in the fabric of American cultural hegemony, ultimately and unfairly enabling generations of African Americans to exploit White guilt, according to Steele. “When racism is defined as a determinism, then whites and American institutions are part of a cultural pattern (“white privilege”) that *automatically* oppresses blacks; and blacks are *automatically* victims of this same pattern,” he argues (p. 38). His evidence for this supposed exploitation of White guilt is found in the ways in which the underperformance of African Americans in education, Black urban poverty, disproportionate levels of unemployment and unequal wages are attributed to structural racism, while the success of Black men and women in sports, music, literature and entertainment is attributed to hard work, exceptionally high standards and dedication.

In the “Age of White Guilt,” agency, choice and responsibility are displaced by structure, determinism and entitlement. White guilt, to Steele, removes responsibility for

everything from education, employment, housing, and racial uplift generally from Black individuals and relocates this responsibility on the back of “White America.” This structural milieu necessitates the maintenance of a mythic Black collective (“the black community”), which was a reality created by slavery that now only exists as a political strategy to allow Black people to exploit and benefit from a perceived weakness in White people – that is, White guilt. White guilt – really Black peoples’ willingness to rely on it for redistributive affirmative action programs and other social welfare initiatives – has eliminated the fierce sense of personal responsibility that defined earlier generations of Black Americans and the early leaders of the Civil Rights movement. Most Black people today cling to the notion of global racism and have rejected their freedom brought forth by legal emancipation and civil rights legislation, according to Steele, and this reliance has severely limited African American cultural politics and economic prosperity. He asserts that, “Without oppression – and it must be acknowledged that blacks are no longer oppressed in America – the group itself becomes automatically responsible for its inferiority and non-competitiveness” (p. 68). Rather than work towards integration and equality, the “overwhelming burden of responsibility” that accompanies freedom from oppression has caused Black Americans to retreat from freedom: “Our understandable fear of freedom has led us to bank our fate on an absurdity: that we can develop by taking *less* responsibility for ourselves” (pp. 68-69).

Black elites, though, seem to be quietly – even shamefully – aware of this social reality, as Steele outlines. He chastises his fellow Black elites and White sympathizers for not speaking the truth about White guilt and Black responsibility. Steele offers introspective narratives of his shifting political beliefs across several decades, recounting

how he initially embraced the logic of White guilt in his militant youth. This political orientation was almost immediately dissatisfying and disempowering for Steele, and he began to distance himself from the political Left, typified by Maureen Dowd and Sandra Day O’Conner, with whom he felt had erroneously and fatally aligned itself with White guilt. He realized his identification with the Black conservative archetype when confronted by a fellow literature professor who assumed his support for an ethnic literature course on the basis of his race. To Steele, “ethnic literature” is a curricular form of affirmative action, which always and in all forms serves to diminish expectations for African Americans and other minorities and uses inclusion and diversity as indicators of the absence of racism (i.e., to solve the problem of White guilt). Steele details his alienation from the Black mainstream and from the Left for what they call his conservative ideals and rejection of White guilt politics. He attributes his alienation – and stigmatization as a Black conservative – to his rejection of the politics of *dissociation*, which he describes as White liberals’ self-focused obsession with distancing themselves from Whiteness in order to reclaim humanity and moral authority from White guilt (p. 140). Though in his explication of the two forms of racism (i.e., actual and global) Steele seems to dismiss racism as a non-issue, his discussion of dissociation – with which he closes the book – attributes White people’s efforts at dissociation as patently racist. He eviscerates liberal columnist Maureen Dowd, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Conner and other White liberals by explaining how their alleged support for affirmative action (e.g., he views the University of Michigan Supreme Court case as a definitive *victory* for affirmative action) is evidence of their refusal to recognize the humanity of Black Americans. To him, White antiracism from the Left is self-focused

politicking designed at reclaiming moral authority by framing Whites as agents and Black as powerless victims. Before rendering any kind of genuine antiracism all but impossible, he praises contemporary conservatism and compares George W. Bush to Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King, Jr. In Bush II's version of conservatism, Steele finds an emphasis on individuality and responsibility that serves as a welcome corrective to the misguided and failed attempts of the baby-boomer generation's Left. In a surprising turn, Steele explains that Bush's detractors – his harsh liberal critics – are reacting to this “historical correction” because they (i.e., the “dissociational left”) have been shamed by conservatism's (lack of) racial politics. Steele demonstrates his only command of emotion psychology at the conclusion by stating simply, “whenever people feel shamed, there is a blowback” (p. 179).

I have devoted substantial space to Steele's work for two primary reasons: first, his work is often cited and has cross-disciplinary import; second, his work is hugely problematic and yet is reflective of much contemporary thinking about White guilt. For example, even though Swim and Miller (1999) may or may not agree with Steele's political position, they use his work to define the construct White guilt in the development of their psychometric White guilt scale. They even go so far as to compare his theory of White guilt to the anti-racist scholarship of psychologists Beverly Daniel Tatum and Janet Helms, and they read his observations as confirming those made by the groundbreaking social psychologist Gordon Allport 50 years prior (p. 502). Steele's writing would be easier to deal with and dismiss, however, if he was wholly wrong or completely insane. Though his writing supports and is used by explicit racists' and the Right's efforts to defend social inequality (see Chapin, above) and tangible, systemic

forms of racism, Steele also problematizes his version of White guilt and White paternalism – which *is* real and does characterize certain segments of the American political Left (see Lott, 2006, for a detailed and astute analysis). Nonetheless, there are significant ontological, epistemological and methodological issues with his argument about White guilt that merit explication, because these problems have influenced the shape of my project.

Steele's is not a psychological project; he does not rely on disciplinary psychology's methods or epistemological configuration to describe the causes and consequences of White guilt. This is not necessarily a problem. Psychology does not nor should it have a monopoly on the intellectual or academic study of emotions. For example, several prominent humanities-based scholars, notably Eng and Kazanjian (2003), Berlant (2004), Ahmed (2004a, 2004b), Leys (2007) and Sedgwick (2003), have recently turned critical attention to affect as a useful framework and object of study for addressing cultural experience across time and space. Ahmed (2004b), for example, has developed a cultural model of emotions – an analytic theory of affect – that borrows from the social sciences but ultimately transforms psychological and sociological assumptions about emotionality into something quite novel. Rather than wholly accept psychological frameworks, which position emotions as interiority (i.e., I feel something), or anthropological and sociological accounts, which figure emotions exteriorly (i.e., We, the social group, feel something), Ahmed insists that emotions are social and cultural practices that allow us to conceptualize the self or the social group in the first place (p. 10). Her theory emerges via an ethnography of texts that explores how emotions – or “how we respond to object and others” – come to co-create surfaces and boundaries of

bodies and identities, a move which further subverts mind-body and symbolic-material dualisms that have their origins in Platonic thought but which concretized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of the modern social sciences and the psychologizing of emotionality (p. 8-10; also, Orr, 2006). Ahmed's "data" are texts that cumulatively and differentially contribute to contemporary epistemology of emotions, including the work of academic theorists and cultural figures, government and legislative policies, journalism and Web sites. By deeply historicizing emotionality, Ahmed is able to demonstrate how feelings and identities, such as womanhood, Whiteness, Australian-ness, queerness, are co-constituted in practice, rather than proceeding or preceding one another.

The critical study of affect occurring in certain spaces of humanities scholarship does not disregard the psychological reality that shapes the phenomenology of affect and its intersections with political attitudes, cultural formations and social identities. Steele, on the other hand, investigates an emotion but cannot adequately account for the affective experience of White guilt. Instead, in recognizing that White guilt is at least partially based in a cognitive process – the *knowledge* of racism – he completely displaces affect with attitude. White guilt, to Steele, loses its affective dimension and becomes primarily cognitive and, thereby, attitudinal: it is both a knowledge and a politics, but *not* a feeling. This is not a moment of conflation of cognition and emotion, which is observed in some psychological literature; it is a literal *displacement* of affect. White guilt, for Steele, only becomes affective when it moves into the level of shame, which manifests as anger. Furthermore, the only apparent route to White shame, for Steele, is opened by the Right through a proverbial "calling out" of liberal Whites' attempts to "dissociate" from their Whiteness. From an even cursorily psychological perspective, this assertion is highly

problematic, and Steele offers no research-based evidence to support this claim, which is fundamentally about the effects/consequences of White guilt (i.e., what emotion psychologists would call the “behavioral” outcomes of guilt).

Steele does base his argument about White guilt in the social identity category of race: White people have White guilt, and Black people deal with it. He pays almost no attention to other racial or ethnic groups, which is typical of White guilt scholarship emanating from disciplinary psychology and *may* not be a substantial problem at least at the level of defining White guilt. Steele bases his argument in historical phenomena that have been shaped and driven by the history of White colonialism and racism against Black people, and the Black-White racial binary. Along with other scholars working in race studies, such as Patricia Hill Collins (2005) and Darnell Hunt (2005), I concur with his choice to focus on the persistence of the White-Black binary and White racism toward Black people as we attempt to establish what White guilt actually is. Nevertheless, Steele’s conceptualization of race as a category is limited at best and essentialist at worst. He presents a homogenized and universalizing perspective on White and Black people that allows for only four distinct groups of people, all constituted by political convictions: conservative Blacks, such as Steele and Bill Cosby; liberal Blacks, such as Michael Eric Dyson and all Black feminists; liberal Whites, such as Sandra Day O’Connor and Maureen Dowd, who problematically dissociate from their Whiteness in response to White guilt; and conservative Whites, such as George W. Bush and the neoconservatives, who rightly reject affirmative action and “dehumanizing” social programs and progressive politics in exchange for an agenda and rhetoric of individual responsibility and so-called minimal state intervention into economic and social issues (this is, of

course, selectively minimal, as the contemporary conservative movements have made heretofore unseen interventions into the social life of ordinary Americans). Somewhere overlapping this configuration is the category of “Black elites,” who are usually liberal and from whom Steele self-identifies as alienated. Ultimately, Steele neglects any meaningful or even superficial consideration of multiple dimensions of difference, especially class, gender, sexuality and nationality, not to mention ability or age. Rather than simply *not* intersectional<sup>2</sup>, his argument is *anti-intersectional*. Even as he argues against the essentializing of Blackness (his example: the rhetorical deployment of “the Black community”), he renders Black and White experience static and homogenous by failing to acknowledge the diversity of Black (and White) experience that is constituted not only by race but by other structural dimensions (examples include his usage of the terms “America,” “a Black,” “a White,” etc.). Ironically, the book begins with an analogy to shifting sexual attitudes when he considers possible reactions to the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal and President Eisenhower’s private use of the N-word if these events were temporally switched and Clinton had used the N-word and Eisenhower had a public sexual affair. He recognizes the ways in which race and sexuality (as major social issues) influence history and politics, but he fails to carry this relationship through the text to consider how race and sexuality are not merely analogous but actually intersect in co-

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<sup>2</sup> A more complete explanation of intersectional theory and politics occurs later in this chapter. For readers unfamiliar with intersectionality, one can use the following definition of the term as it appears herein: those perspectives that centralize the interconnectedness of identity categories, such as race, gender, sexuality and nationality, in shaping individual and group experiences, as well as social systems and structures of inequality. This concept will be greatly expanded upon and complicated throughout this dissertation.



constitution. White guilt, accordingly, becomes an issue of race and *not* gender and sexuality, no to mention class, age, citizenship status, looks or ability.

This anti-intersectionalism is reflective of Steele's overall anti-empirical perspective on racism that views racism ontologically as *individual* actions and attitudes that are made and possessed by independent social actors. This approach is explicitly anti-structural, anti-discursive and implicitly anti-sociological; Steele embraces a typically conservative viewpoint that any kind of systemic or structural racism ended in the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement and its consequential legislation and otherwise 'legal' reforms. Any claims to the contrary are paranoid allegations of power-hungry Blacks and blindly guilty, dissociative Whites. He presumes that White guilt is omnipresent and that White people are preoccupied by guilt and a lack of moral authority on race. However, empirical evidence collected for this dissertation and prior studies of White guilt (see Swim & Miller, 1999; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; Iyer et al., 2003) refute this – both when considering contemporary discourse about race and responsibility in the news media and when asking real White people to talk about their own feelings about race. White guilt may be hegemonic in the Gramscian sense (Gramsci, 1971), in that it plays some role(s) in the sustenance of racial hierarchy and inequity and that these inequities are perpetuated by the intellectual elite, but there is no evidence that White people are generally preoccupied by palpable guilt in everyday life.

Despite the profound limitations of his work to provide any empirically grounded or theoretically complex insight on White guilt, Steele does bring up many of the issues that have preoccupied psychologists and other scholars studying White guilt, including: the self-focus of guilt, the political limits of White guilt, the nonperformativity of

antiracism (Ahmed, 2006), and the precarious relationship between racist attitudes (or “racism”) and White guilt (or “Whiteness”). Before exploring these individual research areas, the roots of the academic study of Whiteness merits explication. Critical studies of Whiteness from across the academy are not connected by a singular genealogy of intellectual inquiry or social activist movement; nonetheless, there are some assumptions and theoretical innovations that loosely link this work in psychology, history and literature: namely, poststructuralism, critical theories of race and cultural studies.

### **Whiteness as an Object of Study: When “Race” Does Not Equal “Black”**

A central theoretical assumption of this work is that – in the 21<sup>st</sup> century United States – Whiteness functions as a site of discursive silence in everyday life and social relations, which is to say that Whiteness typically goes unmarked or unnamed and yet is productive of meaning and consequences for the unequal distribution of diverse forms of capital (social, economic, cultural, etc.) (Bourdieu, 1992, 1993). Though this knowledge is made possible by the everyday lived experiences of people of color and social minorities and those who reject the social, economic and cultural dominance of Whiteness, the assertion that Whiteness is a site of discursive silence is – in the context and genealogy of academic thought on race and racism – made possible by the interrelated domains of poststructuralism, cultural studies, postmodernism and what has ultimately come to be known as “Critical Whiteness Studies.” I will now proceed into a selective review of each of these domains, paying special attention to how these fields have influenced by research and argument.

*Poststructural origins.* Michel Foucault is hardly best characterized as a “race scholar,” and his work does not directly address American culture. As one of the original

theorists of social constructivism and subsequently one of the most influential thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, Foucault's scholarship is pivotal to my work as it informs my theoretical position on race and racism in the United States. Challenging and expanding upon many of the dominant theoretical traditions that came before him and their most famous figures, namely Marx, Hegel, Saussure, Kant, Nietzsche, Sartre and Hyppolite, French philosopher Foucault's career traces a move from structuralism to poststructuralism that in its wake left an intellectual landscape transformed by the concepts of *discourse* and *power/knowledge*. Symbolic interactionist and dramaturgical sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) used the concept "discourse" 10 years prior to Foucault in the development of a theory of identity performance in everyday social interaction. However, it was Foucault's explication of discourse as the process through which meaning is made and power is negotiated that ushered in the discursive turn that is so characteristic of poststructural thought (Hall, 1997b). For Foucault, "discourse" for Foucault is much more than words or even verbal interaction. Indeed, discourse is most simply defined as the social practices that produce knowledge and, thereby, power (Foucault, 1972). Whereas structuralists, such as Saussure (1986) and Levi-Strauss, had attempted to systematize the study of language and linguistics to such an extent that a "science of signs" (i.e., "semiology") would reveal the truth behind all human interactions, Foucault's poststructuralist tendencies are exemplified by his focus on the effects and consequences of language and its role in the productions of social structures and institutions (Hall, 1997b, 1997c; Bloland, 1995).

In his earlier work, particularly *Madness and Civilization* (1965) and *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault was concerned with how the human sciences had constituted

man as an object of study. He argued that the human sciences – what we would today typically identify as the social or behavioral sciences – occupied a precarious position in the modern *episteme*, which was operationalized as the dominant way of knowing (epistemology) since the (European and Euro-American) Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively. The human sciences, namely psychology, sociology and anthropology, “appeared when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and which is to be known” (1970, p. 345). This “event in the order of knowledge” sparked a redistribution of the *episteme*; parts of man had been studied before, but until the human sciences emerged, man had not studied himself as representation. Foucault’s critique of the human sciences was complex and insightful because his criticism was based not on the object of study (i.e., man) *per se*, nor even the mostly quantitative methods on which the human sciences relied. Instead, Foucault identified the *location* of the human sciences in the modern *episteme* – in between the three dimensions of physical and mathematical sciences; biology, economics and linguistics; and philosophy – as simultaneously perilous and in peril. This meant that the human sciences were (and are) always in danger of collapsing into themselves or of suffering an epistemological breakdown from their reliance on modernist, scientific logic to understand *representation of humanity* that resist such logic. At the same time, though, the human sciences benefit from the social and cultural power of scientific knowledge such that their decisions and findings about what constituted “normal” are instantly taken to be truth. “Truth” about social worlds, and the normativities that shape any claims to truth, are the discursive basis for unequal, identity-based power relations, such as those of race, gender and sexuality.

In his deeply historical work on the human sciences, which was later elaborated in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* (1978) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault (1970) first argued that these disciplines rely on models from biology, economics and linguistics to approach the study of man<sup>3</sup> (as man appears to himself). Unlike biology, economics and linguistics, however, the human sciences do not study the structure of “laws” and “rules” of human behavior. Instead, they depend on (self-constructed) representations of man to produce knowledge about man. Note that the use of the term “man” (as opposed to “human” or “people”) is meaningful to Foucault. This term and its rhetorical citationality in Foucault’s writing both exposes the ways in which the modernist logic descendent from the Enlightenment was fundamentally masculinist and androcentric. “The human sciences are not, then, an analysis of what man is by nature; but rather an analysis that extends from man in his positivity (living, speaking, labouring being) to what enables this same being to know (or seek to know) what life is, in what the essence of labour and laws consist, and in what way he is able to speak,” according to Foucault (p. 353). The knowledge produced by the human sciences plays a central role in the production of knowledge about the self (self-knowledge) in modernity; and because their internal logic is framed by dichotomies, taxonomies and binaries inherited from the natural sciences, they are the primary producers of normativity and deviance in culture. Such knowledge is exceedingly powerful, and structures how we know ourselves and Others (Hall, 1997c; Said, 1978).

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<sup>3</sup> I follow Foucault’s use of the term “man” here not because I agree with the default masculine gendering in his rhetoric, but because the use of “man” (as opposed to “human” or “people”) was significant and meaningful. It both exposes the ways in which modernist logic was masculinist and androcentric, and distinguishes Foucault from his feminist contemporaries.

Foucault's theoretical intervention is especially useful for conceptualizing race, as well as other dimensions of difference, as both an object of study and a consolidated, constitutive element of disciplining and disciplined social relations and structures. Because knowledge is produced within, through and by discourse, it is with a Foucauldian lens that I argue that race, along with gender and sexuality, is made meaningful through unequal discursive relations of power and then made visible by a poststructural and intersectional lens that destabilizes the taken-for-granted ways in which race functions unnoticed and impenetrably in contemporary neoliberal cultural contexts. Foucault's contributions are immeasurable, and he is typically credited as the laying the groundwork and articulating the primary tenets of the social constructionist approach (Hall, 1997b), along with other major figures such as Berger and Luckman (1966) and Thomas Kuhn (1962) and sometimes-rival Jacques Derrida. Diverging from various neo- and post-Marxist approaches that privileged class conflict as the organizing component of social worlds and structures, Foucault moved 'beyond' class to formulate a theory of power that can incorporate literally *any* meaningful category of difference because his perspective is framed by discourse, which is only limited by the boundaries of human knowledge. Foucault also largely displaced the subject, choosing instead to focus on discursive power structures and relationships; this choice has been sharply criticized along with his assertion that nothing/no one exists outside of discourse. Some feminists – and particularly Black feminists, such as Patricia Hill Collins (1998) – challenge what many read as a nihilistic perspective because it may limit any individual or group's ability to cause meaningful change to dominant discourses. Others have also claimed that the absence of a subject or explicit consideration of race is evidence of the

implicit White, European male privilege of Foucault's social location (Hall, 1997b; see Collins, 1998, for a more lengthy critique). Nonetheless, Foucault offered a theoretical frame that exposes the ways in which discourse works to obscure or make invisible oppressive practices that shape everyday life. In the context of White guilt, Foucault's displacement of the universal, all-knowing subject – the “man” of the modern human sciences – facilitates a complication of affective experience such that emotions can be within and outside phenomenology. In other words, the flexibility and richness of *discourse, power* and *knowledge* – the discursive lens – enables us to imagine how White guilt and shame are both felt within people's affective lives and how these emotions travel discursively through diverse social practices and institutions.

***Cultural studies.*** Though a full explication of the robust arena of theory and research that came to be known as “Cultural Studies” is beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief explication of some key aims and terms of the field warrant explication here. Challenging the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, which became the status quo of the academic study of culture in the early post-World War II era, British cultural studies began to coalesce into a field or approach in the United Kingdom during the late 1960s and 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, leading figures such as Raymond Williams, Paul Gilroy, Angela McRobbie, Paul DuGay and Stuart Hall helped to transport cultural studies from a primarily British context at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) to continental Europe and the United States, where it eventually intersected with and transformed American Studies.<sup>4</sup> The Frankfurt approach to the study

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<sup>4</sup> Various American Studies Association presidential addresses have chronicled the development of cultural studies and its relationship to American Studies in great detail. For examples of such genealogies, see Radway (1999) and Deloria (2009). For a more

of culture, exemplified by Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Benjamin, had used neo-Marxism to initiate a critique of postmodernity, or what the Critical Theorists saw as the cooptation of consumer culture to manipulate the masses in the interest of the ruling class, who controlled the field of production. Hall (1973/2006) and his contemporaries benefited from the Frankfurt School's theorization of culture as involving more than just "high" art (i.e., the stuff of art history and classical music theory), but critiqued the early Critical Theorists for using a modernist framework to approach postmodernity.

Launching an attack on what came to be known as the hypodermic model of cultural analysis – where consumers are conceptualized as drones who experience culture by figuratively having its meaning injected into their consciousness – Hall, DuGay and others theorized a complex "circuit of culture" that is best characterized by multidirectional and nonlinear interactions between consumers, producers and the processes of regulation, identification and representation (Hall, 1997a, 2006). Cultural studies retained an investment in politics, economics and culture, but tended to embrace more postmodern formulations of social relationships. For Hall (1997a), culture is simply "shared meanings," which are established and communicated within language systems (p. 1). The definition of language, to Hall and other practitioners of cultural studies, is not limited to the spoken or written word, however. Music, visual arts, and diverse forms of communication constitute language through which shared ideas about people, society and relationships are communicated, sustained and transformed. Hall's definition of culture – a framework of shared meanings – is the one that is used throughout this dissertation.

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controversial genealogy and critique of contemporary tensions between the fields, see Reed, T.V. (2001).



As a neo-Marxist model – and one that was both reflective and productive of the postmodern turn in social theory (Clarke, 2005) – cultural studies was and is heavily reliant on the work of Italian Antonio Gramsci to conceptualize how domination and subordination operate in macro-level social relationships. Whereas the Frankfurt School proposed a unidirectional model of interaction in which consumers were manipulated by mass media, Gramsci had earlier theorized that “hegemony” was a better way to characterize the process of domination and how inequity is sustained – even when it seems implausible and illogical. Gramsci (1971; initially written in the 1920s and 1930s) argued that all social groups are culpable for hegemonic systems and institutions – albeit differentially. To Gramsci, social domination of one group over another is only sustainable when both the oppressed and oppressors – and those who fall somewhere in between – literally ‘buy into’ the system of inequity. Gramsci observed this as the poor and peasantry in Italy endorsed fascism even as it promised severe penalties on their quality of life. Similar arguments have been made today about White people who are complacent in U.S. racial inequity, which has tangible consequences for all members of society, including Whites (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; Frankenberg, 1993). Hegemonic systems tend to obscure these consequences, or present them as necessary evils to maintain the status quo. This process is facilitated by the social elites, including intellectuals, who produce knowledge to support the logic of the ruling class.

Rejecting Marx’s two-class system in which one dominates the other, Gramsci opened up his social theory to incorporate the diversity of ways in which multiple ideologies operate simultaneously in any given historical moment, in any given context. Hegemonic systems, like discourse, work to obscure the realities of oppression.

Hegemony is also dynamic – never static – and has to consistently work to establish itself as the dominant and most desirable system of thought and practice in a given society. U.S. racial dynamics are a quintessential hegemonic system; for example, post-Civil Rights movement race relations are distinguished by an urgent insistence that race is no longer the motivating factor in unequal access to resources and power because racism is “illegal.” Hall and the British cultural studies camp studied the global politics of race and racism in their work, which helped form what is now referred to as postcolonial studies and theory; moreover, this framework became a useful lens for scholars working in a U.S. context to investigate the diverse ways in which race works, disciplines and transforms in the United States, past and present. Accordingly, cultural studies has exerted a substantial influence in the humanities and social sciences, including sociology, which throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had largely failed to sufficiently theorize race and develop methods with which to evaluate and critique its role in social relations (Collins, 1998; Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008).

*Racial Formation Theory.* Omi and Winant’s (1986/1994) sociological work does just that, and the exigency of their project is at least partially rooted in the historical reluctance of mainstream and radical academic scholarship to adequately deal with race. Their work emerges in the late 1980s in the context of two interrelated intellectual discourses, which shaped by an implicit White subjectivity: a) continued neglect of race and racial theory in the social sciences, and b) inadequate theorization of race by those few scholars who attempted to directly address race and racism.

Omi and Winant (1994) explain that existing scholarship has not met the challenge of race. Race and racial dynamics have been traditionally understood as relying

on three organizing categories: ethnicity, class and nation (p. 11). These three dimensions of difference, none of which of course is equivalent to race, are seen as guiding theoretical and empirical scholarship on race up until the mid-1980s. Omi and Winant critique the *ethnicity approach* along two major lines: 1.) “the bootstraps model,” in which group norms are treated as the dependent variable in analysis whereby differentiation in success/failure of assimilation and “racial uplift” of a given racial group are attributed to essential characteristics of said group, and 2.) the “they all look the same,” model, in which Whites are viewed as a diverse and multi-variable racial group and Blacks, in particular, are all the same. This theoretical approach reflects and supports social psychology’s assertion of the outgroup homogeneity effect, especially when considering that such racial theories were generated from a White-centric standpoint (even if their authors were not White). Displacing Whiteness from the center is critical to the reduction of the outgroup homogeneity effect, which stipulates that in-groups always view themselves as more internally diverse than outgroups, which appear to be homogenous (see Stangor & Schaller, 1996; also Sherman & Johnson, 2003 for a thorough discussion). Finally, ethnicity model approaches quintessentially conflate ethnicity and race, according to Omi and Winant, refusing to distinguish between the two concepts; this is especially problematic in a U.S. context, in which race and ethnicity have functioned in fundamentally different ways throughout American history.

Racial theories based on a class paradigm typically work to deny the uniqueness and significance of race as an organizing component of everyday life and institutional processes in exchange for over-emphasizing the role of class and market relations in stratification. Such work, according to Omi and Winant (1994), neglects to interrogate

intra-group racial dynamics, e.g., between middle-class and poor African Americans. Nationality paradigms, on the other hand, are viewed more favorably than either ethnicity- or class-based approaches, but these are ultimately nonetheless insufficient. Nation-based theory generally “emphasizes the relationships among the different elements of racial oppression – inequality, political disenfranchisement, territorial and institutional segregation, cultural domination,” according to Omi and Winant (p. 37). These approaches share a reliance on components derived from colonialism to demonstrate, “the continuity of racial oppression from its origins in the national oppression prevailing in colonialism’s heyday” (p. 37). Still, even though the colonialism critique is largely based in racial terms (albeit through the distorted lens of nation), the conditions and structures of colonial systems created and practiced by colonizers who retain dominant social positions today do not automatically capture the racial experiences of minorities in the postcolonial era. Nation-based paradigms, though largely advanced by Black scholars, may importantly fail to reflect the lived experiences of African Americans (as opposed to Black Caribbean Americans and other Black immigrant groups), obscuring the legacy of American slavery and the forced immigration of many Blacks into the United States. Colonialism and slavery are distinct but related phenomena, and though national approaches to racial dynamics may serve as a “partial prototype” for their argument (more so than ethnicity or class theories), Omi and Winant position racial formation theory (centering race) as necessary in order to capture the complexity and specificity of U.S. race relations (p. 47).

Omi and Winant’s (1994) project pivots on several “definitions,” which can also be thought of as operationalized theoretical constructs. This caveat is vital, because these

“definitions” are hardly static. On the contrary, they are *practices*. Omi and Winant define *race* as: “a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies” (p. 55). They explicate that, “Although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics (so-called ‘phenotypes’), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process” (p. 55). *Racial formation* is defined as, “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (p. 55). A *racial project* is, “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines. Racial projects connect what *race means* in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially *organized*, based upon that meaning” (p. 56). Note the linguistic choice of the term “formation,” as opposed to “form”: Omi and Winant insist upon a conceptualization of race that captures the complexity and historical contingency of race and signals a constant enactment of race (as a category), as opposed to a static definition that implies transhistoricism, stability or universality.

Omi and Winant’s theoretical perspective aids understanding of race and racial dynamics grounded in anti-essentialism, deep historicism and critical attention to the role of culture in any identity-based power relation. As such, I read them as integrating the contributions of Foucault and Gramsci, particularly, as they (re)focus discourse, discipline and hegemony on the U.S. racial state. For Omi and Winant, social and historical processes are bound up in representations – signifying practices that take place

in everyday life as well as institutional apparatuses that are less visible in everyday experiences but nonetheless effective and influential (Hall, 1997a; Foucault, 1977). Racial signification – such as those constructed and disseminated in televisual and other mass mediated discourses – are central to any racial formation or racial project (racist or otherwise). Racial formations are dependent upon culturally and historically situated racial projects, which organize and represent social structures and (racially marked) bodies. Their “racial formation” is also dependent upon specific hegemonies, which localizes and specifies the ways in which race works in contemporary society, simultaneously offering insight into race’s relationships with other identities, identity-based movements and socio-political dilemmas (p. 56).

In historical terms, “Racial rule can be understood as a slow and uneven historical process which has moved from dictatorship to democracy, from domination to hegemony....In the U.S., the origins of racial division, and of racial signification and identity formation, lie in a system of rule which was extremely dictatorial” (p. 67). Now, however, “racial rule” works hegemonically to obscure the ways in which the state dictates particular race relations (structurally) and the manner by which the mass media and popular culture support such unequal racial dynamics (representationally). Together, these structural and representational components constitute the contemporary U.S. racial project. Social justice-based changes to the contemporary U.S. racial order manifest themselves in processes of “rearticulation,” which are composed of the disorganization (deconstruction) of dominant, pre-existing racial ideology and (re)construction of alternative, oppositional frameworks for knowing and doing race and race relations (p. 89). But rearticulation of racial ideology is not always invested in social justice for racial

minorities, as exemplified by the new right of the mid-1970s, the emergence of Reagan-era neoconservatism and the development of Clinton-era neoliberalism, which persists today (Duggan, 2003; Melamed, 2006). I will return to neoliberalism later, but now proceed to a discussion of those studies of race that are primarily concerned with the construction of “White” and “Whiteness.”

### **Critical Studies of Whiteness**

With ‘race’ sufficiently troubled by poststructuralist approaches to the category that effectively unhinge race from the concept “Black,” the door was opened for critical investigations into the ways in which race emerged as a category in the United States and how it is deployed in a diversity of ways in contemporary U.S. cultures. Some scholars began to point their critical attention toward “White” and “Whiteness” during the 1980s and 1990s; the label used to describe this scholarship is hotly contested even today (Weigman, 1999), but can generally be grouped under the umbrella category of “critical studies of whiteness” or “critical whiteness studies.”

In addition to inheriting theoretical tools from Foucauldian poststructuralism and more general postmodern approaches to cultural and social analysis, critical Whiteness studies are directly descendent from critical social theories of race and racism largely emanating from scholars and communities of color (Roediger, 1998), as well as allied feminist theories, politics and activism (Frankenberg, 1993). Critical Whiteness studies have worked since the 1980s and early 1990s to highlight how “White” raciality is defined not by neutrality or its supposed emptiness as a cultural signifier. To the contrary, Whiteness and White people are racialized in distinct ways but within the same macro-level framework of racialization that disadvantages some racial groups over others and

promotes inequity. Whiteness means specific things in distinct historical moments and shifts in its meanings across time and space; Whiteness also changes in its relationships to class, gender and other dimensions of difference.

Critical Whiteness studies are not, however, about re-centering Whiteness in critical discourse or about re-inscribing the centrality of White racial identity in sociocultural analysis, though this has been the subject of intense academic debate over the past several decades (see Hill, 2004; Weigman, 1999). Understandably, there is a tangible amount of anxiety regarding an antiracist academic project that posits White people as its primary object of study/inquiry. To the contrary, the types of scholarship that I would identify as fitting within this broad category are those kinds of projects that are typically about the socio-historical configurations of racisms, and they approach Whiteness at an oblique angle. The effect is the destabilization of Whiteness as the racial equivalent of “normal,” troubling hegemonic norms about how race and racism function. These interventions across the humanities and social sciences have varied in their substance and influence, but critical studies of Whiteness have universally emphasized that “race” does not equal “Black,” and “White” does not equal “neutral.” As prominent figures such as Roediger, Lott, Hill, Ignatiev, Lipsitz, Weigman, Helms and Frankenberg have established, accounts of historical and contemporary racism are therefore profoundly limited if Whiteness is taken for granted and not explored in all its particularity.

Roediger (1991), for example, has traced the shifting group memberships of “White” people throughout colonial U.S. history and up to the immigration waves of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His historical work demonstrates how the boundaries of



Whiteness have been simultaneously policed and permeable, moving and shifting as class statutes and perception of immigrant groups have transformed through primarily economic relations. Similarly, Noel Ignatiev's (1995) landmark work focused on how one particular group of immigrants – the working class Irish – transformed their social standing in the U.S. through access to White identity group membership enabled by a complex combination of language (i.e., English), labor, religious and race. In literary studies, Eric Lott (1995) has shown how racism was literally performed in working class minstrel shows, and how race, gender, class and sexuality intersected in these performative moments. Ultimately, Lott argues that minstrelsy represents latent-but-powerful homoerotic desire of the Black man's body.

Not all influential studies of Whiteness emanate from a strictly academic context. Professional writers Tim Wise (2008) and Maurice Berger (1999) have both published memoirs in which their identities as White men have served as launching points for the interrogation of how White privilege intersects with gender, sexuality, class, nationality and religion together shape the life experiences of diverse White people. Both demonstrate familiarity with the academic study of racism and Whiteness, but use personal life history, autoethnography, creative writing, informal interviews, oral history and storytelling as their data sources. For example, Berger (1999) recounts the story of a White, Jewish, South African immigrant to the United States who was frequently confronted with questions about racial apartheid in her country of origin. She told Berger, “When Americans ask me if I'm ashamed to admit that I'm South African, I wonder if they should be ashamed to admit that they are American” (p. 60). Berger uses this woman's story to illuminate cultural differences in the conceptualization of race and

racism, whereby “outsiders” to the United States may be more perceptive of American White raciality and intergroup race relations than White people born and raised in a U.S. context. He asserts that, “Whiteness is rarely discussed in American life and culture. White people, while vigilantly aware of the presence of blackness, are most often oblivious to the psychological and political weight of their own color” (p. 184).

George Lipsitz, a leading figure in American Studies, offered one of the most empirical accounts of systemic racism in the U.S. ever published with his thesis on the “possessive investment in Whiteness.” Lipsitz (1996/2006) painstakingly accounts for the movement of White people from cities to suburbs throughout the Cold War era and the diverse and contradictory ways in which government action and inaction contributed to a massive disinvestment in urban spaces occupied primarily by people of color throughout the 1960s and 70s. In the domains of housing, banking, transportation, education, public health and various aspects of infrastructure, U.S. governmental agencies on the federal, state and local levels – together with Congress – have overvalued Whiteness and devalued Blackness and other forms of raciality, according to Lipsitz. He argues ultimately that White people – the most vocal critics of so-called “identity politics” – have been the greatest beneficiaries of identity-based practices in the most fundamental practices of civic life in the United States. Of course, these discriminatory and systemic processes are largely “invisible” to the extent that they fit within the racist logics of advanced capitalism and draw upon deep-seeded U.S. racial projects that associate White people with entitled affluence and Black people with deserving poverty. Lipsitz asserts that these practices, such as “the organized abandonment of poor and working class people in New Orleans” continue today, and are most painfully evident in the conditions

that precipitated the federal government's failed response to Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region (p. 243).

The genealogy and impact of critical studies of Whiteness is especially relevant to the present inquiry, because so much of this field of research is about the social and cultural politics of antiracism, which I argue are inextricable from feelings engendered by antiracism. As Whiteness studies scholars in history, sociology and cultural studies have traced the shifts and demarcations of White identity in the U.S. throughout the nation's history and prior, they have paid principal attention to the relationships between Whiteness and Blackness and how Whiteness has influenced macro-level social relationships and U.S. institutions. In psychology, scholars have also examined Whiteness and White identity for its influence on personal and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the consequences of White identification on social relationships and attitudes, such as racism (Saucier & Miller, 1999), and intrapsychic problems, such as guilt, depression, anger and shame.

### **The Psychology of White Guilt**

Janet Helms's work is one of the most commonly cited sources in psychological research on Whiteness, because she developed an influential model of racial identity development that attempts to formalize and codify diverse experiences of White people into a workable identity model. For Helms (1993), a counseling psychologist, White racial identity is observable set of characteristics that reflect the intrapsychic and interpersonal qualities of people who are White. Her model includes the following stages, which are organized linearly and normatively to the extent that certain stages are preferable to others: "contact," "disintegration," "reintegration," "pseudo-independence"

“immersion/emersion,” and “autonomy” (Helms & Carter, 1993). The model, which is arguably the most influential and commonly used of its kind, presumes that White racial identity is dynamic and that, like other forms of social identity, will inevitably shift and change over time. The narrative that underlies this model presumes that White people will likely interact with people of color and non-Whites throughout the lifespan, and that these interactions will have implications for a White individual’s sense of self. This process is sometimes painful and regressive, but ultimately should lead toward a reconciliation of one’s racial identity and, ideally, a sense of autonomy. In other words, the “developed” White person will reach a psychosocial space in which he can both be White and distinguish himself from racist attitudes and behavior, embracing racial empathy and an understanding of White racial and social inequality. Implicit in the measure, however, is a kind of Ericksonian identity development framework, with its normative value on “autonomy” reminiscent of Erickson’s “integrity” stage – an essentially unattainable ‘perfect’ identity (Côté & Levine, 2002). These six distinct stages are also posited as measurable and quantifiable using the Helms and Carter’s WRIS, a survey-based instrument designed to assess where an individual is in her White racial identity development (Helms & Carter, 1993). Though this conceptualization of identity is radically different from the way in which symbolic interactionists, poststructuralists or postmodernists might think about racial identity, Helms’ work is reflective of the ways in which counseling and social psychologists tend to approach social and personal identity – as an observable reducible construct that lends itself to quantification using self-report or other forms of measurement. The development of the model, in isolation from other social identity variables, such as gender or sexuality, is also reflective of race research in

psychology, which emphasizes and values parsimony. Indeed, this is how psychologists have theorized and researched White guilt despite how, as I will argue, what we call “White guilt” is multidimensional. Because of this multidimensionality, which means that White guilt is dependent upon identity, culture, affect, attitudes *and* situation/context – the construct is largely resistant to traditional methods of self-report measurement and observation. These methodological limitations and concerns will be centralized in Chapter 3 and 4, which rely on different forms of self-reporting and observation to gather data, and will be further discussed in Chapter 5, when the data are explored collectively.

In developing one of the first and widely used psychological measures of White guilt, Swim and Miller (1999) astutely observed that while the literature on White racial identity and attitudinal racism has reached a consensus about the *existence* of White guilt, “these claims lack empirical tests and have been based primarily on commentaries and nonsystematic observations” (p. 501). Moreover, “the White racial identity models assumed the existence of White guilt. They embed guilt feelings in a certain stage or subcomponent of their models without empirically testing for White guilt,” according to Swim and Miller (p. 501). Accordingly, they identify an underlying assumption of White guilt as a requisite component of White racial identity; however, little scholarship exists to confirm the presence of White guilt during White racial identity development in any kind any systemic or empirical way. For example, unsystematic observations in education settings have employed White guilt as an umbrella concept to group together such a variety of identity-based emotions, attitudes and behaviors as guilt, shame, depression, paralysis, anger, resistance and anxiety (Tatum, 1992, 1994; Davis, 1992; Romney, Tatum & Jones, 1992). Because White guilt holds some meaningful degree of salience in

the racial formation and culture of the contemporary United States, it seems to have imbedded itself into psychological theories or racial identity as a kind of taken-for-granted aspect of being White.

But what exactly is White guilt, according to psychologists? Surprisingly – at least for a discipline relatively concerned with clear, parsimonious and transparently defined constructs – an answer to this question is somewhat elusive. A more effective version of the question is: what are the things that psychologists have identified as “White guilt,” and why do they assume its universality?

According to Swim and Miller (1999), “In general, Whites need not spend as much psychological effort or economic resources recovering from others’ prejudice and protecting themselves from possible encounters with prejudice. Awareness of this unearned White privilege along with the awareness of racism could create feelings of White guilt” (p. 500). In this framework, White guilt is cognitively triggered by an awareness of unfair inequity and unearned privilege and is dependent upon an individual possessing certain racial attitudes, such as the belief that racism is *not* a good thing. Iyer, Leach and Crosby (2003) go further to define the construct: “The term White guilt describes the dysphoria felt by European Americans who see their group as responsible for illegitimate advantage held over other racial groups, such as African Americans” (p. 118). Their definition retains the cognitive, perspectival aspect (e.g., “...who *see* their group as responsible...”) but emphasizes, to a greater extent than Swim and Miller, the emotional consequences of these attitudes. By identifying White guilt as a form of dysphoria, the authors have centralized concerns about the negative dimensions of guilt as an emotion. They also, however, imply that all “European Americans,” a vague and

amorphous socio-cultural group, experience White guilt to some degree, large or small. Regardless of the differences between their definition of the construct, Iyer et al. assess the presence and magnitude of feelings of White guilt using Swim and Miller's White guilt scale, which includes the following five items:

1. Although I feel my behavior is typically nondiscriminatory toward Blacks, I still feel guilt due to my association with the White race.
2. I feel guilty about the past and present social inequality of Black Americans (i.e., slavery, poverty).
3. I do not feel guilty about social inequality between White and Black Americans. (reverse-coded)
4. When I learn about racism, I feel guilt due to my association with the White race.
5. I feel guilty about the benefits and privileges that I receive as a White American. (Swim & Miller; p. 513).

Note that these fairly simple items restrict the attitudinal component of White guilt to the structural relationships between Black and White people in the United States, as opposed to relationships between Whites and all non-White people. Questions one and five refer to personal behaviors or privileges, while two, three and four point to sociological and historical concerns. The format of the scale essentially bounds racial affect to a spectrum: one side represents the complete absence of guilt, and the other represents its total presence. In other words, the opposite of feeling guilty is *not* feeling guilty, as opposed to feeling entitled, deserving and fair, etc. There is no possibility, in this universe of responses, to represent the potentially 'positive' feelings enjoyed by those who literally

enjoy unequal privilege. Finally, all five questions conspicuously employ the word “guilt” or “guilty,” a point of psychometric controversy that will be discussed later (in Chapter 3) in detail.

Even though guilt has a negative valence and ranges from uncomfortable to painful (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), one might assume that *White* guilt actually has positive consequences for racial attitudes, or that it is at least positively correlated with antiracist perspectives and behaviors. Psychologists have found some evidence of this association, but feeling or claiming to experience White guilt does not appear to be a reliable predictor of antiracist attitudes or behaviors. A fundamental aspect of guilt is that it focuses attention on the self (Tangney & Fischer, 1995). Those who feel guilty direct their attention toward themselves, their guilt-provoking behavior and the extent to which they are responsible for this behavior (Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003). “Thus,” as Iyer et al. explain, “the experience of White guilt should focus European Americans’ attention on the (ingroup) self rather than on the (outgroup) other” (p. 118). Self-focus, accordingly, should generally make guilt a weaker basis for actually helping the harmed or wrong group (in this case, African Americans) than internalized feelings or political convictions that are focused on the welfare of the harmed themselves, according to Iyer et al. Congruent with research on generic guilt, Iyer et al. assert that White guilt should motivate compensatory behavior, because psychological literature suggests that people who feel guilty attempt to make restitution to their victims. Swim and Miller’s (1999) development of the five-item White guilt scale (above) supports this notion, as White guilt was a predictor of “European Americans’” support for compensatory affirmative action programs that aim to correct and apologize for racial discrimination and inequality.



As measured using existing psychometric instruments (e.g., Swim & Miller's five-item test), Iyer et al. found that White guilt is *not*, however, a reliable predictor of support for comprehensive, equal opportunity affirmative action programs that seek to address inequality in systemic ways and at the structural level, addressing White privilege and explicit racial discrimination on the part of White people. They argue that this is the result of White guilt's self-focus, and that White guilt may only motivate people to alleviate the dysphoria of guilt and is not necessarily or consistently predictive of internalized antiracism or concern (i.e., "group-based sympathy") for African Americans (p. 125). Similarly, in the development of a multidimensional scale to assess the psychosocial consequences of racism to White people, Spanierman and Heppner (2004) concluded the following:

Contrary to expectation, no relationship was found between White Guilt and ethnocultural empathy. One possible explanation may be that White individuals who experience high levels of guilt and shame may be too overwhelmed to empathize with people of other races. Similarly, sometimes Whites become "stuck" in guilt and shame (e.g., self-pity, self-absorption, and so forth), which consequently may inhibit them from increasing their racial awareness beyond their current levels and further prevent them from taking action to challenge racism. (p. 260)

If their assertion is followed to its logical conclusion, then White guilt is only a productive inasmuch as it may motivate White people to do things to *compensate* for White privilege; accordingly, in the absence of internalized antiracism, these behaviors (e.g., endorsing compensatory affirmative action programs) should only occur so long as

White guilt is present. Moreover, there is a presupposition – rooted in their use of the term “stuck” – that non-movement is *not* the ‘normal’ state of White people, at least when it comes to race relations. There is no extant psychological evidence to suggest that White guilt motivates an internalization of group-based sympathy or antiracist attitudes such that an individual’s concern for African Americans as a social group and commitment to resisting racism will extend beyond or greater than the duration and severity of her White guilt. Tatum (1994) has also qualitatively observed that White guilt is not a dependably useful pedagogical tool, as guilty White students may be too anxious or depressed to learn about racism and integrate knowledge about their own relationships to systems of power and inequality.

### **Guilt and (In)Action**

Groups of guilty White people may behave in similarly compensatory ways that elide actual political attitudes and commitments. In “The Nonperformativity of Antiracism,” Ahmed (2006) explores the complexities of institutional statements about diversity and the ways in which they may actually obscure the material actions and commitments of an institution. Ahmed elucidates a distinction between the actual performance of antiracism and empty, antiracist nonperformance. Diversity statements (e.g. “We are committed to diversity,”) and statements that admit to certain failures in the past, she argues, “do not do what they say: they do not, as it were, commit a person, organization, or state to an action. Instead, they are nonperformatives” (p. 105).

Referencing John Langshaw Austin and Judith Butler, Ahmed explains that a speech act is performative when it does what it says – when it secures the effect that it names. In Ahmed’s model, the failure of the speech act to do what it says is not circumstantial nor

accidental, but is indeed quite deliberate; a nonperformative speech act: “‘works’ *because* it fails to bring about what it names” (p. 105). The speech act is read as nonperformative because it indicts failures to do things (to act) as opposed to naming and criticizing the actions of perpetuating racism. Likewise, the central paradox then emerges: admitting to being racist becomes a claim to have transcended one’s own racism (ironically, the reason for issuing such a speech act). The implications of nonperformativity for a theory of White guilt are intriguing, and will be explored in greater detail in the empirical portions of this dissertation. What is potentially most compelling about Ahmed’s argument is that nonperformativity may be central to White guilt. If White guilt simultaneously a) manifests rhetorically as antiracism, then b) alleviates White guilt while c) not resulting in an internalization of antiracist or a structural critique of racism and White privilege, then can the experience of White guilt be likened to the superficial diversity statements that constitute the evidence of Ahmed’s thesis?

A question that lurks beneath and beyond the scope of this present investigation is the causal *and* longitudinal relationship between White guilt and racist attitudes/antiracism. Because the task at hand is to establish a more cultural, critical, psychologically grounded account of White guilt, I am not yet prepared to answer this question, which ultimately – as I intend to demonstrate -- will require a mixed-methodological, experimental and ethnographic examination of individuals over time. However, as Ahmed and others’ work insists, the rhetorical expression of lament over racism and its consequences does not equate to antiracism as a material-semiotic phenomenon. Moving beyond an ambiguous and largely ambivalent conceptualization of

White guilt will require a more nuanced account of the diverse relationships between racial identity, racial attitudes and White guilt.

### **Distinguishing Between Guilt and Shame**

Before I turn toward my proposal for an intersectional and interactionist approach to White guilt, I will discuss another area of ontological ambiguity in the study of White guilt that merits attention. Anecdotal evidence collected in preparation for this dissertation suggests a strong diversity of opinions regarding what “guilt” is, much less its racialized forms. A survey of relevant literature confirms the controversy over defining guilt as an affective construct and experience. Psychologists studying emotion maintain robust debates over the ontology of guilt (see Tangney & Fisher, 1995), and these constructions of guilt can and do differ largely from those in other academic discourses and popular culture (see Fisher, 1984). For example, Leys (2007) argues that the decades since the Holocaust and World War II have seen a shift in popular discourse from guilt *to* shame that is based on her readings of cultural texts and selected works of psychotherapists and affect theorists. The differences in guilt and shame, to Leys, appear to me more rooted in rhetorical than psychological experience. Comedian Tina Fey (Carlock & Scardino, 2006) invoked the concept of White guilt in a recent episode of her sitcom *30 Rock* when referring to her character’s ability to be manipulated by a Black co-worker; in this instance, guilt is constructed as a weakness of personality – a political vulnerability. As noted earlier, anecdotal observations of White guilt in classroom settings have associated guilt with a wide range of emotions that do little to advance a tangible conceptualization of the feeling or how it is distinct from other forms of affect (Romney, Tatum & Jones, 1992; Davis, 1992). Though I would hardly advocate that we

ignore White guilt's relationships with other forms of affect, I assert that we must distinguish the construct on a theoretical level and through empirical praxis *before* making claims about its relationships to and interactions with other forms of affect, behavior and attitudes.

Within the psychological literature on White guilt, I have observed two problematic trends regarding the conceptual/definition discreteness of "guilt" as a construct. First, the term "guilt" and the emotional construct to which it refers are under-defined and used synonymously with "shame." For example, Spanierman and Heppner (2004) used the terms "shame" and "guilt" synonymously in the development of their Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites (PCRW) scale, neglecting to distinguish the respective constructs theoretically or psychometrically. On the other hand, Swim and Miller (1999) hesitantly asked whether some of their data might be confounded by the existence of White shame: "It would be informative for future research to explore what people mean when they say that they feel White guilt. For instance, it might be useful to differentiate between White guilt and White *shame*" [emphasis added] (p. 512). Swim and Miller acknowledge that there are meaningful differences between the antecedents and behavioral consequences of guilt and shame, and they point to preeminent research on these distinctions developed by J. P. Tangney and others in their moral emotions research (Tangney & Fischer, 1995; Tangney et al., 1996). Tangney's work (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney & Fischer, 1994; Tangney et al., 1996) has established crucial distinctions between guilt and shame, as well as their respective behavioral and emotional implications. Guilt and shame are both conceptualized as self-referential, "moral" emotions with negative valences; however, guilt is triggered by a specific behavior or

attribute, as opposed to shame's indictment of the entire self, and guilt is generally less painful than shame. Literally, this translates to the following: a guilty person might express that "I feel bad for doing that," whereas a person feeling shameful might express that "I hate myself." Despite extensive empirical research that distinguishes guilt from shame, including behavioral, cognitive, social and cultural approaches, prior attempts to formalize and measure *White* guilt have often conflated the two emotions.

A second problematic trend that emerges in the psychological study of White guilt is the tendency to assume that a lay psychological understanding of guilt exists and that most people share or understand psychologists' definition of the construct, and its distinction. Because Swim and Miller's (1999) five-item White guilt scale actually uses the words "guilt" and "guilty" in individual items, it is thereby dependent upon a common definitional understanding of what "guilt" means (feels, looks like, etc.) and its distinction from other forms of self-conscious, negative affect; the same critique can be lodged against the more psychometrically and conceptually sophisticated PCRW scale (Spanierman and Heppner, 2004). Conversely, Tangney and Dearing (2002) have advocated for the use of scenario-based measures, such as the Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3 (TOSCA-3), that assess "proneness" to guilt and shame (as opposed to *state* or in-the-moment guilt and shame) without requiring respondents to possess psychological knowledge of the terms "guilt" and "shame" or the psychological distinctions between them.<sup>5</sup> The TOSCA-3 is composed of hypothetical scenarios and asks respondents to rank several possible responses to each scenario on a 1 to 5 scale, with higher numbers

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<sup>5</sup> *Proneness*, as opposed to state guilt or shame, leans toward measurement of *trait* guilt and shame. Trait characteristics offer global information about a person that tends to be relatively more consistent over space and time than state characteristics.

indicating greater likelihood of that particular response. None of the scenarios or responses contains the words guilt or shame; instead, the instrument ‘taps’ or captures these emotions by presenting anxiety-provoking hypothetical situations that are likely to elicit these feelings and then offering potential reactions. Because one situation may elicit different responses among different people *and* simultaneous or contradictory responses in the same individual, the TOSCA-3 allows respondents to indicate that they would be likely to react in multiple ways. In other words, they are not forced to react in only the ways predicted by psychologists nor possess an academic knowledge of guilt and shame. Though this kind of scenario-based, multidimensional scale produces more psychometrically complex and sometimes ambiguous data (Fowler, 1995), it is preferred to overly simplistic forms of survey measurement.

The resulting data from the TOSCA-3 are divided into four inter-related subscales: shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, and two related emotions, detachment and externalization (of blame). Detachment and externalization are included as subscales because of their significant correlations with shame; Tangney and Dearing (2002) assert that both are ways of avoiding feelings of shame and can be indicators of latent shame and/or guilt. Swim and Miller (1999) note that White shame might motivate defensive reactions to confronting inequality and racism, as opposed to the compensatory behaviors triggered by White guilt. Furthermore, detachment and externalization appear to have potentially profound consequences for a theory of White guilt, because they may signal its presence when other forms of measurement might not be able to detect White guilt using self-report surveys and other forms of quantitative and qualitative assessment. Because of these concerns over definition, theory and measurement of guilt and shame, I

argue that Swim and Miller's proposition that "it might be useful to differentiate between White guilt and White shame" is a profound understatement. These problems, as well as the question of individual versus collective or 'corporate' guilt (Doosje et al., 1998), will be addressed empirically in Chapter 3, but now I turn to the relationship between context and method that motivate my intersectional, interactionist approach to White guilt.

### **Neoliberalism and Implications for Cultural Psychology**

Realizing a truly cultural psychology necessitates careful consideration of the cultural and historical contexts in which psychosocial processes are constituted and manifest (Gergen, 1973; Markus, Kitayama & Heiman, 1996). The White guilt that is the subject of this dissertation, accordingly, is a psychosocial process that is situated within a particular time and space: the United States, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the lives actual White people and popular, mass-mediated discourse. Recently, through a lens that identifies and critiques the politics of "neoliberalism," scholars in the humanities and social sciences have worked to explain the contradictions and inequities endemic to race relations, specifically, and identity politics, generally, in the contemporary U.S. Originally a concept developed in the arena of political science and studies of international relations, neoliberalism is the term used to describe the ideology behind "globalization" and the policies and strategies employed by powerful Western governments (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States), military coalitions (e.g., the U.N., NATO) and policy organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to spread liberal political-economic interests and unequal trade policies across the globe, typically in the name of promoting freedom and democracy. In actuality, neoliberalism resembles neo-colonialism and has been critiqued by scholars



and activists as promoting postmodern forms of imperialism. Neoliberalism is a category that exists conceptually above ideological labels such as “Republican,” “Democrat,” “liberal,” “conservative” or “neoconservative”; indeed, neoliberalism is such a pervasive hegemony that contemporary manifestations of each of these political positions are constituted within and by the logics of neoliberalism.<sup>6</sup> Though much academic work that studies and critiques neoliberalism has focused on issues of empire and globalization, including macro-economic concerns over the flow of capital, the War on Terror and macro-sociological relationships between political entities (see Pietrse, 2007), scholars have also examined the cultural impact of neoliberalism both internationally and in the United States.

Political scientist, queer theorist and leading Americanist Lisa Duggan’s (2003) work elucidates neoliberalism’s influence on domestic social policies and the discourse on identity and inequity at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Broadly defined, in the terms of ‘domestic’ affairs, neoliberalism is the dominant structuring of intersecting economic, cultural and political processes that result in a privileging of privatization, upward economic distribution, and a dismantling of the social welfare state (Duggan, 2003). Duggan (2003), Sara Ahmed (2006), Nikhil Pal Singh (2007), Jodi Melamed (2004), Eric Lott (2006) and other leading figures of American Studies have posited interventions that collectively suggest that neoliberalism is the dominant era, cultural aesthetics, politics and epistemology of our time. As articulated by Lisa Duggan, neoliberalism “organizes material and political life *in terms of* race, gender, and sexuality as well as economic

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<sup>6</sup> It might be better to say that neoliberalism has developed into a term that can be used to describe or denote a variety of hegemonies that interlock to create globalized systems of material and discursive inequity.

class and nationality, or ethnicity and religion. But the categories through which Liberalism (and also neoliberalism) classifies human activity and relationships *actively obscure* the connections among these organizing terms.” These processes subsequently silence critiques of structural inequality along lines of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality within a multicultural framework that allows for superficial inclusion of difference (Grzanka & Maher, in review). Under neoliberalism, race, ethnicity and other markers of difference are embraced by a superficial multiculturalism that celebrates diversity while shutting down any discussion of power and inequitable access to resources. As Melamed (2006) explains, “Race continues to permeate capitalism’s economic and social processes, organizing the hyperextraction of surplus value from racialized bodies and naturalizing a system of capital accumulation that grossly favors the global North over the global South. Yet multiculturalism portrays neoliberal policy as the key to a postracist world of freedom and opportunity” (p. 1). Neoliberal hegemonic conditions precipitate, according to Melamed, discourses of multiculturalism that suggest America is post-racial; such discourses have only been amplified with the 2008 election of Barack Obama to the U.S. Presidency. Gallagher (2008) asserts that neoliberal ideology produces a standpoint held by the majority of White Americans whereby “the imperatives of the market have rid society of the irrationality of racism” and other forms of inequity (p.165). According to Gallagher, concordant colorblind racisms facilitate dominant groups’ perspectives that racial inequality is the result of cultural pathologies or individual choices made and internalized by racial and ethnic minorities, *as opposed to* structural factors.

Like any hegemony, neoliberalism is inherently in flux and always re-inventing itself to accommodate the discontinuities between material reality and neoliberal ideology. Literature on neoliberalism tends to emphasize the many contradictions that permeate its ideological framework and policy implications. In his analysis of the Bush Doctrine and the military strategies of the United States in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Pieterse highlights the inconsistencies that arise when unilateral force is deployed within rhetorics of freedom and liberty so central to neoliberalism's legitimacy as a foreign policy agenda:

Applying the entire arsenal of instruments of power open up multiple fronts and as many points of contradiction. How, for instance, do freedom and democracy rhyme with the use of military force? How does the liberal use of depleted uranium ammunition square with bringing liberty? (p. 80)

In order for neoliberalism to function in international and domestic spheres, discourse about its structural inequalities and undemocratic logic cannot sufficiently breach the mainstream so as to reveal the hypocrisies and il-logics of neoliberal movements such economic globalization and multiculturalism. Accordingly, neoliberalism is always in danger of legitimization crisis (Gramsci, 1971; Habermas, 1975). This has meaningful implications for the cultural and psychological study of race in the United States, because neoliberalism facilitates forms of discourse that actively obscure the materiality of persistent and pervasive racialized economic, political and ideological inequity and the varied ways in which racial inequity interfaces with other systems of identity-based subordination and oppression (Collins, 1990/2000). Specifically, Whiteness is a "site of discursive silence" in neoliberal hegemony because Whiteness is the hyper-invested but

taken-for-granted space for the upward redistribution of (multiple forms of) capital (Clarke, 2005). Whiteness remains unfairly, disproportionately and violently privileged in contemporary U.S. racial formations, at it has been throughout the history of the nation and its colonies; however, the discursive articulation and material reality of today's Whiteness is historically unique to the conditions of postmodernity and neoliberal multiculturalism. Accordingly, the effects of neoliberalism not only manifest in the realm of discourse and social policies, but in the ways in which people think and talk about race and other forms of socio-political identity in the United States.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, much of the academic discourse about White guilt, specifically, retains a one-dimensional and linear conceptualization of personal and collective racial guilt that presupposes a guilty White populace and a victimized Black minority, which is arguably a form of cultural residue from the colonial roots of the nation, the Civil Rights movement (Ellison, 1996) and deeply embedded Western ontologies of self-psychology, guilt and shame (Carroll, 1985). Perhaps even more importantly, there is an assumption in such research that ordinary Americans recognize said inequities and agree with this dualistic and binary representation of U.S. race relations. However, *multiculturalism* both demographically, economically and rhetorically challenges such a simple rendering of

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<sup>7</sup> I do not mean to imply here that neoliberal discourse, including multiculturalism or postraciality, comes squarely *before* attitudes or emotions about race in the contemporary United States, which will signify a unidirectional relationship between neoliberalism and political identity. Such a model would also seem to suggest that neoliberalism comes from “above” or even nowhere. Indeed, the relationship between social attitudes and neoliberal hegemony is more accurately described as co-constitutive. However, it is important to recognize that neoliberalism does not just refer to cultural practices nor do all people equally shape its conditions and ideologies. Major political figures and governmental bodies have disproportionate effects on neoliberal policy agendas and thereby exert disproportionately strong influence on the cultural contexts in which neoliberal discourse manifests.

race relations by presenting diverse images of White and Black people, as well as many people of other races, including ambiguous and mixed raciality that challenges, subverts and transforms the black/white binary. Highly influential symbols of affluent African Americans in popular media culture provide ammunition for the defense of the racial status quo and obscure the complex heterogeneity of Black experiences, including *differences* in sexuality, gender and class (Collins, 2005), as well as *similarities* in experience that include systemic discrimination, unequal access to unequal resources, symbolic violence, hate crimes, unfair persecution and criminalization. The cacophony of information and representations characterized by postmodern media cultures facilitates the discursive schizophrenia of neoliberalism (Gergen, 2000), in which making *any* kind of sense structural relations of power is exceedingly difficult and variations in experience are easily reduced to individual choices and actions. Extreme forms of racialized, economic stratification exists alongside disproportionate over-representation of Blacks – especially Black men – in television, film and music; meanwhile, Whites maintain control over a shrinking number of corporations that control access to an increasingly huge proportion of media outlets and mediums for information dissemination (Hunt, 2005; Gray, 2005; Means Coleman, 1998; see also Screen Actors Guild, 2006).

I do not suggest that neoliberal hegemony is so inescapable or universally affecting that all people in the United States think about race, identities and inequality in the same way or that intervening in such discourses that obfuscate systemic discrimination is impossible. However, I do believe that disrupting the inequalities engendered by neoliberalism – and the multiculturalism and so-called “colorblind” racism that emerges within our neoliberal historical moment – requires a theoretical and

methodological approach that addresses the impact of neoliberalism on the ontologies of race and responsibility in the contemporary United States. In other words, I presume that, like all cultural systems, race and White guilt are being made and re-made in 21<sup>st</sup> century discourse, and that – even though contemporary rhetoric would suggest otherwise – these concepts interface with other systems of inequity, such as sexism, heteronormativity and classism. Approaching these concepts with an epistemology and logic that fails to see these points of intersection and which neglects to conceptualize race, social identity and guilt as interpersonally dynamic and historically contingent is only likely to reinforce what we already assume and to reflect academic discourse more than material reality. The situation at-hand necessitates a sufficiently reflexive and multidimensional approach to the study of White guilt in order to first capture the complexity of the social relationships that create differences, identities and inequalities, and then to intervene in these discourses so as to promote social justice.

### **Conclusion: Toward an Intersectional Interactionism**

Based in the critical review of literature that has composed the majority of this chapter, I conclude by making the case for an intersectional approach to the study of White guilt that is grounded in the principles of symbolic interactionism. Though this dissertation employs a variety of methodologies, the research design and theoretical positioning has been thoroughly influenced by the domains of Black feminist thought, which is synonymous with intersectionality (Collins, 2000), and symbolic interactionism, which is descendent from the philosophical tradition of American pragmatism. Though these areas of (primarily sociological) inquiry are genealogically distinct, they share a

capacity for reflexivity and political subjectivity that lends itself to the production of critical social theory – that is, social theory for justice.

***The origins of interactionism.*** Generally, symbolic interactionism (SI) is both a theoretical and methodological approach to social interaction that a) characterizes social interaction as the foundation of the self and b) relies on empirical, qualitative observation and analysis to uncover meaning-making in social interaction. George Hebert Mead was an American philosopher and pragmatist and is credited as one of the earliest and most influential developers of the SI perspective (Denzin, 1992). SI is a diverse field with a variety of theoretical approaches (e.g., pragmatic, dramaturgical, feminist, phenomenological and interpretive approaches) as well as a range of qualitative methodologies, such as ethnography (feminist, postmodern, semiotic, structural, practical, etc.); biographical, life history; traditional interviewing and participant observation; creative interviewing; and historical analysis, to name some of the major strands of practice. According to Denzin (1992), SI is descendant from the pragmatist tradition led by James, Mead, Pierce and Dewey, who developed theories of “knowing, truth, science and meaning” (p. 5). The pragmatists fostered a sense of cultural romanticism in the interactionist heritage, which is congruent with the left and liberal romanticism of such major American and European figures as Emerson, Marx, Gramsci (1971) and Martin Luther King, Jr. SI’s birth is often associated with the 1890 publication of James’ *Principles of Psychology*, Dewey’s 1896 “The Reflexive Arc Concept in Psychology,” Cooley’s 1902 *Human Nature and the Social Order* and Mead’s 1910 “What Social Objects must Psychology Presuppose?,” though SI is most commonly associated with

sociology and sociological social psychology – not disciplinary psychology (Denzin, 1992).

In 1937, Blumer introduced the term “symbolic interactionist,” to label those scholars of the pragmatist tradition of studying the nature of social phenomenon, an explicit acknowledgement of the contributions of Mead and the field’s other leading founders (Blumer, 2004). In 1986, Blumer articulated six “root images” that characterize the central preoccupations of SI: 1. human groups or societies; 2. social interaction; 3. objects; 4. the human being as actor; 5. human action; and 6. the interconnectedness of lines of action (qtd. in Blumer, 2004; p. xiii). Clarke (2005) elaborates Blumer’s “root image,” claiming that such “root metaphors” of SI function as somewhat tacit knowledge guiding interactionist projects. For Clarke, the framework of analysis often employed by Chicago symbolic interactionists is “tacitly rooted in a metaphor of human action as an arrow or arrows moving forward through time, where the key actions are to be specified during the research and the path of the arrow(s) may well thus become understood as convoluted” (p. 39). Denzin (1992) offers his perspective on what interactionists do:

[Symbolic interactionists] study the intersections of interaction, biography, and social structure in particular historical moments. Interactional experience is assumed to be organized in terms of the motives and accounts that persons give themselves for acting. These accounts are learned from others, as well as from popular culture. These motives, gendered and nongendered, explain past behavior and are used to predict future behavior. They are ideological constructions which create specific forms of interactional subjectivity in concrete situations (p. 20).



Clarke has argued that SI is “always-already” postmodern to the extent that its root metaphors reflect a troubled relationship to the modernist investments of traditional social psychological approaches to the self in social and cultural interaction. Other contemporary interactionists, such as Ken Plummer (1996; 2003; see also Stein & Plummer, 1996), have integrated queer theories and postmodern perspectives that unsettle some fundamental assumptions of SI that had been taken for granted in earlier interactionist work. As Plummer (2003) explicates, “Queer is seen as partially deconstructing our own discourses and creating a greater openness in the way we think through our categories,” including the nature of ‘identity’ and ‘the self’ (p. 522). To interactionists, queer theory poses the question: what happens to the practices and performance of ‘sexuality,’ when the ontology of sexual identity categories is thoroughly disrupted by the process of *queering* SI? The implications of such a question are significant to re-thinking implicit structures of heteronormativity that have influenced the SI intellectual project during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. However, Clarke, Plummer, Denzin and other contemporary interactionists retain pragmatism’s investment in political action, democratic knowledge production and social justice, which are all arguably “modern” concepts reflective of pragmatism’s modernist tendencies. Similarly, Plummer notes that “...interactionism – unlike much postmodernism – does not wish to lose its grip on the ‘obdurate empirical world’ and its search for a truth that will at least hold for the time being” (p. 520). Moreover, it is precisely the provisional and critical willingness to adopt identity categories, to emphasize the utility of said labels and to be preoccupied with the production of theory that *does* something which together facilitate SI’s

compatibility with Black feminist epistemology and the methodology of intersectionality, which itself maintains a complicated relationship with postmodernism.

*From variables to intersections.* Efforts to treat race, gender, sexuality and other “dimensions of difference” as separate and isolated variables of human experience, as sociologist and Black feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins (2000) has argued, elide the *reality* of human experiences. In actuality, lived experiences are framed by the *intersections* of social identity categories, or “intersectionality.” Collins first defines “intersectionality” as a concept: “particular forms of intersecting oppressions,” such as race and gender, or race and nation (p. 18). Intersectional scholarship thereby explores the ways in which intersecting oppressions shape social life, historically and contemporarily. Intersectionality “remind[s] us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice” (p. 18). For Collins, analyses that privilege race at the expense of other organizing categories of social experience obfuscate the ways in which race is shaped by other meaningful identities. Race does not have to be marginalized in order to examine other categories simultaneously; intersectional theoretical and methodological innovations have demonstrated instead how we can better understand race and all structures of identity and oppression in the context of multi-dimensional experiences.

Intersectional analyses are purposefully distinct from additive models that simply incorporate multiple axes of difference and treat identity categories as discreet variables (see Cole, 2009, for an explanation of what this looks like). Moreover, Dill (1979) argues that Black women’s knowledge about their social worlds may at best not easily fit into existing models of race, gender and class; at worst, such paradigms “essentialize” or

reduce Black women's lived experiences into one-dimensional narratives that deny the inter-related meanings of race, class and gender for the very people being studied. In the late 1970s, before intersectionality had been fully articulated, Dill and others were arguing for a new paradigm – for and by Black women – that could rely on Black women's experiences (i.e., histories) to destabilize supposedly given or static categories (e.g., race, gender) and racial formations. By the late 1990s, intersectional scholars had asserted that dimensions of difference could no longer be treated merely as variables, as Zinn and Dill (1996) insisted: “Race, class, gender and sexuality are not reducible to individual attributes to be measured and assessed for their separate contribution in explaining social outcomes... where a woman's identity consists of the sum of parts neatly divisible from one another” (p. 327).

Though this brief genealogy of intersectionality begins in race, class and gender studies, intersectional theory and methods have ushered transformations in areas of research and teaching across the social sciences and humanities. Intersectionality can even be found in such fields as environmental policy, epidemiology and public health. Scholars of color working in sexuality studies have used intersectional analyses to highlight the ways in which much of what came to be known as “queer theory” was flawed by an inherent bias toward the experiences of White, middle-class, gay men; a resulting “queer of color critique” has emerged (Ferguson, 2004; Johnson & Henderson, 2005; Muñoz, 1999). Similar critiques have occurred in disability studies (Thomson, 1997), and throughout ethnic studies projects (Reed, 2001). Black feminist thought has also turned the intersectional critique on itself in recent years, exposing an investment in heteronormativity and Christian privilege throughout some mainstream Black feminist

scholarship (Collins, 2005). Intersectionality, though grounded and originating in the lived experiences of U.S. Black women (Crenshaw, 1989, 1993), has proven to be a potent and productive critique throughout the humanities and social sciences and across diverse areas of study and policy projects (McCall, 2005). In other words, though social justice is always at the center of it, intersectionality is not exclusively relevant to the study of Black women's issues; Black feminist thought, as Collins (2000) asserts, is committed to social and economic justice for U.S. Black women and *similarly oppressed groups* around the world (p. 9). Indeed, intervening in the discourses of racism, sexism, heterosexism and other systems of oppression requires uncovering and challenging injustices throughout human experience. Black feminists have long argued that we are all in this – the fight for justice – together. Accordingly, Black feminists such as Collins (1998) have maintained a critical distance from those postmodern approaches, such as deconstruction, that privilege analyses of mediated discourse above all other forms of social interaction and which describe hegemony as impenetrable and inequality as inevitable. This kind of method and theoretical position negates the possibility for claims to and strategies for social justice by turning identities and inequalities into linguistic tropes and rhetorical moves that are divorced from materiality (Butler, 1993). As Collins (1998) has astutely argued, this kind of scholarship tends to only benefit those kinds of multiply privileged -- and traditionally White male – academics who produce it.

Investigating how the phenomenology of White guilt shifts along axes of sexuality, class and gender is not an optional pursuit. Principally, both the racial category “White” and the emotion of “guilt” are constituted within historical matrices of identity and inequity that are materially shaped by dimensions of heteronormativity, gender

inequality and class discrimination. As Ahmed (2004b) detailed, the history of emotions reveals a persistent gendering of emotionality that locates feeling(s) within a feminized body – one that can be both female and/or queer<sup>8</sup>. Psychologists have found empirical evidence to suggest that women and men “learn” guilt and shame in different ways; the propensity to feel guilty and shameful, as well as what these emotions look like, is further complicated by sexual identity (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Roberts & Goldberg, 2007). If we accept what Ahmed (2004b) theorizes, which is that, “Shame can also be experienced as *the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence*,” then we must at least consider the possibility that White guilt *may* feel and be different for those people whose identities are culturally constructed as inherently worthy of shame (p. 107; see also Sedgwick, 2003; Perez, DeBord & Bieschke, 2000; Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 2009). Furthermore, cultural differences are afforded great power in the study of self-conscious emotions, but typically focus on how *Other* people’s feelings differ from Americans or those in the West (Markus & Kitayama, 1994; Kitayama & Markus, 1994). In this dissertation, the Americanness of White guilt is hardly considered neutral or the standard from which other forms of guilt should be evaluated; instead, this White guilt is

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<sup>8</sup> The term “queer” is contested knowledge; furthermore, the concept has multiple ontologies, which are dependent upon on culture, politics, historical situatedness, etc. In this dissertation, I will use the term “queer” in two capacities. First, it will serve as an umbrella term to describe people with non-normative sexual identities and who engage in non-normative sexual practices, including those people more typically identified by the rubric LGBTQ. I do recognize, and will make clear when appropriate, that “queer” is also a particular kind of politicized sexual identity – one that I embrace myself and sometimes distinguish from the term “gay,” which has contemporary neoliberal connotations in 21<sup>st</sup> century gay politics (see Duggan, 2003). Second, I will use “queer” in the context of queer theories and the analytic mode of destabilizing heteronormative foundations of Western epistemology, ontology, methodology, etc. Nikki Sullivan (2003) offers an accessible primer on the debates over “queer” in her *Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. See also Stein and Plummer (1996) and Plummer (2003).

posited as a particularized and situated cultural practice. Critical studies of Whiteness have sufficiently demonstrated the centrality of class to the historical ontology and lived experience of White racial identity (Roediger, 2007), so it is less difficult in this context to conceptualize (and literally *see*) the intersectionality of race and class. However, the intersectionality of race, sexuality and gender is more tricky because race is over-privileged in the discourse on White guilt as the determinant factor of its history (Steele, 2006) and the only social identity variable principally relevant to its empirical investigation (Swim & Miller, 1999). Furthermore, moving beyond a gender and sexual differences model that treats gender and sexuality as merely independent variables and signifiers of inherent differences is particularly challenging, because some amount of categorical simplicity is necessary in order to make sense of the complexity of intersectional experiences (McCall, 2005; Cole, 2009). Nevertheless, the analytic orientations and rhetorical tendencies of both SI and intersectionality privilege the *emergent* – those previously unrecognized and taken-for-granted circumstances of human experience that emerge through critical social research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dill, McLaughlin & Nieves, 2007). In this project, mixed-methods, which are innovative strategies of approaching objects of study using traditionally disparate means of constructing knowledge, will be used to develop “diffractions” that expose emergent, intersectional configurations of racialized affect (Haraway, 1997).

In summary, intersectionalists and interactionists share a commitment to the following: 1) empiricism, in that both approaches aim to reflect reality and lived experiences; 2) reflexivity, because both value deep historicism and conceptualize the researcher as central to the production of knowledge; 3) pragmatism, as both approaches

are invested in the production of democratic knowledges for social justice. Some interactionists have already demonstrated the compatibility of these approaches; their work strongly influences my own and shapes what I see as an emerging intersectional interactionist paradigm (see Mamo, 2007). For example, Janet Shim's (2005) impressive ethnographic work on cardiovascular disease (CVD) finds meaningful distinctions between how epidemiologists and people with CVD conceive of race as a factor contributing to *risk*, *prevalence* and *experience* of CVD. Her interactionist work is pointedly intersectional, as she a) conceptualizes race as a social difference that is inextricably linked to other dimensions of difference relative to context (situation) and subject to change over time and space (social and individual life history), and b) interrogates the construction of categories of difference (especially race, gender and class) and the ways in which their deployment by medical researchers and practitioners shapes social interactions. Accordingly, and echoing Foucault (1970; 1972) and Haraway (1997), she posits that racial differences are common "objects of study" in epidemiology, and that they serve to create *natures* of bodies, difference and diseases, that order power relations and frame representations of human interaction. She focuses on the disciplinary authority of epidemiology, explaining how its disciplinary power has the result of shaping what "we" – the lay public – believe about our bodies and differences between our bodies and Others' bodies. Shim offers important critique of disciplinary epidemiology, which tends to view (the material effects, or materiality of) intersectionality as a technical conundrum or statistical nuisance, even though her participants emphasize the importance of structural inequalities in their personal health and simultaneously demonstrate how their intersectional experiences vary across contexts

and *mean* different things to different people. Shim's interactionist intersectionality demonstrates the fruitfulness of approaching representations and structures with an integrative lens directed toward sites of silence.

*A "new" White guilt?* I have devoted substantial space in this chapter to explaining the epistemological configurations of intersectionality and SI in order to make explicit the analytic tools with which I interrogate White guilt within this project. An intersectional interactionist perspective offers a productive, critical framework with which to begin a conversation that re-grounds White guilt in the reality of Whiteness, racism and discourses of responsibility in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through this review of literature, I have attempted to show how diverse disciplinary approaches to White guilt have created a particular, historicized object of study – one that is reflective as much of *assumptions* about White guilt as its "materiality," which refers to the citational, discursive practices that shape its constitution within contemporary race relations (Butler, 1993). These varying approaches have explored White guilt and race relations at different levels of analyses, ranging from the intrapsychic work of Tangney and Dearing (2002) and the micro-sociology of Clarke (2003), to the historicized rhetoric of Ahmed's (2006) nonperformative antiracist speech acts and the macro-sociology of Omi and Winant (1994). All of these levels – once critically and vertically integrated – contribute to a multidimensional rendering of the constructs and situations at-hand. I have argued that a static understanding of race and guilt limits our ability to account of the diversity and complexity of experiences that are engendered by multiculturalism and neoliberalism, which describes the historical conditions in which Whiteness is given meaning today. Furthermore, the relationships between race and other dimensions of difference must be



accounted for so we can better understand how White guilt is experienced differently and means different things to diverse White peoples, while balancing a need for conceptual precision (McCall, 2005; Cole, 2009). Up to this point, however, my argument has been primarily analytical and theoretical. The remainder of this dissertation retains an emphasis on critical analysis, but shifts my focus to the descriptive and empirical. Indeed, empirical evidence – the lived experiences of White people and discourse found in the archives of popular media – must drive the attempt herein to unsettle these assumptions about White guilt and to construct a more psychologically and culturally astute account of the construct.

Factor: *Shame*

I first moved to Columbia Heights in June 2005. The neighborhood is situated at the center of Washington, D.C. both literally and figuratively. The relatively large rectangle-shaped neighborhood straddles 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW and begins at Florida Ave, spanning from midtown to uptown and serving as the transitional space between what looks like the city and what begins to resemble the suburbs.

The story of Columbia Heights is well chronicled by the local press, city historians and ordinary Washingtonians, including longtime residents, recent transplants, people who visit the neighborhood for shopping and nightlife, and folks who have never (and would never) step inside its boundaries. Once rural and briefly home to what would become George Washington University, Columbia Heights became a middle- and working-class African American neighborhood during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The neighborhood sits just north of the U Street corridor of the Shaw neighborhood, sometimes referred to as D.C.'s version of Harlem and long considered the center of Black arts and culture in the city. In 1968, when the city erupted in riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., rioters traveled up 14<sup>th</sup> Street from U Street and devastated Columbia Heights, especially the mostly Black-owned businesses along 14<sup>th</sup>. In the wake of the riots, which effectively eviscerated several Black neighborhoods across Northwest and Northeast Washington, the city and federal government quickly modified its plans for a subway system, rerouting a mid-city line to the areas hardest hit by the riots. The idea was to provide mass transit to these areas and connect them to the rest of the District and suburbs, which would eventually spark economic development and re-investment in U Street, Columbia Heights and other damaged regions of the

Northwest quadrant. The Metro subway system opened in 1976 with the debut of the Red Line, which dips into the city like a horseshoe with both of its ends in affluent Montgomery County, Maryland, home to some of the wealthiest areas of the planet, such as Bethesda, Potomac and Chevy Chase. The mid-city Green Line was finally fully functional in 2001, 33 years after the riots and 25 years after the opening of Metro.

The story of Columbia Heights epitomizes the District of Columbia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because it became a hotspot of gentrification in the wave of re-urbanization and the astronomical housing bubble that lasted for most of the first decade of the century. If subtle forms of gentrification were happening across the region, Columbia Heights exemplified the real estate frenzy and how young White college-graduates and professionals from across the country were creating a new urban oasis in what had been a largely abandoned and disinvested region of the city. In the early 2000s, Columbia Heights was known simultaneously and contradictorily as a haven of hipster coolness that promised to be the newest real estate goldmine *and* as a hotbed of gang activity, drug dealing and general violence perpetrated by young African Americans. Columbia Heights was a veritable borderlands – both ‘ghetto’ and ‘cool,’ ‘edgy’ and ‘scary.’

I was 21 when I moved to the neighborhood, having spent some time there in the preceding months and getting comfortable in what was surely the most urban area I had ever contemplated living. I moved into a converted Victorian rowhouse on Fairmont Street NW with a roommate (a White woman) on the eve of the opening of a new gourmet Giant grocery store and just as plans were announced to bring a Target store to the neighborhood within the next few years. There was a subsidized housing complex at the end of our block with an obvious drug market, and I was sometimes scared to walk

around by myself at night. But I became comfortable by the end of the summer and began to feel at home in the neighborhood. No one called me a ‘faggot,’ and the teenagers who were making headlines for gang-related ‘pack attacks’ and daytime shootings weren’t giving my boyfriend and me any trouble. Also, living in ‘CH’ came with some social capital and street cred, among White folks at least. For example, local friends and I would frequently engage in conversations filled with hipster- and yuppie-bashing in which we use our committed antiracism and awareness of structural inequity to distinguish ourselves from those *other* White people in Columbia Heights. Most importantly, I could afford to live there and was happy, so I ultimately chose to stay in the ‘hood after my roommate and I split. I got a new apartment a few blocks away in adjacent Mt. Pleasant, and moved once more back to Fairmont Street in April 2007.

My new apartment was in the basement of a home owned by a French immigrant and his American wife; both were White. I met my neighbor, Tommy, within a day or two of moving in. Tommy was a lifelong Washingtonian who had lived his whole life in his house on Fairmont. His brother was a prominent local jazz musician, and they both were deeply involved in the city’s arts community. Tommy, who had long since retired from fulltime work, had sold real estate professionally and knew who occupied most every home on the block. In random meetings outside our houses, he would tell me stories about the neighborhood, including what famous people had lived on the street and which prominent Washingtonians quietly called Fairmont Street their home. He told me how things had changed, and how much of the neighborhood had stayed the same while Columbia Heights became the new ‘It’ location. I helped him with his groceries and yard work; he included me on local email listserves and kept me abreast of developments with

a theatre restoration project he was spearheading on T Street NW. Our friendship was comforting to me, because Tommy was a kind person with knowledge that I found meaningful and because we represented something important to me. In a neighborhood that was characterized by interracial conflict between White yuppie newcomers, poor Latino immigrants and longtime Black residents of the middle and working class, Tommy and I got along just fine. We weren't going to change the culture of the neighborhood together or end the structural inequities that were so endemic to the rapid gentrification of Columbia Heights, but we did work. Older, Black, lifetime Washingtonian, and new, younger, White, gay Washingtonian. Somehow, we transcended the narrative that defined the "new" Columbia Heights. We were alright.

One night in late May, my boyfriend and I walked home to his apartment, which was just up the block from mine. This was our routine, because Joe had a dog that needed to be fed and let out. We did this all the time. That night, I was wearing flip-flops and a bright green track jacket that had the word "Ireland" on the back. We were not holding hands. We were laughing. Just after midnight, as we turned onto Fairmont Street, a young man about my height hit me on the back of my head, knocking my glasses off as he ran in front of me. I didn't know what was happening, but my boyfriend started to scream. I got hit again by someone else and fell on the ground. I had never been hit before. Joe was in front of me on the ground. He kept screaming as they kicked and hit us. I covered my head, because there were several guys hitting me in the face. They kept yelling, "Give us the money!" I was afraid, but I wasn't panicking. I thought I might die, but I remembered what my mother always told me: give them your money. I tried to reach for my wallet in my back pocket, but they wouldn't stop hitting us, and I couldn't uncover my face long

enough to get my wallet. I think Joe said we didn't have any cash, but mostly he just kept screaming for help, and for them to stop. It went on for some amount of time, but I'm not sure how long. More than seconds, less than minutes. It was painful. I thought I might die. I tried to cover Joe's head, because he was screaming so much. They were laughing.

At some point, it was over. I learned later that a couple who was walking home had started to yell at our attackers and said they were calling the cops. This is probably what scared the guys away. Joe got up and started calling 911 and asking if I was OK. I remember that my head did not hurt, but I couldn't see through a swollen eye and the blood all over my face. My feet and knees were scraped and bleeding; that's the pain I remember. Joe kept looking at me. The police and ambulance came. I don't remember much of what they said, except that I had to get in the ambulance. One officer, a Black woman, said she was sorry. She had been around the corner on patrol. She said she could have stopped them. They tried to give me an IV en route to George Washington University Hospital; I wouldn't let them, because the ambulance ride was bumpy and I was scared. Joe was crying and looking at me.

The hospital staff made Joe wait in the lobby for awhile when they took me back on the stretcher. I gave a statement to a detective, who asked me if I could offer any description of the attackers. I couldn't describe their faces, but I remembered one was wearing a red hoodie. I only really saw their arms and fists. They were Black, I told him. He was Black, too. He left and I never saw or heard from him again. In the police report, he said that I had sustained minor injuries and that I was discharged. This made me angry, because he didn't know if I was discharged and didn't speak to my doctors. Nothing about this felt "minor."

By 8 a.m., I had 12 sutures in my face and had undergone a CT-scan to confirm that there were broken bones in my face. I had no fewer than seven follow-up appointments with an ear-nose-and-throat specialist and an ophthalmologist, who had to watch to see if my right eye was slowly sinking into my head. It wasn't. My bones healed on their own, without surgery. I still see the scars on my face, but no one else says they can see them. I see them everyday.

In the aftermath, Joe got angry. He wishes he could have fought back, hit them, protected us. I got sad and scared. I didn't want to walk anywhere at night. I sometimes couldn't leave my house during the day. I used to tell my students that personal safety should always be attended to, but that it was important to interrogate feelings of fear, especially when the fear is directed at particular groups of people. I was upset, because I became terrified of Black teenagers. In the Metro. On campus. In broad daylight.

I thought about what would happen to those young men, whom I call boys because I think they were very young – like 16, 17. What were the chances of their lives turning out OK? My bones would heal, and so would my psyche – eventually. But how do you come back from beating someone on the ground as they scream for help? How do you love someone after that? How do you build a family? How do you not do it again? I worried about the next time they would do it, and when they would be arrested, and what kinds of prison sentences they would get. There was a long time when I didn't want them to be punished at all – I'm still not sure I see the point of it. I wanted them to have to come to school with me and learn. How could a person be well educated and beat someone while they scream for help, I thought? At least learning about the world and being empowered through knowledge would minimize the chances of them beating

someone up again, or worse. I would talk about this with my parents on the phone and with my friends in our backyard on Fairmont Street. My answers are simple and naïve. I don't know anything about poverty or violence. I feel like a foolish White liberal. I feel like a fraud, because I'm scared now. Just like the script is supposed to go, I'm afraid of Black kids.

I had bruising and scabs on my face, legs and feet for weeks, so I stayed away from people with whom I didn't want to talk about "the attack." I avoided my landlords, because I didn't want them to get upset. I never told them. I saw Tommy the next week, from afar. I waved and walked away quickly. I didn't want to tell him what happened. I imagined versions of the conversation in my head, but I didn't want to do that with him. I didn't want him to express the requisite sympathy about what had happened, and to feel sad for me, and to bring into our relationship the harsher reality of race, which we had been able to avoid. It wasn't that we had never discussed race, but we hadn't talked about Black boys beating up White men down the street.

More than fear, unsafe, worried, awkward, nervous or self-conscious, I felt...I felt small and victimized and it was all wrapped up in my race and my work and Columbia Heights. I never wore that green Ireland jacket in public again. I was embarrassed about what had happened. I felt disgust at myself for imagining that my academic knowledge about race and my antiracist politics would somehow shield me from the reality of my gentrifying neighborhood and my role in it. I had committed symbolic violence, and they had committed physical violence. I thought: I never should have walked around at night so carelessly. I thought: I never should have moved to



Columbia Heights. It was stupid and foolish. I helped gentrify a neighborhood. A few stitches are what I deserve.

I don't feel the same way today. I healed a bit. I cannot remember how my life felt before the attack, but it was impossible for me to predict how profoundly the attack has and will continue to affect my relationships with others and my various social worlds. My mother told me that she initially kept it a secret from her friends and most of our extended family, because she couldn't re-conceptualize herself as the mother of a victim of violence. I kept it from Tommy, because I was ashamed.

## CHAPTER 2:

### Finding White Guilt: Popular Culture and Three Moments of Crisis

*“We are increasingly aware of our role in informing the market that we will no longer pay for entertainment that capitalizes on our degradation. We are joined by many white men who, though not the direct targets of verbal assaults, understand the injury they cause.”*

*-Anita F. Hill, (May 3, 2007) in “Our wallets can shock the jocks” (The Boston Globe)*

Sara Ahmed (2004a, 2004b) has argued that emotions should not be conceptualized as emanating from within the self *or* as constituted solely through group interaction (i.e., from without). Rather, she insists that emotions are the cultural practices that actually enable us to understand and define social groups and the self, demarcating and transforming the boundaries and fixities of identities. In Chapter 1, I offered a critique of academic thinking about White guilt using insight from Ahmed and others to shift critical attention from intra-psychic psychology *or* social history toward a more dynamic, interactional and culturally grounded theory of racial affect. In Chapter 2, I establish a critical account of the cultural contexts in which contemporary experiences of White guilt manifest in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century United States. In this chapter, I investigate the journalistic discourse about race and responsibility in three controversial episodes of identity-based conflict involving public figures in U.S. popular culture. I follow cultural theorists Hall (1997c), Ahmed (2004b) and Gergen (1990/2000), as well as social psychologists Stangor and Shaller (1996), in identifying mass-mediated discourse as a critical site for the production of emotions and the ideas about the self. Indeed, in the

historical and cultural conditions of postmodern media culture, mass-mediated news and information become meaningful sources of ‘data’ with which we come to know ourselves and Others. Distinguishing between these mass-mediated interactions and “real” physical, interpersonal relationships is generally reductive and artificial, because all of these forms of symbolic interaction come to inform our sense of self and social worlds, albeit in differential and complex ways. Interactions with mass-mediated words and images are not equivalent to face-to-face interactions, but they co-exist and complicate our interpersonal experiences. In this chapter, I do not posit a causal relationship between the news media’s talk about race, identity and responsibility and the contemporary phenomenology of White guilt, but I do position this discourse as the cultural context in which racialized forms of affect are produced and negotiated.

Through a primarily descriptive analysis of these “crisis” moments, I attempt to offer an empirically grounded explication of the written language produced about these conflicts, which are situated within neoliberal multiculturalism and associated “colorblind” racial projects (Melamed, 2006; Omi & Winant, 1994; Bonilla-Silva, 2006). These controversial episodes are not positioned as deterministic of race relations or the contours of other identity-based social relations, but they are identified as fruitful arenas of inquiry because of their relative discursive prominence in U.S. media culture and for the ways in which each conflict made specific forms of identity-based conflicts come to the surface of discourse. Though these moments certainly retain meaningful “sites of silence” (Clarke, 2005), each involved articulations of how social identity categories, namely race, gender and sexuality, influence the ways in which individuals and groups of people negotiate social issues such as blame, punishment, and responsibility on both

individual and collective/group levels. As I have previously asserted herein (see Chapter 1), neoliberal multiculturalism necessarily makes such explicit articulations relatively rare – at least in ‘mainstream’ discourse – so these moments are especially productive of meaning and can be insightful into how people in the United States think about and literally *feel* race, guilt and shame.

The present chapter takes the following form: first, I explicate the logic that informs the selection of these three crisis moments from among a much larger pool of potential candidates. This is preceded by a discussion of the methods of analysis, which include a modified form of grounded theory developed by Adele Clarke (2005) and which involves the construction of topographical visualizations of narrative discourse. Three “positional maps” are integrated throughout the chapter to inform the rendering of this discursive terrain. I investigate these narratives for evidence of how major public figures, reporters, commentators, and implicated actors in the three crises collectively construct an epistemology of race and responsibility that encompasses a variety of politics, subject positions, attitudes and feelings. Though each episode is discussed and analyzed independently, I conclude by offering some preliminary theorizing to describe the patterns of discourse that come to characterize such crises and which shape the articulation of race and responsibility in the public sphere.

### **Methodologies/Methods**

As my larger project on White guilt developed in early 2007, I endeavored to identify a set of controversial episodes in American popular culture that met the following criteria:

1. Involved one or more public figures engaging in behavior that some interpreted as reprehensible or warranting punishment
2. Included both Black and White (social) actors
3. Received sufficient journalist attention to enable analysis of print news coverage from multiple sources
4. Occurred within the prior three years (early 2007-2004)

Note that explicit talk of White guilt or shame was purposefully *not* a criterion for consideration. Rather than insist on analyzing only those moments in which journalists or their sources invoked “White guilt” as a specific and consciously deployed linguistic term, I sought to analyze moments in which White guilt as a multifaceted *process* might become implicated. Accordingly, this opened up the possibilities of finding the stuff of White guilt in extraordinary or unexpected contexts and conditions, including those controversies that might not obviously implicate and motivate negative affect from White people. Based on my (working) ontology of White guilt, I identified the major, requisite components of a discourse to at least implicate (i.e., not necessarily invoke explicitly) White guilt, which include but are not limited to: race, responsibility and blame. Other constructs of interest included gender, sexuality, punishment, emotions and collective identity.

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was marked by several high profile racial controversies that met the criteria above. In preliminary research, I identified a group of potential “scandals” that included: the Duke lacrosse team rape scandal, which involved several White heterosexual men and a Black woman dancer who accused three players of raping her at a party in Durham, North Carolina; comedian Dave Chappelle’s notorious

exit from his self-titled and wildly successful sketch comedy show on Comedy Central cable network; and pop stars Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake's infamous "wardrobe malfunction" during the 2004 Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show that came to be known as "Nipplegate." Choosing the events on which to focus was especially important because they would also serve to structure the in-depth interviews that constitute the ethnographic portion of this project (see Chapter 4). Initially, I selected the following three controversies: "Nipplegate"; broadcaster Anderson Cooper's well-publicized and highly emotional coverage of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath; and actor Isaiah Washington's termination from the popular ABC network television drama *Grey's Anatomy* after allegedly referring to co-star T. R. Knight as a "faggot." Then, Don Imus called the Rutgers University women's basketball team "nappy-headed ho's" in early April 2007, and I substituted this rapidly unfolding scandal for the older Nipplegate. Though I felt that Jackson and Timberlake's public condemnation was quite appropriate for the present investigation, I ultimately made the choice to analyze Imus's comments and subsequent firing because I wanted to increase the likelihood that college-aged students would be familiar with the event when asked questions about it in interviews. Cooper's coverage of Katrina was especially intriguing to me because of speculation about the anchor's sexuality and how this may have influenced reception of his perceived emotionality while he covered the horrific aftermath of the hurricane. The *Grey's Anatomy* crisis is different from the other two because it was largely framed as an issue of sexuality and *not* race. However, some journalists and commentators did react to the racialized aspect of the conflict, which was perceived as a fight between a Black, straight male aggressor and a White, gay male victim. In the context of Oprah Winfrey telling the

world about the so-called “down low” *vis a vis* author J. L. King and the Republican Party’s mobilization of conservative Black church leaders during the 2004 presidential election (Wilds Lawson, 2009; Collins, 2005), the Washington-Knight conflict became particularly compelling because, as I will argue, it implicated a growing cultural perception that the African American community is *more* “homophobic” or “anti-gay” than the *rest* of Americans (i.e., White people). Furthermore, this off-camera drama sat in stark contrast to the multicultural utopia depicted on-screen in the televisual landscape of *Grey’s Anatomy* producer Shonda Rhimes’ colorblind and sexually liberated Seattle Grace Hospital.

Each of these episodes in recent history could be satisfactorily labeled as “scandals,” “controversies,” “flash points,” and “conflicts,” among other descriptors. However, I quickly began to refer to these moments as “crises,” which is a theoretical move that has bearing on how I analyze and make meaning out of these events. Descendant from the Frankfurt School tradition of Critical Theory, Jurgen Habermas’ theory of legitimation crisis complements the concept of hegemony – and neoliberal hegemony, specifically – to the extent that Habermas explains the potential for hegemonic systems to fall apart. Habermas (1975) is a modernist whose social theory is typically too formulaic and rigid to be synthesized with poststructural or postmodern perspectives, especially because of Habermas’ investment in Enlightenment ideals. Here I employ a neo-Habermasian approach; taken as an interpretive framework, as opposed to an inflexible prescription, I assert that his concept of legitimation crisis can be read as lens through which to analyze the structural and discursive components of American

identity politics and U.S. racial hegemony without reifying his commitment to the modernist project of Enlightenment.

According to Habermas (1975), the state (in democracy) must limit its intervention into cultural or ideological affairs for fear of being perceived as authoritarian or totalitarian. This by no means implies that governments do not have a stake or control in ideological affairs; merely that they cannot appear to be *overly* involved in culture. There is no absolute value of such over-involvement, according to Habermas, because levels of government intervention in culture are relative to how legitimate a particular government is perceived to be at a given time. Legitimation is similar to Gramsci's (1971) hegemony: it connotes a system of ruling (or even domination) that at least appears to be democratic and inclusive, even if the material reality is quite the opposite. In order to sustain legitimation, the state or ruling class must give participatory rewards (material, symbolic or otherwise) to its constituency relative to the degree of current legitimation. "A legitimation crisis arises as soon as the demands for such rewards rise faster than the available quantity of value, or when expectations arise that cannot be satisfied with such rewards," asserts Habermas. Habermas largely frames state and constituency interactions in socio-economic-political terms, but legitimation crises are ideological and communicative in nature. U.S. race relations, for example, are currently sustained as legitimate by neoliberal multiculturalism, which manifests in the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). As Duggan (2003) and Melamed (2006) have argued, neoliberalism organizes inequity in terms of race, class, gender and sexuality, but multicultural discourses obscure the reality of this organization. In terms of the sustenance of neoliberal legitimation, this means that members of the most privileged



racial category, Whiteness, must not collectively perceive – or, I would argue: *feel* – that social policies or cultural movements are unfairly privileging White people or disadvantaging racial Others, especially African Americans. Overt racists are not the key components of this legitimation; instead, well-intentioned and even politically left-leaning intellectuals are the critical, constitutive variables in the U.S. racial legitimation model (Lott, 2004). The discursive noise of multiculturalism insists upon a post-racial and post-identity American politics in which personal choices and agency are the determining factors of all social relationships. This noise is not an after-effect or symptom, but is actually endemic, vital part of the multiculturalism constructed by neoliberalism. What we observe in these three moments of crisis is the potential for this legitimation to be challenged and to move toward Habermas’ conception of crisis. The state is directly involved in only one crisis (Katrina), but is invoked in all three crises because of neoliberalism’s emphasis on the state-supported division of public and private lives, including individual rights to privacy and freedom of expression in certain domains but not others (Duggan). Moreover, it is cultural consensus about the inherent equity and fairness of American culture that becomes potentially destabilized in these moments: when journalists, major public figures and members of the lay public begin to articulate and take up positions that challenge the multicultural framework in which identity only matters in terms of commodifiable difference (i.e., food, festivals and fashion), not power (Grzanka & Maher, 2009; Melamed).

The intersectionality of these crises was palpable and undeniable. Though a primary marker of difference may have been narratively constructed by the American press as the lens through which to understand each conflict (e.g., Katrina=race,

Washington=sexuality, Imus=race *or* gender), multiple, intersecting dimensions of identity and oppression shaped the events themselves and their diverse responses in the popular, mass-mediated imaginary. To discover how these moments have been interpreted and taken up in discourse necessitates an analytic lens carefully tuned to hear and see the interconnectedness of identity categories and to capture intersectional complexity that would otherwise be obscured by a one-dimensional approach and are already obfuscated by the rhetoric of neoliberal multiculturalism (McCall, 2005; Duggan, 2003). Rather than mine for guilt, specifically, I take these moments on their own terms. The goal is to see (literally, to *diffract*) how people other than myself – but who command media-based attention and some greater amount of power – talk about what happens when people behave in ways that are perceived as blame-worthy and how, in turn, these actions affect the ways in which social groups perceive each other (Haraway, 1997; Joyce, 2008).

Unlike other traditional forms of qualitative social research that involve analyses of researcher-conducted interview transcripts and field notes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), the “data” for this chapter existed prior to this dissertation project. These “data” are a particular kind of discourse, which can include visual materials, bodies, music, digital objects of all kinds, multi- and mixed-media images and non-linguistic objects – a virtually infinite variety of forms. Incorporating multiple forms of data into a single “multisited” project is especially important for the task at-hand so that affect, including the phenomenology of White guilt, is not restricted to an artificially and arbitrarily constructed White, omniscient and omnipresent subject (Clarke, 2005). Symbolic interactionists have long relied on a variety of data sources to investigate meaning-

making in micro- and macro-interactional settings (see Goffman, 1959, 1963, 1979; Mamo & Fishman, 2001; Joyce, 2008). Traditional discourse analyses, as Clarke (2005) describes, are those analytic techniques that explore how meaning is created through discursive practices organized around a given subject, theme or topic and/or produced by a given group of social actors. *Critical* discourse analyses, on the other hand, are “predicated on a Foucauldian analytics of power wherein power is potentially productive as well as controlling and destructive, and circulates at every level of action and interaction – preventing, enabling, serving as a resource, flowing sometimes wildly about” (Clarke, 2005; p. 150). Ahmed (2006) elaborates this process, which she calls, “ethnography of texts”:

Such an approach still considers texts as actions, which “do things,” but it also suggests that “texts” are not “finished” as forms of action, as what they “do” depends on how they are “taken up.” To track what texts do, we need to follow them around. If texts circulate as documents or objects within public culture, then our task is to follow them, to see how they move as well as how they get stuck. (p. 105)

I elaborate on the *methodological* assumptions of this approach, because they are the epistemological foundation of my *methods*, which refers to the practical tools of analysis. I tend to locate myself in the postmodern, feminist, constructionist camp, including Foucault, Clarke, Haraway, etc., and centralize concerns about the constructedness of any research, regardless of data type. For example, I disagree with Ahmed’s (2004) elaborate distinction of extant data types, such as journalism news sources or creative fiction, from research-made data, such as interviews or autoethnography. She calls both “texts,” which

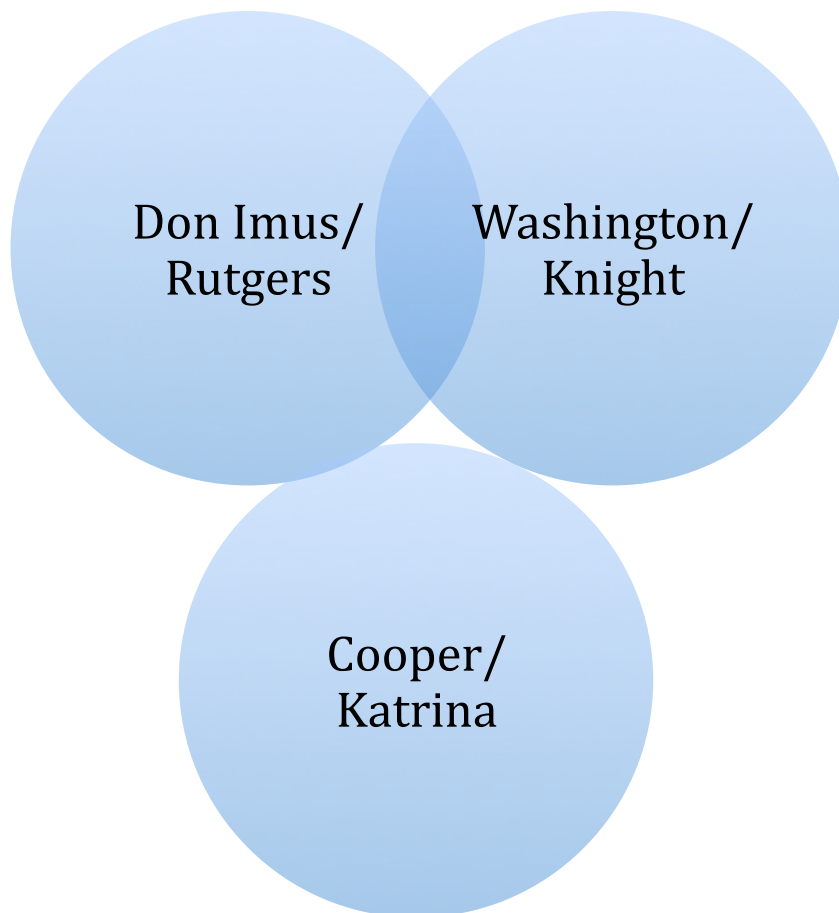
is correct, but she asserts that “the distinction between my research and interview-based research on emotions is in the different nature of the texts generated; the texts I read are ones that already ‘out there’ in the public, rather than being generated by the research itself” (p. 19). Though I recognize that these sources are *different*, those differences do not affect the reflexivity or sensitivity of my approach to them. In the same way that the interview and survey data produced, collected, digitized, transcribed and analyzed in chapters 3 and 4 are unique to and situated within this research, so are the texts collected for this discourse analysis. Ahmed’s assertion also elides how the texts got “out there.” As I will describe in detail, the collection and constitution of these news sources together as an archive of data is just as constructed and constructing as any interview or survey research.

The collection of these data involved theoretical sampling (Clarke, 2005), which refers to the qualitative methods approach of collecting data as informed by one’s theoretical approach and ongoing analyses of data already collected. In other words, theoretical sampling allows the data itself to guide collection of other data in order to fill in gaps and illuminate meaningful points of analysis (see also Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Fassinger, 2006). Moreover, my approach was systemic but flexible. Based in the feasibility of this project and my ability to collect and examine the data over an extended period of time, I limited the universe of potential data to print and online journalism sources, which includes English-language magazines, newspapers published in major metropolitan areas and the online components of both. I did use video of the major controversial infractions to learn more about what specifically happened in each crisis to produce public reactions, including the live telecast of Imus’s radio show, Cooper’s

argumentative interview with Senator Mary Landrieu, Isaiah Washington's utterance of "faggot" at the Golden Globe Awards ceremony press conference and T. R. Knight's interview on the Ellen DeGeneres show later that same week; all of these videos were obtained via YouTube.

In the interest of obtaining sources that were likely to have been widely disseminated, I focused my search to two kinds of publication groups organized by database service-provider Lexis-Nexis, though Lexis-Nexis itself was not the only means by which I obtained data. First, I searched for articles about each of the three controversies in "major" world news sources; however, only one international editorial was included, and prominent journalist and author Andrew Sullivan wrote it. I purposefully used only sources within the United States because I wanted to learn how these topics were being articulated in an American context, however amorphous and superficial the concept "American" is materially and symbolically. "Major" is a term defined by Lexis-Nexis and is, as of 2009, based on combination of circulation-levels and professional esteem: "The Major World Publications group file, MWP, contains full-text news sources from around the world which are held in high esteem for their content reliability. This includes the world's major newspapers, magazines and trade publications which are relied upon for the accuracy and integrity of their reporting." Next, I searched within the "U.S. Newspapers and Wires," which is defined as: "The US Newspapers and Wires group source contains: 1) newspapers published in the United States and 2) wire services where more than 60% of the stories originate in the United States." From this group, I used my own judgment to filter out stories from smaller local papers in favor of articles published in more prominent publications in mid-size and large metropolitan

areas. This undoubtedly skewed my results toward a more metropolitan authorship and audience; though, I found that relatively little coverage was given to these national crises by small papers beyond re-printing of *Associated Press* and other wire service stories. Generally, I excluded all independent and alternative press, especially those with very small readership or no online presence. I obtained a relatively equal amount of copy for each crisis, which included a total of 120 articles.



*Figure 1.* Visual representation of relationships between the crises based on journalism coverage. Note that there was much more overlap between articles about Imus and Washington than between both scandals and articles about Hurricane Katrina and Anderson Cooper.

I conducted “thick” readings of each article fully before formal analyses began. Then, each article was read with its relevant topic area (Cooper/Katrina, Imus/Rutgers, Washington/Knight); however, there was significant overlap between topics pieces as journalists and commentators compared events, especially Imus and Washington (see Figure 1). The articles were annotated with extensive memoing for the creation of general thematic codes that corresponded to relevant psychological and cultural topics, including the following primary codes: externalization of blame; articulations and explanations of racism; articulations and explanations of sexism; articulations and explanations of heteronormativity and homonegativity<sup>9</sup>; causal explanations of social phenomena; expressions and labeling of guilt; expressions and labeling of shame; and detachment.

This analytic process followed the principles of situational analysis explicated by Clarke (2005) and was centered on the production of positional maps. According to Clarke, the goal of positional maps is to “represent the positions articulated [in the data] on their own terms” (p. 126). She explains that, “Positional maps lay out most of the major positions *taken in the data* on major discursive issues therein – topics of focus, concern, and often but not always contestation. Issues, positions on issues, absences of positions where they might be expected (sites of discursive silence), and differences in the discursive positions...” (p. 126). Distinct from traditional position organization

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I will typically use the term “homonegativity” to describe negative attitudes toward queer people. This term, initially proposed by Hudson and Ricketts (1980), is a more accurate and psychologically appropriate term than “homophobia” to describe hate and discrimination directed at gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, questioning and gender-queer people, as well as people who may be associated with or allied with queer people. I will use “heteronormativity” to describe the systemic, hegemonic inequality that positions heterosexuality as the unmarked norm in contemporary U.S. society and cultures. “Heterosexism,” is closely related and refers herein to the practice and effects of heteronormativity. I will use “homophobia” only when citing or referring to others’ use of the term.

advocated in earlier forms of grounded theory methodology is that positional maps in Clarke's postmodernism-inflected situational analysis do not correlate directly with persons, groups or institutions. To the contrary, they are literally positions taken or not taken in discourses. Therefore, Clarke's position mapping helps accommodate the lived experiences of person, groups and institutions which typically hold multiple, disparate and contradictory positions on the same issue, topic or controversy. Specifically, the positions visualized in the maps herein do not reflect positions taken formally by a particular social, political or professional group, i.e., liberal journalists, White people, conservative pundits, African Americans, etc. The analytic emphasis is on the positions themselves and the relationships between positions taken and not taken; in other words, the focus is on the map itself, which represents the discursive arena to which we now turn our attention.

### **“I-Mess”: Don Imus and the Rutgers Women’s Basketball Team**

*“That’s why a flicker became a firestorm – not because bloggers suddenly run America, but because the comment resonated way beyond itself. Once Imus was portrayed as representing the weight of America’s racial history, he never had a chance.”*

*-David Hinckley, journalist (April 16, 2007, The (New York) Daily News)*

On Wednesday, April 4, 2007, radio personality Don Imus was discussing the Rutgers-Tennessee women’s basketball game from the previous night, which ended Rutgers’ hopes of winning a national championship that year. Led by coach C. Vivian



Stringer, the unlikely Final Four contenders had come from behind that season to emerge as one of the strongest teams in the country. The unexpected success of Rutgers' team was what earned them Imus's attention on his CBS radio show "Imus in the Morning," which was simulcast on MSNBC cable television network. In describing the team, composed of eight Black women and two White women, Imus began to compare them to the Tennessee team, which was composed of White women. A partial transcript of the conversation between these White men – Imus; executive producer Bernard McGuirk, co-host Charles McCord and former *Imus* sports announcer Sid Rosenberg – follows (see Appendix B for the complete exchange):

ROSENBERG: Yeah, Tennessee won last night -- seventh championship for [Tennessee coach] Pat Summitt, I-Man. They beat Rutgers by 13 points.

IMUS: That's some rough girls from Rutgers. Man, they got tattoos and --

McGUIRK: Some hard-core hos.

IMUS: That's some nappy-headed hos there. I'm gonna tell you that now, man, that's some -- woo. And the girls from Tennessee, they all look cute, you know, so, like -- kinda like -- I don't know.

McGUIRK: A Spike Lee thing.

IMUS: Yeah.

McGUIRK: The Jigaboos vs. the Wannabes -- that movie that he had.

IMUS: Yeah, it was a tough --

McCord: *Do The Right Thing*. (Media Matters, 2007)

Within days, the incident had erupted into a huge scandal that garnered enormous amounts of attention from national news and entertainment media outlets. According to *The New York Times*, more than 350,000 people watched Imus's show everyday on MSNBC and he had millions of listeners on over 70 radio stations across the United States. On Thursday, Imus has yet to apologize but "wondered aloud on his show what the big deal was, saying people should not be offended by 'some idiot comment meant to be amusing'" (Carr, 2007; p. B7). Criticism from other public figures, including sports commentator and journalist Michael Wilbon, national weatherman Al Roker and civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton, targeted the racial and gendered dynamics of the situation. By Friday, apologies began: first from MSNBC, then from CBS Radio and Imus himself. The following week, he was first suspended for two weeks and then fired from MSNBC; CBS once again quickly followed suit. Imus continued to apologize, but the comments cost him his job. However, after meeting with and being forgiven by the Rutgers basketball team later in April, he was eventually hired to host a new radio show – simulcast on upstart, rural-oriented television network RFD-TV – by the end of 2007.

The narrative construction of responsibility and blame was fairly straightforward in this case. Imus and his colleagues made patently hurtful comments toward a group of young people who were not famous; they were also not engaged in any kind of debate or argument with the *Imus* team. Journalists and commentators described the language differentially as "stupid," "vile," "despicable," and "disgusting." Almost immediately, however, discourse around the event began to center on Imus himself, as opposed to

McGuirk and the others. While the defenders of Imus were not the most vocal or significant part of the discourse, Imus’s critics hardly maintained a uniform voice or singular explanation for the outrage over his behavior. However, identity – from Imus’s reputation, professional role, race and gender – was at the center of the talk over why Imus was wrong, including if and how he should be held responsible for his words and actions. Figure 2 is a representative, alphabetical list of the terms used in my sources to describe Imus’s behavior and his actual comments.

Abhorrent	Hate(ful)	Second-class
Adolescent	Hurtful	Sexist
Bigotry	Inappropriate	Sexually charged
Bile	Inexcusable	Stupid
Contemptible	Infamous	Thoughtless
Counterproductive	Misogynistic	Toxic
Crude	Morally wrong	Unalloyed racial insult
Defamatory	Offensive	Unconscionable
Deplorable	Patently unfair	Unsavory
Despicable	Pathetically infantile	Verbal assault
Disgusting	Racial	Vile
Disparaging	Racially charged	Vitriol
Disrespect(ful)	Racist	
Filthy	Racist/sexist	
Foul	Repugnant	

*Figure 2.* Words used (by journalists, Imus, commentators, corporations and others) to describe Imus’s comments

Identity complicates this situation in multiple ways. First, the major actors in the conflict are different in at least three primary axes of difference that were articulated in journalistic coverage: gender, race and age. Imus and his team of commentators were middle-aged or older, White men; the women of the Rutgers basketball team were much young and predominantly Black (i.e., all but two team members). Furthermore, the words that became the primary locus of criticism – “nappy-headed hos” – invoked race, gender and sexuality, though the later was largely masked or avoided in discourse. “Why does

this racist and sexist radio patter warrant our attention?” asked columnist Phil Sheridan (2007) in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (p. C01). “We’ll count the ways,” he continued. Sheridan and others used like “vitriol” to describe Imus, while the Rutgers players and coach Stringer were called “one of the classiest acts in all of sports.” “What kind of man feels the need to heap scorn on young women who play college basketball? Take the racism out and the remarks are merely unnecessary and cruel,” wrote Sheridan. Commentary consistently labeled comments and both racist and sexist and frequently invoked the term “misogynistic.” As David Hinckley (2007) wrote in the *New York Daily News* about Imus’s language, “...from the mouth of a white guy, where calculated or incidental, sounds like ugly code. It suggests something about black people – in this case hair, but it could be any other attribute, including skin color – is the punchline of a joke” (p. 72). The concepts of racism and sexism were used not only to identify why Imus’s comments were wrong, but why he should be punished for such actions in the workplace of corporate America. “Imus’s [sic] advertisers’ couldn’t afford to be associated with racist, misogynistic views, and neither could NBC...It doesn’t mean that white males are being relegated to the dustbin of history. Last time I checked, guys, you still ran most of the world,” wrote Eugene Robinson (2007) in the *Washington Post*.

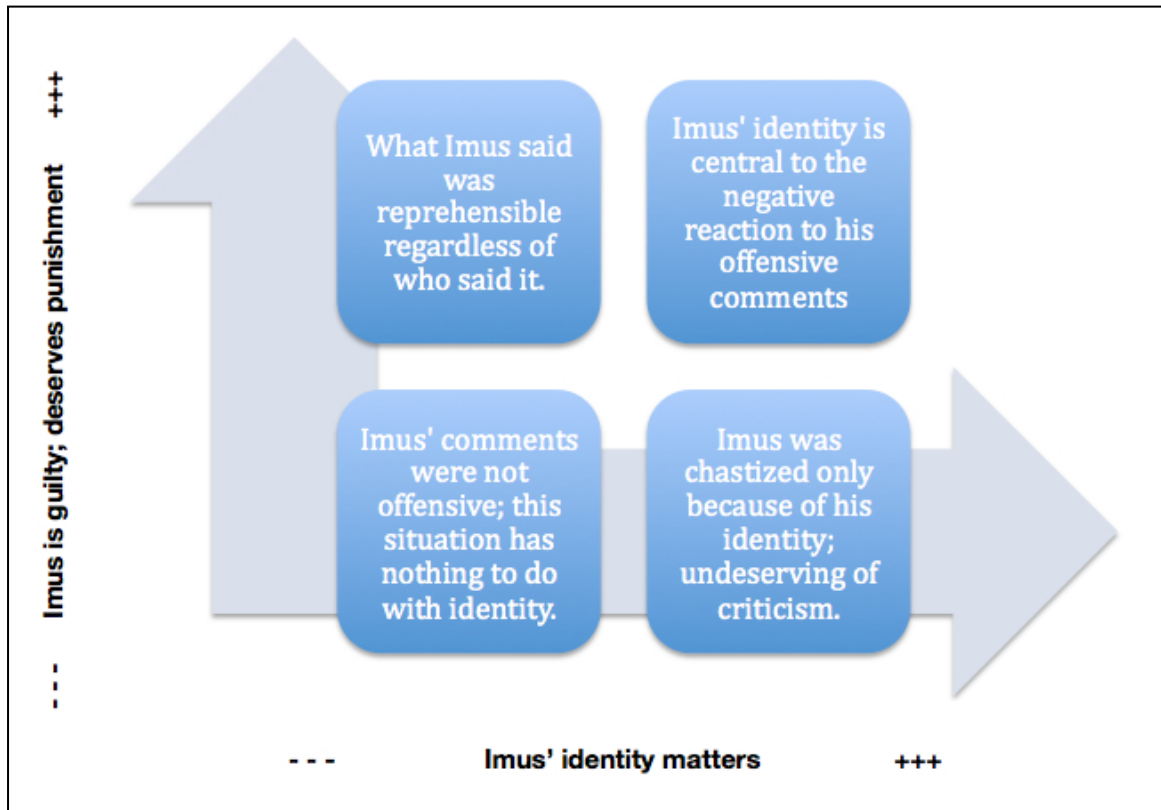


Figure 3. Positional Map: Discursive Response to Imus Scandal in Journalistic Sphere

Some who agreed with and shared in the outrage over Imus's comments questioned why it had taken so long for the public to speak up about his consistently offensive on-air statements and to shift the rhetoric toward blame and punishment. Several authors, including David Carr (2007) of *The New York Times*, invoked Imus's calling prominent journalist Gwen Ifill "a cleaning lady" in the 1990s and his regularly inflammatory remarks targeting politicians, celebrities and public figures of all kinds. Imus was called a "shock jock" and this label was used as if it was common knowledge that this kind of behavior was to be expected from Imus and others who earned this title, such as Howard Stern. But some explained that the contradictions in Imus's professional identity and on-air persona were the source of the controversy. The situation was explained as a case of wanting to have it both ways: respect as a legitimate journalist *and* an entertainer. As Carr explicates, "He is...a lawn jockey to the establishment. Few

politicians, big of small, pass up a chance to bump knees with Mr. Imus, in part because his show is one of the few places where they can talk seriously and at length about public issues.” In the months before the Rutgers comments, Imus had interviewed at least three one-time U.S. presidential candidates, including senators John Kerry, John McCain and Barack Obama; respected NBC journalists Tom Brokaw, Andrea Mitchell, Tim Russert and David Gregory were reported to have appeared on *Imus in the Morning* with some regularity. Perceived as more respectable and intelligent than Howard Stern, Imus occupied a kind of liminal space in the media imaginary where he could – up until he aimed his talk at Rutgers – be both abject comedian and legitimate commentator. He arguably negotiated the role with success: “Part of the reason that his corporate owners are eager to apologize, eager for the latest gaffe to blow over,” wrote Carr on April 9, 2007, “is so that they can get back to counting the lucre he generates” (p. C1). To Carr and others, this liminality was more of the source of the problem with the “nappy-headed hos” comment than the comment itself or the identities of Imus’s targets. From his perspective, Carr believes the public might not have reacted if Stern had said it, but that Imus’s *credibility* made the statement unacceptable to the media analysts and public.

Retrospectively, stories on the “I-Mess” explained that the scandal fit into a developing schema of celebrity/public figure misbehavior from the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and Imus was compared to Mel Gibson, Michael Richards and U.S. Senator (and eventual Vice President) Joseph Biden, who had contrasted the race of his then-rival Barack Obama by describing Obama as “clean” and “articulate.” For example, Brown and Fears (2007) wrote in the *Washington Post* months after the scandal that Imus could be grouped with other contemporary moments of racial conflict that had made headlines. They cited

the Duke University lacrosse team's rape accusation; the federal government's dysfunctional response to Hurricane Katrina, which I will discuss below; and the noose hangings in Jena, Louisiana, the University of Maryland, Columbia University and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, which constituted a string of hate crimes on school campuses in 2006 and 2007. They all share a formulaic, mass-mediated constructedness, according to Brown and Fears, that is best described as the "long-running Saga of Race in America":

...a string of characters lines up to react to the latest eruption. The media records them as they take up positions in the Great Race Debate. The media stokes the discussion as self-proclaimed black leaders scream outrage while opponents – often white, sometimes black – scream counter-outrage. The "colorblind" wonder why we all just can't get along. And the rest of us watch from ringside, rooting for one camp or another, sometimes in silence. Then inevitably, the media turns away. The outrage fades. The talking heads go silent. The curtain falls, and the debate recedes to wherever it goes until the next eruption. (p. M01)

The focus on Brown and Fears piece is on the deferral of a serious public conversation about race; they clearly identify race as the primary marker of difference and explanatory factor in each "eruption." A central part of this "show" is the prominent Black political icon, personified by Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson. Sharpton and Jackson are figured as central actors (in the dramaturgical and sociological sense of the term) in these scandals, though their purpose and effects are characterized in diverse ways. Citing John McWhorter, a Black scholar at a conservative think-tank, Brown and Fears signal that their roles are simultaneously to identify and explain racism, as well as to offer

absolution to its perpetrators – as well as to White Americans, generally. Brown and Fears quote Whorter as saying, “We know now and we knew then that what Michael Richards said some night in some club, in the grand scheme of things, was utterly insignificant. But there is a ritual that American has been going through for 40 years where we grab on to all and any opportunity to show we are morally pure in not being racist.” The authors continue: “[Sharpton] knows about this pattern, of course. Those accused of racism often go to him or to [Jackson] seeking absolution” (p. M01).

Whereas Brown and Fears (2007) render Sharpton and Jackson as agents of blame who call out racism and possess the power to forgive its perpetrators, others accuse Jackson and Sharpton as stoking the fires of otherwise non-incidents and for being opportunistic hypocrites. Describing Imus as “an equal-opportunity attacker” and his controversial statements as “cranky quips,” Bill Maxwell (2007) of the *St. Petersburg Times* wrote, “Let’s keep it real: Black people have a double-standard regarding who can and who cannot insult us. Blacks can. Whites and other cannot” (p. 3P). Accordingly, Maxwell, who self-identifies as a “black American” in his op-ed, condemns the NAACP, Chris Rock, the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and Sharpton for hypocritical behavior. Maxwell’s piece is representative of a position taken up throughout the Imus crisis – primarily but not exclusively by conservative critics in conservative publications, such as *The Washington Times* – in which Sharpton, Jackson and Black advocacy organizations are held at least partially responsible for the “I-Mess.” Differentially characterized as exacerbating the situation or blamed for actually causing it, Sharpton and Jackson are faulted for failing to simultaneously criticize rap and hip hop artists for inventing the term “ho” and who allegedly proliferate misogynistic and racist



language. On April 11, 2007, just days after the story broke, *The Washington Times* published an editorial in which the newspaper asserted that criticism of Imus was warranted, but went on to externalize responsibility for Imus's comments by blaming media corporations, including Imus's employers MSNBC and CBS, for "failing to pull other entertainment offerings" that promote offensive language similar to Imus's, namely rap music played on MTV and BET. Sharpton and Jackson are explicitly implicated by the *Times*'s logic:

The fact that the outrage [over Imus] was led by the Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, who have dabbled in vicious racism themselves from time to time (Mr. Sharpton encouraged a deadly riot against Jews in Crown Heights and Mr. Jackson once called New York City 'Hymietown'), does nothing to soften the Imus offense. Messrs. Sharpton and Jackson, who have demanded that Mr. Imus be fired, might now lead a campaign to clean up offensive language throughout the entertainment industry. Such a campaign is long overdue, but we won't hold our breath. (p. A16)

Though the editorial does not go so far as to actually specify which aspects of the "entertainment industry" are to blame, others made their accusations clearer. Republican strategist Karen Hanretty (2007) wrote in the editorial pages of the *Washington Post* that, "Malcolm X would be proud, wouldn't he? No matter that Sharpton and Jackson picked the wrong fight by pressuring corporate advertisers to drop an old coot who stopped being influential years ago rather than pressuring corporate advertisers (such as Chrysler) to drop misogynistic rappers who affect young men's perceptions of women." Notably denying that there was an inequality of power between Imus and the Rutgers players

because the young women were exceptionally talented (e.g., “Fight the power? Honey those women are the power.”), Hanretty describes Imus’s critics as feigning outrage about racism. “Too bad old Imus didn’t direct his attention toward a group of Caucasian women with slutty ‘stripper roots,’” wrote Hanretty. “He’d still have a radio show today.” Hanretty and others foreclose on Sharpton and Jackson’s ability to object to Imus’s behavior because the term allegedly originated in Black music and culture. Adrienne T. Washington (2007), a Black woman, wrote (also in *The Washington Times*) “Mr. Imus is not the first person to call black women disparaging and disrespectful names. Just tune in to any urban radio station” (p. B02). Enough discourse about the illegitimacy of Sharpton and Jackson’s circulated in journalistic discourse that Sharpton and Jackson became as much a central figure in the story as Imus himself. On the other end of the political spectrum, Colbert King (2007) wrote in the *Washington Post* that, “To shift the argument, as some have done, from Imus to the legitimacy of the Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson criticizing Imus, given their own past insensitive remarks, is a smoke screen” (p. A19). To Colbert and those on the left, the responsibility for Imus’s comments laid with him and the organizations that facilitate/perpetuate his public persona.

Discourse about responsibility and blame in the Imus scandal complicates traditional psychological literature on the externalization of blame and the relationship between externalization, guilt and shame. Tangney and Dearing (2002) argue that both externalization of blame and detachment are closely connected to the affective experiences of guilt and shame; the presence of either of these cognitive-affective strategies can indicate that a person is trying to avoid or defer guilt and shame, or might be “covering up” these deeply painful feelings by articulating a detached positionality or

arguing for others' responsibility. This conceptualization of detachment and externalization produces a generic guilty and/or ashamed subject who a) has actually done something wrong or should feel badly, and b) who uses these strategies to deny, defer or negate his guilt/shame-worthy behavior or connection to others' guilt/shame-inducing behavior.

In the Imus scandal, the externalization of blame regarding Imus's behavior was not only limited to attacks of Sharpton and Jackson from journalists and public figures. From coverage of "I-Mess," we see that there multiple ways to externalize blame and label others' responsibility for Imus's words/behavior, in particular, and racism or sexism, in general. For example, then-U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton was in the middle of a presidential campaign during the Imus scandal and made an appearance at Rutgers days after his initial remarks. According to the *Washington Post*, Clinton had previously been invited to the University, but made the choice to come only after the Imus flap (Bacon, 2007; p. A02). Staff writer Perry Bacon Jr. characterized Clinton's visit as a political opportunity to connect her campaign to women and Blacks' struggle for equality in the United States. Her speech at Rutgers personalized her own experiences of discrimination as a woman while simultaneously distancing herself from White racism. "Marginalization like that happens all too often. It happens every day, in ways large and small, in places private and public. We've all seen it and we've all heard it," Clinton was quoted by Bacon as saying. One would not expect a presidential candidate to freely admit past or present unfavorable behavior or attitudes, such as racism, but Clinton's rhetoric is especially compelling from a psychosocial perspective, because it locates the perpetrators of said "marginalization" outside of both the speaker and audience of the speech –

creating an imagined “we” and “them.” Neither Clinton nor members of the Rutgers community are implicated in any of this racist or sexist behavior, though Clinton simultaneously said that the Imus’s comments could be transformed into a substantive, “teachable” moment – a serious conversation about race and racism today. However, her language intimates that such a conversation needs to happen among *others* – people like Imus and those connected to him, such as rival politicians who had been on his show – not Clinton herself or the diverse community at Rutgers. In this instance, the externalization of blame is happening by a social actor who had no obvious connection to Imus or his comments, but is identifying blame and distancing herself from the cultural conditions that perpetuate the behavior of people like Imus. One aspect of her identity – her gender – was made salient in the interest of relating Clinton to the young women who were the target of Imus’s misogyny; her race, on the other hand, was not highlighted. Rather, prior behavior and her public political convictions were used to distinguish Clinton as meaningfully different from Imus in multiple ways.

Throughout the coverage of the Imus scandal, public figures such as Clinton made rhetoric gestures of sympathy with the Rutgers team and distanced themselves from Imus; even then-President George W. Bush’s spokeswoman said that Bush thought Imus’s apology was warranted (Page, 2007). Cal Ripken Jr. announced that he would not appear on the Imus show as previously scheduled to promote the release of his two new books (Loverro, 2007). Their actions to move symbolically away from Imus in the public imaginary serve to express and represent condemnation of his behavior as well as differences between Imus and themselves. In cases such as Clinton, Bush and Ripken, the externalizing actors are White people who do not wish to be associated with him and

thereby incur some form or associative responsibility for his comments, which had been labeled racist and sexist (among other things; see Figure 2).

The mass-mediated, *public* dimension of this scandal cannot be understated, especially because the distinction between public and private offensive comments was frequently made explicit. Writers and their sources highlighted how Imus's comments would not have been notable had they not been articulated in such a public arena, inferring or insisting that the forum was what distinguished Imus's comments – not the slur itself. Andrew Sullivan (2007) wrote that “Imus simply said on the air what [Imus's predominantly White male listeners] all say in the privacy of their own homes. Getting close to it in public was as close to authentic as many of these politicians and pundits get” (p. 4). Regardless of Imus's “true” feelings and attitudes, some journalists' insisted that the consistency of his remarks in the public domain offer sufficient data to label Imus a racist. “What characteristics, do you suppose, could possibly identify a person who was indeed a racist?” asked Eugene Robinson (2007, p. A17). “You think that maybe saying racist things might be a fairly reliable clue?” Al Sharpton was quoted as saying, “What he did was a public, racist act....He should be fired” (Fenner & Siemaszko, 2007; p. 9). In an April 10 column titled “Misogyny in the Morning,” Robinson (2007) characterized the medium of drive-time radio as a “free-fire zone, a forum for crude and objectionable speech that would be out of bounds anywhere else” (p. A17). The solitary nature of highway commuting helps construct a superficial relationship between the talk-jock and driver-listener, according to Robinson. “There's an intimacy about radio. The medium creates the illusion of privacy – it's the jock and his or her entourage speaking to you, the listener, alone in your car where nobody else can hear” (p. A17). By Robinson's

calculation, the medium itself is paradoxically what encourages radio jocks to “spew [*sic*] racism, misogyny and other forms of cruelty for the amusement of gridlock-bound commuters” and the very thing that gets them into trouble. The privacy, of course, is artificial; once the content of the broadcast penetrates discourse outside of the arbitrary boundaries of drive-time, it is evaluated by those outside of the jock-listener diad relationship. Sometimes, the offense goes ignored. In Imus’s case, it becomes a crisis of the jock’s professional legitimacy and opens a discussion about what is or is not acceptable in the public sphere. Regardless, the so-called “private” amusement of listeners remains unarticulated and un-interrogated in this ontology of racism.

Emphasis on the public/private binary has two final implications for our analysis. First, neoliberalism pivots upon a firm division between notions of public and private. In social policy, this manifests in rhetoric and legislation about what one is allowed to do in the privacy of one’s own home versus behaviors (literally: civil rights) that are discouraged or prohibited in the public sphere. Lisa Duggan (2003) argues that contemporary debates about same-sex marriage take this form, whereby anti-gay activists and politicians are able to frame heterosexist and homonegative discourse as *not* about identity or inequality. The “defenders of marriage,” according to this logic, only want to distinguish between what the government does and does not have to recognize legally in the public sphere. In the Imus scandal, we see the public/private binary mobilized to distinguish between what Imus and every American should be allowed to say in private, versus what kinds of discourse are appropriate in the public sphere. The debate about Imus is not adequately characterized as what Brown and Fears (2007) call a “serious

discussion on race” (p. M01). Instead, public debate pivoted upon whether or not Imus should be punished for making the comments on the air, in public.

Second, the mass-mediated construction of the Imus scandal has implications for what Charis Thompson (2005) calls the “ontological choreography” of White guilt and White shame, particularly in terms of their parsimony and mutual exclusivity as concepts. In Thompson’s ethnographic research, she found that people who use alterative and technoscientific-assisted forms of reproduction to become parents engage in discursive practices that re-make definition of parenthood. In the Imus scandal, journalists, pundits, celebrities and other public figures worked through the contemporary ontology of White guilt and shame.

Both terms (i.e., guilt and shame) were used to describe Imus and the aftermath of his comments, but I would argue that the escalation of public outrage directed at Imus represents a choreographic shift from White guilt to White shame. Whereas his comments about the Rutgers basketball team were initially constructed as inappropriate but perhaps forgivable – something he should be guilty about – discourse only days later shifted toward rhetoric of inexcusability and unforgivable-ness. By the time he appeared on Al Sharpton’s show, the possibility of redemption was negated. In other words, the problem became less about what Imus *did* this time and more about *who he is*.

Highlighted by the emphasis on the public nature of the comments and fallout, which is sometimes characterized as a factor of psychological shame as opposed to guilt (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), coverage constructed Imus as a site of White shame – an ontological exemplar of the phenomenon. As Lisa de Moraes (2007) phrased it in *The Washington Post*: “Following in the footsteps of celebrity slur-spewers such as Michael Richards and

Isaiah Washington, Imus yesterday began his Walk of Shame” (p. C01). We will later explore how Washington, as a Black man embroiled in a scandal over a gay slur directed at a White man, figures into contemporary discourse of racial guilt and shame. Now, however, we turn our attention toward reporter Anderson Cooper and his celebrated coverage of Hurricane Katrina.

### **Our Reporter, Ourselves: Anderson Cooper Covers Katrina**

*“At times I feel like a failure, as if I’m not up to the responsibility. At night, when I try to sleep, I go over the questions I’ve asked interview subjects, the wording, the accuracy. Did I stutter and stammer and beat around the bush? Was I fair? Was I too emotional? Did I give the guest a chance to answer? Did I let him ramble on too much? Did I get spin? I worry that our cameras are not capturing enough. I worry that I’m letting New Orleans down.”*

*-Anderson Cooper, journalist (June 2006, Vanity Fair)*

As I explained above, the “I-Mess” discourse I surveyed was predominantly about the assignment and avoidance of blame and the production of racialized guilt and shame, which intersected principally with gender and sexual politics. Discourse about CNN anchor Anderson Cooper’s coverage of Hurricane Katrina’s aftermath – coverage of the coverage, in other words – provides insight into a different but nonetheless essential component of White guilt and White shame: how people deal with it. The management of guilt and shame becomes central to Cooper’s journalistic performance and the American public’s reaction to it. As I will demonstrate, other journalists’ evaluation of Cooper’s dramatic, “emotional” reporting in New Orleans reveals how Cooper came to manage collective, nationalized White guilt and shame over Hurricane Katrina. Though it rarely



breaches the mainstream – that is, becomes visible or articulated – I read Cooper’s closeted-queer gender performance as central to his ability to feel in the public sphere and to help viewers work through and out of White guilt and shame.

Cooper’s rise to fame is attributed to his reporting during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in late-August and September 2005. It was in the days and weeks following the storm that Cooper was crowned television journalism’s new “It” boy by well-known columnists such as Gail Shister (2005) of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Cooper’s somewhat erratic professional resume did not make him the predictable heir to Aaron Brown’s anchor chair at CNN, though he is the heir to part of the Vanderbilt fortune via his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt. After working for Channel One, the closed-circuit classroom news network, and as a freelancer during the 1990s, he joined ABC News but left journalism altogether in 2000 to host ABC’s *The Mole* reality television series when he was dissatisfied with his reporting assignments with ABC (Jensen, 2005). According to Jonathan Van Meter (2005) of *New York Magazine*, “it seemed doubtful at the time that he could ever go back to serious news,” but managed to secure a spot in 2002 co-hosting CNN’s morning show with Paula Zahn. It was only once he subbed in for Brown on CNN’s flagship *NewsNight* that Cooper caught his big break and found his niche at CNN. He described the experience on *NewsNight* as finally allowing him to be authentic on camera: “...they let me play with stuff and morph things around, and the audience responded because I was just being real, being myself because I had nothing to lose” (qtd. in Van Meter, 2005). He was awarded his own show, *Anderson Cooper 360*, in September 2003. Two years later, when Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, Cooper would become part of a trio of White male reporter-anchors, including Brian Williams of NBC

and Shepard Smith of Fox News Channel, to serve as the voices of the storm, whose subjects were overwhelmingly Black.<sup>10</sup> Cooper's performance, however, was the most memorable. By November 2005, he had replaced Aaron Brown as CNN's premiere anchor and CNN/U.S. president Jonathan Klein was willing to risk his job – and CNN's ratings – on Cooper's appeal (Shister, 2005). "He is the anchorperson of the future...an anti-anchorperson...He's all human. He's not putting it on," said Klein (Jensen, 2005; p., 1E).

Klein and others attributed Cooper's ratings success, as well as his praise and criticism as a journalist, to his emotionality – literally, his "magical" qualities. With remarkable consistency, other journalists wrote about Cooper's "emotion" during Katrina and said that his ability to connect with audiences by letting his guard down – by displaying emotions and feelings – was the key to his newfound celebrity. Moreover, journalists mark the start of his accelerated, meteoric rise to professional preeminence and general American celebrity status with one specific, emotional interview. On September 1, 2005, Cooper interviewed Senator Mary L. Landrieu, Democrat from Louisiana, four days after Hurricane Katrina had come ashore in southeastern Louisiana and Mississippi and became the largest natural disaster in modern U.S. history. Journalists like Cooper, Smith and others helped reveal to the American people and the world that many aspects of the disaster were, however, quite man-made. Even Cooper's

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<sup>10</sup> It is beyond the scope of the present investigation, but it is interesting to note that – despite a relatively racially and ethnically diverse anchor staff at CNN and the other major new networks – White men became the journalistic voices of this storm. Darnell Hunt (2005) offers analysis of this kind of phenomena in his important work, *Channeling Blackness*, with a particular emphasis on how White men tend to control networks even when they appear "diversified" *a la* CNN.

critics, such as Jonah Goldberg (2005) of the conservative *National Review*, identify this interview as a turning point in the news media's coverage of the storm.

As Landrieu thanked President George W. Bush for his "strong statements of support and comfort," as well as the members of Congress for responding to Katrina with the approval of federal disaster relief funds, Cooper interrupted her and delivered the most important monologue of his career (see Appendix B for a transcript of the entire interview):

I got to tell you, there are a lot of people here who are very upset, and very angry, and very frustrated, And when they hear politicians...thanking one another, it just you know, it kind of cuts them the wrong way right now. Because literally there was a body on the streets of this town yesterday being eaten by rats, because this woman had been laying in the street for 48 hours. And there's not enough facilities to take her up. Do you get the anger that is out here? (qtd. in Van Meter, 2005)

Landrieu was obviously taken aback and recited her connection to New Orleans' past and present in an apparent attempt to cast herself and her family as victims and to avoid any further scorn from and exasperated Cooper. The next day, Cooper told reporter Van Meter that he had not planned to go after the senator; it was an organic response rooted in his emotions. "I didn't really plan on that. I just, uh, I guess I was just surprised. Yeah, I could prefer not to be emotional and I would prefer not to get upset, but it's hard not to when you're surrounded by brave people who are suffering and in need," Van Meter quoted Cooper as saying. Though this interview represented the most notable eruption of Cooper's Katrina coverage, journalists described him as frequently fighting back tears

and occasionally allowing the rawness of his feelings to be expressed on camera. *Vanity Fair*, which later put Cooper's face on the cover of the magazine and printed an excerpt from his biography *Dispatches from the Edge* in June 2006, said that Cooper broke the status quo during Katrina: "In response [to Landrieu], Cooper unleashed an emotion rarely expressed on national newscasts: genuine, full-bore indignation" (Halberstam, 2005). His outburst at Landrieu, in particular, "signaled a watershed of sorts. Many in the audience (after years of watching news personalities tow the party line in the wake of a different deadly crisis) felt release as Cooper vented," wrote Halberstam. Journalistic interpretation of the Landrieu interview was that Cooper not only critically reported the news – a rarity of "mainstream" coverage during the Bush administration – but that he served in a kind of emotional capacity for the American collective, as well. He captivated national audiences, in particular, because he helped us both to know *and* feel the news of Katrina. As CNN head Jonathan Klein was firing Aaron Brown, he told *The New York Times* in November 2005 that, "Clearly, America is embracing Anderson Cooper" (p. C3).

By some experts' estimation, Cooper's feelings became the news as much as the devastation in the Gulf Coast was the story. *The Capital* (2006) ran a piece in which Knight Ridder quoted professor Andrew Clark from the University of Texas at Arlington as saying "He becomes the news, instead of the story, and he has done nothing to downplay that...I would have to think he's less sensationalist than Geraldo (Rivera) but it's that sentimental aspect to what he's doing. The tears on Katrina, I'm not going to say if it's genuine or not, but it's going over the top a bit" (p. B6). In *The Washington Post*, Michael Kinsley (2006) wrote, "In short, he's acting like a human being, albeit a

somewhat overwrought one” (p. A19). For Kinsley, Cooper’s style of journalism heralds “the twilight of objectivity,” when reporting itself may transform into something “more personalized, more interactive, more opinionated, more communal, less objective” (p. A19). According to Kinsley, so-called “opinion journalism” does not *necessarily* preclude telling the truth – it just usually winds up that way in the United States and especially on TV. In coverage of Cooper’s Katrina, even those who celebrated his breaking through the fourth wall continually reinforced the binary opposition between feelings and truth –subjectivity and objectivity, in clichéd journalism terminology. The second position map of this chapter illustrates the differing reactions to Cooper’s emotionality and the perception of his coverage (see Figure 4). “Advocacy journalism” and comparisons to legendary Edward R. Morrow were relatively frequent, if hesitant. Whereas Tim Cuprinson (2005) of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* collected opinions from a range of sources who differentially positioned Cooper amid a cast of Murrow-esque figures that included the aforementioned Smith, Williams, Ted Koppel and veterans Mike Wallace and Dan Rather, Peter Ames Carlin (2005) of the *The Oregonian* was more certain of Cooper’s similarities to Murrow. According to Carlin, Cooper’s reporting, along with that of Shep Smith, “changed the course of the government response to the disaster,” namely because Cooper brought “morality” into the equation (p. E07). Neal Gabler (2005) echoed in *The New York Times* that Cooper and other impassioned reporters “forced officials to act” (p. D12).

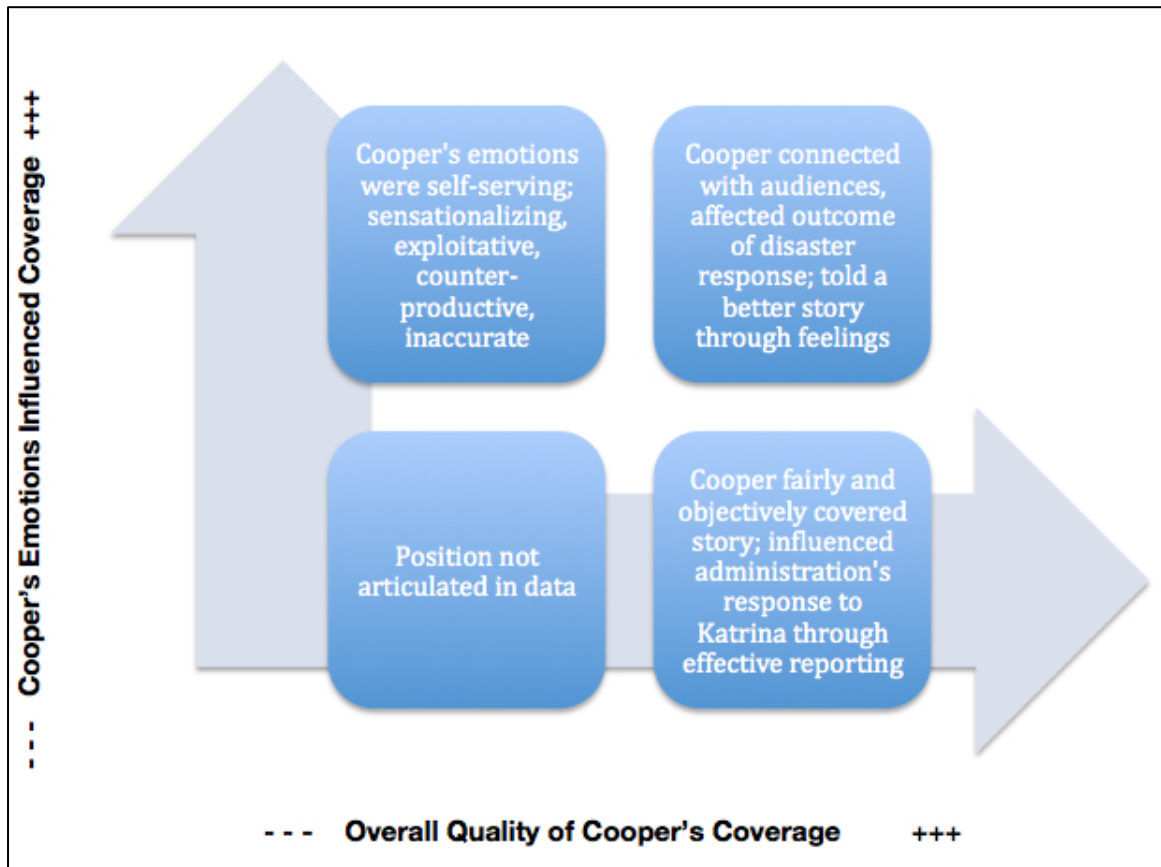


Figure 4. Positional Map: Evaluation of Anderson Cooper's Coverage of Hurricane Katrina in the Journalistic Sphere

Cooper was not the only reporter *feeling* his way through the story, but he was the central one. Nicholas Lemann, dean of Columbia University's Columbia School of Journalism, remarked in the *New York Observer* that, while the emotion of Katrina was not particularly surprising to him, the level of reporters' anger was unusual. "My impression is, if you were there, the conditions were so shocking, it led people to emote more than [the] general professional standard in journalism, which is now being widely applauded," he said (qtd. in Kolhatkar, 2005; p. 1). Neil Justin (2005) wrote in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* that "the press got angry over rescue efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," and cited Cooper's fight with Landrieu as an exemplar (p. 21E).

Debates over the appropriateness of such emotionality were, not surprisingly, fascinating to journalists, who devoted considerable editorial real estate to thinking through Cooper's emotive behavior. Some, such as Fox News correspondent Rick Leventhal, said "I don't feel like it's my role to cry" (qtd. in Justin, 2005; p. 21E). But Leventhal's coverage of Katrina was inconsequential; Cooper's became the litmus for talented breaking news reporting – and a magnet of discursive activity. Journalism experts Tom Rosensteil and Bill Kovach (2005) wrote in a *Washington Post* editorial about the relationship between reporters' emotion and aggression, and figured this kind of emotionality as fairly natural but not necessarily helpful – it can "distort coverage" (p. B07). Nevertheless, they said, "It would have been odd, even distressing to most, if reporters had reacted like journalistic robots to the devastation in the Gulf Coast." Such "emotional isolationism" does not achieve the goal of helping audiences "reconnect" with citizens to present news that feels "relevant" and helps audiences "bond" with reporters. "Human emotion," they argue, "is at the heart of what makes something news. But if journalists try to manufacture it or use it to bring attention to themselves, they're into something there is already enough of: reality entertainment" (p. B07).

According to the press, Cooper's "Andersonian emotionality" enabled him to serve as an emotional proxy for what was arguably the most important racial/racist event (so far) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Van Meter, 2005). I assert that his race, gender and sexuality together contributed to his central role in covering Katrina and his positive evaluation by fellow journalists. Much has been written about racial and class dynamics of the Katrina disaster by academics (see Lipsitz, 2006; also Clyde Woods' 2009 special issue of *American Quarterly*), but reporters struggled to deal with the inextricability of race, class

and Katrina. For example, an in-depth report by *Vanity Fair* contributing editor James Wolcott (2005) noted that Williams, Smith and Cooper “spoke truth to power” during the coverage, but ultimately concluded that class was the primary factor underlying the Katrina disaster, negating a multidimensional, intersectional epistemology of the storm. Howard Kurtz (2005) wrote in his *Washington Post* column the weekend after the hurricane struck that, especially on cable television, Katrina threw off the traditional focus on the missing White woman of the week; accordingly, reporters and producers did not know how to handle the socio-cultural complexity of the story. Kurtz quoted *Slate* columnist Jack Shafer, who said, “Race remains largely untouchable for TV because broadcasters sense that they can’t make an error without destroying careers. That’s a true pity” (p. C01). Race was on the minds of White reporters, even if they failed to effectively articulate what race meant to the story. For example, CNN’s Wolf Blitzer (in)famously said, “They are so black,” on air as cameras panned across the flooded terrain of Katrina “refugees.” On Fox, conservative pundit Glenn Beck expressed literal hatred for the Katrina victims, because he interpreted them as unpatriotically critiquing the federal government after irresponsibly failing to evacuate New Orleans. Even in the face of these incidents, Wolcott confidently asserted: “It’s class, not race, that’s been the great undiscussable. The true eye-opener from Katrina was having the flap lifted on the specter of lower-depths poverty in this country....Poverty has been scrubbed from the American screen with a sanity wipe” (p. 176). One high-profile cover story in *Newsweek* discussed “Poverty, Race and Katrina: Lessons of a National Shame” (Alter, 2005), but it was only one of three stories I surveyed that tackled race and Katrina. Even in the light of Kanye West’s “George Bush hates Black people” comment on live television, the story –



including Cooper's reporting – focused on the (colorblind, but maybe classist) failures of the Bush administration – not institutional or structural racism that created economic stratification in New Orleans and a cultural environment in which the death and displacement of thousands of Black people could be sustained by the nation. As Black woman journalist Ziba Kashef (2005) elucidated, “we” got upset – but we still let it happen.

In *Color Lines Magazine*, which in late 2009 still lists “Katrina” as a “hot topic” on its home page, Ziba Kashef wrote about how “as these critical conversations about race, class and equity unfolded” in the media, “they were simultaneously undermined by charges of looting, exaggerations of crime and bizarre characterizations of the largely Black population of New Orleans as refugees wandering through an American Third World” (p. 5). Reporters and commentators “...analyzed the class angle as if it could be entirely separated from race, rendering discussions about discrimination moot,” according to Kashef. In the most racist rhetorics, led by zealous conservatives such as Lou Dobbs, “Blame-shifting not only went from federal to local officials, but from whites to Blacks,” wrote Kashef. She is the only reporter in my research who racialized any kind of collective or group-based responsibility for Katrina beyond “Americans” or the “Bush administration.” Kashef was also one of the most aggressive critics of Cooper, whom she painted as racist, privileged and paternalistic; she argued that he relied on his White, masculinist gaze – a “cruel microscope” – to objectify victims of Katrina in the midst of his surging popularity while transforming their trauma into ratings capital. Citing a specific instance in which he brought a homeless Black girl to tears during an interview and a conversation between Cooper and Oprah Winfrey in which they discussed what the

federal response would have been if the victims had been “soccer moms,” Kashef concludes that his “emotionalism” was privileged over the structural inequities that caused Katrina to result in such racialized devastation. From Kashef’s perspective as a woman of color – and potentially representing multiple *communities* of color whose voices are not well represented in the White-dominated new media (Hunt, 2006) – Cooper was not a useful proxy at all for connecting with and working through the emotions connected to Katrina. Instead, according to Kashef, he reified hegemonic knowledge that does not validate or reflect African American lived experiences of racial inequity nor explanations of how Katrina happened (and continues to happen as New Orleans remains largely unrepaired and resettled) (Lipsitz, 2006). His identity – and the performance of his social location as an affluent White man – mired him in a self-conscious affectivity that, according to Kashef, could not possibly bridge the divide between White and Black experiences of Katrina, much less the feelings of viewers and those directly endangered or displaced by the storm.

Meanwhile, from the perspectives of journalists writing in the proverbial “mainstream,” Cooper helped White Americans – myself included – deal with it, “it” being the affective process of facing the persistence racial inequality in the United States. As I discussed in Chapter 1, contemporary neoliberal racial hegemony remains and remakes itself as legitimate in the absence of images of identity-based inequality and in the silencing of counter-discourses that resist the dominant narrative of U.S. post-raciality. Normally, as Bonilla-Silva (2006) puts it, this colorblind ideology helps White people maintain an affective homeostasis: “Whites’ collective denial of about the true nature of race relations may help them *feel* good...[emphasis added]” (p. 213). When

colorblind ideology and the presumed fairness of neoliberalism are challenged in moments such as Katrina, feeling good becomes difficult. As Adler (2005) wrote in *Newsweek*, Katrina was shameful and shaming. At least during the coverage itself, when avoiding images and coverage of Katrina was relatively difficult, Katrina taught painful lessons about how impoverished the United States is and how racialized this poverty remains, effectively making salient various latent forms of collective White shame. Katrina destabilized neoliberal ideology that insists upon American exceptionalism and those intrinsically positive qualities of the U.S. nation-state, which are built upon concepts of democracy, opportunity, justice and equality. Katrina, on the other hand, was about disenfranchisement, foreclosed opportunities, injustice, cruelty and inequality. Katrina was discursively productive of collective shame. Based on the social identities of these reporters and commentators, as well as their assessment of the storm and its emotional aftermath, this shame was arguably felt more often by those people in groups not well represented among Katrina's victims: namely, the White middle- and upper-class.

In reading the process of White shame in journalists' writing about Cooper and Katrina, I do not intend to inscribe a deterministic or unidimensional interpretation of the discourse that forecloses on other diverse and complex readings. However, shame itself is a complex and multidimensional form of affect. Shame is associated with many other forms of feeling and behaviors, and may function on conscious and non-conscious levels. Shame may be articulated or remain unarticulated; it can be owned or disowned. It may be avoided or embraced; it may be deferred, accepted and rejected. In this sense, collective shame can be conceptualized as a specific concept – in this case, negative

feelings about White Americans – and a process that is bound up in related forms of affect, cognition and behavior. Cooper’s coverage represented and expressed at least two of these emotions: anger and sadness. Cooper cried, empathized and described feelings of depression while covering Katrina and bearing witness to the devastation in the Gulf Coast region. Cooper’s emotional experience and expression resonated with at least some meaningful portion of viewers who were feeling similarly as they faced scenes of horror from the Superdome and New Orleans Convention Center on their television screens. But Cooper also expressed *anger*; undoubtedly, there were many reasons to be angry as the government failed to respond to Katrina. For example, there was a deep sense among many African Americans and of citizens of New Orleans that a Katrina-scale disaster was inevitable, and that they had been ignored for a length of period stretching much longer than the days it took FEMA to arrive. But for Cooper and other White people, anger may have been a cognitive-affective strategy to cope with – or to *avoid* – the painful feelings of shame associated with having one’s worldview challenged by a disaster and stratification once thought impossible. His anger, as the Mary Landrieu interview illuminates, was most often directed at other White people, which serves to distance Cooper from other White people (i.e., collective group identity) in a similar way to how Hillary Clinton distinguished herself from Don Imus and racist Whites. Cooper pointed his anger at political figures, such as President Bush and Senator Landrieu, and at the federal government. He and other White journalists, such as Shepard Smith, used anger to craft a story about Katrina that blamed several levels of government for ineptitude and inaction that resulted in unnecessary death and suffering. Their emotional, anger-fueled coverage became the primary narrative of the storm. I argue that such a narrative is

affectively preferable – i.e., *feels better* – than a framing of Katrina in which Americans, especially White, middle- and upper-class Americans, take collective responsibility for ignoring structural racism and holding prejudicial attitudes in the present that precipitate infrastructural deficiencies and facilitate disasters such as Katrina. Such a claiming of responsibility or relationship with systems of inequity does not *necessarily* require a sense of shame or guilt and *could* engender action rather than self-conscious depression. At the very least, this ownership of responsibility or relationality to Katrina very least likely incorporates some kind of negative, self-directed feelings. Cooper’s outward-directed anger, in this sense, becomes a desirable proxy through which to work through bad feelings associated with the storm without addressing macro-sociological factors, which explain the Katrina disaster and have implications for how one makes sense of persistent inequity in the United States. In discourse – specifically, the interactions between audiences and reporters – Cooper can become a metaphorical receptacle of White shame, while his anger becomes the phenomenological route through which negative affect is performed and released.

When we examine Cooper’s gender performance and ambiguous sexuality, his appeal in this moment of “crisis” becomes more obvious and apparent. Indeed, there are meaningful connections between the characterization of Cooper as emotional and the feminine gendering endemic to such a label. Furthermore, in contemporary American culture, ‘emotional’ men are subject to suspicion about their presumed heterosexuality. Almost as uniformly as journalists’ writing about Cooper emphasized his emotional reporting, journalists explicitly described his body and demeanor. For example, a Knight Ridder (2006) lede from *The Capital* reads: “There’s no escaping the glare from

Anderson Cooper's steely baby-blues these days. He's the youthful, prematurely gray Kim Jong-Il of media cool, his image plastered all over the pop-culture landscape" (p. B6). "He looks suave and debonair," writes Shister (2005) in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Van Meter (2005) wrote, "...his sleek good looks and boyish charm inspire an awful lot of I-love-Anderson mania on the Internet." *People* magazine named him one of its sexiest men (Gabler, 2006). His age (38 during Katrina) and relative youth was juxtaposed to Aaron Brown's middle-age milieu (he was 56 when Katrina struck). His prematurely gray hair is a constant staple and aesthetic trademark. Shister and others note his fast speech, because it helps to tell the story of Cooper's novelty in the journalism world. His voice, not particularly deep or commanding, sits in contrast to the traditionally commanding sound of Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw and Dan Rather – the old-guard anchor icons. Cooper appeared in a fashion spread in the September 2005 issue of men's magazine *Maxim* during the same month he covered Katrina; he appeared in *Esquire* simultaneously (Jensen, 2005). Van Meter noted during an August 2005 interview, days before Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, that Cooper's appearance lends him an aura that commands attention:

Though it was midday on one of the hottest days of the year, Cooper couldn't have looked more put-together in his impeccably modern black suit, crisp pink shirt, and perfectly knotted purple-and-blue tie. What is it about people with that particular combination of icy blue eyes, pale skin, and silver hair? Cooper's appearance lends him an aspect of otherworldly knowingness and inner calm. But appearances can be deceiving.

This aesthetic deception, according to Van Meter, is rooted in Cooper's nervous off- (and sometimes on-) camera demeanor, which includes his often-stuttering, rapid-fire speech; his awkward avoidance of any conversation about his sexuality and sexual orientation; and a public, dark and troubling past of privilege and tragedy, which involved a famous fashion-designer mother (Gloria Vanderbilt) and a brutal suicide of a sibling. Notably, Carter Cooper, his older brother, jumped to his death from Anderson's bedroom terrace on the 14<sup>th</sup> story of their family home in Manhattan on July 22, 1988. Despite his wealthy background, Anderson Cooper chose to make money on his own as a child by modeling for Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein and Macy's. He told Van Meter that he quit at age 13 when "a creepy male photographer propositioned him."

Van Meter is one of the only reporters to write about Cooper's sexuality, which Anderson himself avoids discussing with the press. However, according to Van Meter, "his sexuality is regularly discussed just under the radar.... There has been a lot of chatter on the Internet about the fact that Cooper may or may not be gay...." Van Meter cites a gay magazine, *Metrosource*, that goes so far as to refer to Cooper as "the openly gay news anchor." He reportedly lives a "gay social life," associating with high-profile gay celebrities. In a heated 2004 interview with Jerry Falwell about gay marriage, he reportedly said, "We pay taxes," though this has been difficult to verify. On *Salon.com*, Neal Gabler characterizes Cooper as a "method" anchor, referring to the acting technique in which actors tap prior experiences to construct their characters. Cooper's "method" style is rooted in his emotionality: "He is a professional emoter – the 'conscience of the nation,' *Vanity Fair* called him. His *job* is to feel." Gabler gently connects this characterization of his emotionality and appeal to his undeclared sexual orientation.

“Added to all this attention,” writes Gabler, “is the frisson of his sexuality and the hanging question – hanging because Cooper refuses to address it – of whether he is gay or not, which raises the possibility of his being America’s first gay anchor.” In April 2007, *Out* magazine put Cooper’s face on the cover of a model (next to another model sporting a Jodie Foster mask) with a headline reading: “The Glass Closet: Why the Stars Won’t Come Out and Play.” In the article, author Michael Musto positions Cooper as one of the celebrities who is barely closeted or in “the glass closet,” i.e., will not talk about his sexuality, but everyone knows he is gay. Musto quotes controversial outing journalist Michelangelo Signorole, who disparagingly said, “Anderson Cooper has finessed it where straight women who have a crush on him think he’s straight and gay men actually think he’s out. [The glass closeters] are able to play different niche audiences to whatever sexual orientation those people want, and they believe it!” In summary, Cooper’s resistance to being identified with a sexual orientation label and persistent speculation about his sexuality suggests that representation of Cooper resists a stable rendering of his sexual identity. Cooper performs gender normatively enough to avoid overwhelming suspicion of homosexuality from a heterosexual audience, but does not foreclose conversation about his perceived queerness sufficiently to silence alternative narratives about his alleged gay identity and/or behavior.

If Cooper’s identity is examined solely through the prism of race, one can recognize how Cooper’s Whiteness positions him as a sympathetic ally to the guilty or shameful White viewer wrestling with the anxiety (e.g., anger, sadness, depression) that coverage of Katrina provoked. However, a critical lens that accounts for the intersectionality of Cooper’s identity on television and in mass-mediated journalistic



discourse about him engenders a more nuanced and comprehensive explanation of his appeal to White audiences. Cooper does not “do” White masculinity in the same vein as Shepard Smith or Brian Williams, both of whom are accepted as heterosexual and sufficiently heteromasculine. Cooper *feels* more than both of them, which served him well professionally during Katrina. His ‘softer’ performance of masculinity and his non-threatening sexuality, which are evidenced by his speech, attire, celebrity appearances and avoidance of sexual labeling, enabled him to emote throughout the storm and to do so in a way that was perceived as authentic and genuine – he could just be read as *Details*-reading “metrosexual.” He was not too feminine so as to turn heteronormative audiences off; to the contrary, he embodied a kind of neoliberal, heteromasculinized homosexuality akin to other popular out celebrities, such as actor Neil Patrick Harris, who do not *feel* (homo)sexual at all (Harris, 2006; for an academic perspective, see Duggan, 2003). For the CNN-viewing audience, his refined good looks and affective demeanor were as inviting and non-threatening as the fictional Will Truman from *Will & Grace*. One cannot know exactly how the viewing public would have responded if Brian Williams had yelled at Senator Landrieu with his authoritative masculinity and deep voice. However, one can imagine that the reception of Cooper’s rant at Landrieu might have been different if his gender performance was more heterosexual; would his response have been perceived as an honest expression of deep sadness and frustration? Could audiences tolerate a commanding White straight man yelling at a heterosexual White woman, obviously upsetting her on camera? Would Landrieu herself have behaved differently?

By my reading of journalistic coverage of Cooper, the anchor’s “limpid blue eyes,” “soulful” stare, elusive sexuality and “handsome,” boyish appeal are inextricable

from his sympathetic Whiteness and his central positionality in the narrative of Hurricane Katrina (Gabler, 2006). Evaluating whether or not Cooper was an effective journalist in the wake of Katrina is outside the scope, purpose and bounds of my present investigation. I found, however, that other journalists were fixated on Cooper's intriguing persona throughout the aftermath of Katrina. In their evaluations of his coverage, other journalists and media experts celebrated Cooper's ability and willingness to emote on camera – to overcome the boundary between the televisual viewing public and the subject-victims of the storm. His propensity for affectivity mediated the painful shame of Katrina, providing a discursive proxy through which viewing audiences could *feel* with him. In the context of negotiating Hurricane Katrina as a national shame, Cooper expressed shame-associated feelings of anger and painful sadness and worked through these affective experiences on camera. In doing so, he is representative of how the White guilt and White shame of contemporary American discourse resists the simplistic rendering of a universal guilty subject who feels bad about racism. To the contrary, Cooper's personification and performance of White shame cannot be understood through the binary of individual/collective, because he was emoting individually as audiences were feeling with him. Furthermore, his subtle and complex gender and sexual identity intersect with his Whiteness to position him as a sympathetic White figure – at least to White audiences – in the midst of a horrific racist crisis.

### **“Isaiahgate”: Gay Men, Race Matters**

*“Forgive my skepticism, but I’m not a huge fan of apologies that come only after an evident threat to one’s livelihood; I have difficulty believing that they spring spontaneously from a troubled soul.”*

*-Mark Harris, editor (June 2007, Entertainment Weekly)*

In August 2007, *Entertainment Weekly* ranked the top 25 “biggest scandals” of the past 25 years. “Don Imus Fouls Out!” was ranked number 16, and the impact on his career was called “major.” Imus’s controversy was ranked two places behind Michael Richards’ well publicized “Racist Rant!” at Los Angeles’ Laugh Factory comedy club in 2006. Mel Gibson earned the number two spot with his anti-Semitic and misogynist tirade (“Mel(t) Down!”), which was directed at L.A. County police who had pulled him over for a suspected DUI. The number one scandal was “Nipplegate!” the infamous “wardrobe malfunction” that cost CBS half a million dollars in 2004 when Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson’s breast during the Super Bowl halftime performance. “Isaiah Mouths Off, Shoots Self in Foot!” was ranked right in the middle, at number 12. “Just when you thought the drama on ABC’s *Grey’s Anatomy* couldn’t get more overwrought, it did behind the scenes,” wrote reporter Ty Burr (p. 22). As the magazine’s humorous and non-scientific rankings suggest, Isaiah Washington’s “F-word” debacle was situated within a decade full of major celebrity scandals, several of which included identity-based slurs and all of which implicated complex, culturally embedded relations of race, gender and sexuality. Moreover, the nature of these scandals is such that each invoked discourses of responsibility, blame, apology, punishment and redemption, which implicitly and explicitly enkindle rhetoric of guilt and shame.

“Isaiahgate,” as it came to be known, is the final crisis explored in this chapter, and is simultaneously similar and distinct from the other two crises in terms of journalists’ narrative mapping of the stories. “Isaiahgate,” like the “I-Mess,” involved a celebrity behaving in such a manner so as to warrant the assignment of blame and punishment. Isaiah Washington’s ‘bad’ behavior also similarly involved the use of a culturally loaded and offensive term. However, Washington’s slur was anti-gay: the word of interest was “faggot,” and Washington’s alleged use of the term targeted another man. As such, the story was taken up journalistically as centering on the theme of homophobia, *not* racism or sexism. Indeed, discourse about Washington’s race only surfaced once he had been fired, months after the controversy began to receive media coverage. The identity labels most salient in discourse about Washington were straight and gay, or heterosexual and homosexual, and Washington’s race was rarely articulated. Furthermore, whereas Imus quickly accepted responsibility and apologized for calling the Rutgers players “nappy-headed hos,” Washington’s acceptance of responsibility – or lack thereof – was much more complicated and inconsistent. As I will explore, though, Washington’s Blackness and his alleged victim’s Whiteness were central to the discourse of “Isaiahgate” and the racialized rhetorics of responsibility and blame. Limiting analysis of “Isaiahgate” solely to racial dynamics paints a reductionist and overly simplistic portrait of this ‘crisis.’ To understand “Isaiahgate” is to recognize the intersecting dimensions of difference and oppression that co-constitute the axes of power through which this story played itself out and was understood by the public, i.e., its audience. Race, gender and sexuality are concurrently salient in the rendering of victims, victimizers, responsibility, blame, punishment and retribution in “Isaiahgate.”

Most Americans did not hear Don Imus slander the Rutgers' team or watch Anderson Cooper yell at Mary Landrieu on live television or radio. However, journalistic coverage of the events – and the ability to actually replay them on television and the Internet – ensured that many people following the story could actually witness for themselves the newsworthy moments. This also meant that reporters could write with authority about what happened, because there was tangible proof. Imus didn't 'allegedly' do anything: we heard and saw exactly what he did. Ironically, Isaiah Washington might have benefited from an audio transcript or video recording of his off-camera fight with co-star Patrick Dempsey, which started the scandal that resulted in his eventual forced exit from *Grey's Anatomy*. Hypothetically, he could have used such hard evidence to make a stronger case that he said "faggot" but did *not* mean to imply that co-star T. R. Knight was gay. Or, the same recording could have made it clear that Washington did invoke Knight's name alongside "faggot," which likely would have resulted in swifter, harsher punishment. At the very least, such an archiving of the actual altercation would have made this a simpler story. Instead, "Isaiahgate" was such a compelling news story because it became a high-stakes and high-profile round of celebrity he-said, she-said, he-said.

To review: in October 2006, rumors surfaced that Washington, a black actor, and Dempsey, a more well-known White actor, had gotten into an loud argument off camera on the set of their hit ABC television series, *Grey's Anatomy*. Allegedly, Washington referred to T. R. Knight, a White man and co-star, as a "faggot" during this fight. Knight came out (as gay) in October shortly after the story broke by revealing his sexual orientation to *People* magazine. Washington initially denied and then apologized for

using the term. Washington was quoted by the *Associated Press* (2007) as issuing a statement in which he “expressed regret for ‘the unfortunate use of words’ he called ‘beneath my own personal standards.’” According to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, “The controversy simmered for months, reaching a crescendo” when Washington said “faggot” at the January 2007 Golden Globes – this time on camera – to deny saying it in the first place. “I did not call T. R. a ‘faggot.’ Never,” said Washington backstage at the Golden Globes ceremony press conference to a reporter who had asked about the October incident, according to the *Associated Press* (Elber, 2007). The next day, January 17, 2007, T. R. Knight was a guest *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and said to DeGeneres: “He referred to me as a faggot....Everyone heard it” (Elber, 2007). After apologizing again and entering treatment for his anger management and alleged homophobia, ABC and *Grey’s Anatomy* creator Shonda Rhimes, a black woman, chastised Washington. “I speak for all of the executive producers here at *Grey’s Anatomy* when I say that Isaiah Washington’s use of such a disturbing word was a shocking and dismaying event that insulted not only gays and lesbians everywhere, but anyone who has ever struggled for respect in a world that is not always accepting of difference,” said Rhimes in a statement released January 24, 2007 (Bruno, 2007). Eventually, on June 7, 2007, it was announced that Washington was fired from the series and would not be returning to the show for the 2007-2008 season (Katz, 2007).

In October 2006, it was immediately unclear what exactly Washington had done and whose story was the most accurate reflection of the events that had unfolded off camera. Besides Knight’s coming out, the initial story did not provoke much coverage – or outrage. This may be tied to its lack of actual documentation; the public cannot

become enraged about what it does not know. Some felt differently and were ready to lay blame on Washington. *Entertainment Weekly* editor Mark Harris (2007), for example, wrote in that magazine:

For a while, Isaiah Washington was actually going to get away with it. I'm talking about how things felt before the Official Entertainment Remorse Machine kicked in – the denial, then the half-baked small apology, then the more impressive, bigger, 'I'm scared' apology (the one that goes, 'I have sinned, I must look deep inside myself and deal with my issues, I shall summon leaders of the offended community to meet with me') with a side order of official corporate rebuke, presumably followed by regret-soaked on-air interviews and a group hug. For three months, all the evidence suggested that everyone – Washington, *Grey's Anatomy* creator Shonda Rhimes, Touchstone TV, and ABC – had decided it was no big deal for an actor to refer to a gay colleague as a 'faggot' on the set and that if everyone just averted their eyes, the word would become a tiny speed bump that a show could bounce over without looking back.

Harris notably expressed outright hostility toward Washington and the other players in the situation, criticizing them for failing to act and react until after the Golden Globes incident: "...everyone in a position to do anything about it was content to let the word *faggot* hand in the air all winter..." Until journalists wrote about the story and talked about it on camera, however, the word itself had not been actually uttered in the public in the context of this controversy – it was journalists' coverage of the rumored argument that brought Washington's use of the term into discourse and journalistic rotation. However, the initial alleged use of the term concretized into the more reliable and

dependable accusation; reporters decided that he had called Knight a faggot based on Washington's first (and second) apology. The second utterance, at the Golden Globes, was more complicated, because he had used it to defend himself. Reporting about the Globes' press conference reflects this confusion and the diversity of reactions to Washington's statement. Harris, for example, said that Washington used the word again in his denial, and Zeller (2007) wrote a *The New York Times* media blog that, "...Mr. Washington apparently made matters worse by saying the word again in denial at the Golden Globes on Monday....Seems [he] caused jaws to drop when he boldly re-issued a slur...in the context of what appears to have been an unsolicited denial of having used the slur back in October, in reference to co-star [Knight], who is gay." On the other hand, a *New York Times* Style section story printed the same week, began: "Executives at ABC and its parent, Disney, are mulling the future of [Washington] after Mr. Washington last week publicly used an anti-gay slur for the second time in roughly three months, a Disney executive said Monday" (Wyatt, 2007; p. E1). *US Weekly* (2007) wrote, "D'oh! There he goes *again*" ("Grey's Anatomy' smackdown, round 2: Heigl vs. Washington"). Reports differentially constructed the incident as the only, second or quasi-second use of the term.

In addition to mulling over what actually happened – i.e., what constituted this (as) news – journalists tapped public opinion about the relative offensiveness of Washington's alleged comments. In the wake of Washington's firing and the several other celebrity slur-scandals listed above, *Business Wire* released a May 2007 Harris Interactive (2007) online poll of 2,383 U.S. adults opinions regarding the Washington, Richards, Imus and Gibson scandals, among others. Sixty-nine percent of those polled said that Richards' use of the "n-word" was offensive; 64 percent said Imus's slur was



offensive and 63 percent found Gibson's anti-Semitic slurs to be offensive. Meanwhile, 54 percent felt Washington's use of "faggot" was offensive, just above Rush Limbaugh's use of the phrase "Obama Osama" to describe then-Senator Barack Obama. Forty percent of those surveyed did not find the Washington incident to be offensive, but only one in two surveyed was actually familiar with the Washington scandal. A full 80 percent were familiar with the Imus's Rutgers comments.

Differences emerged in the 2007 Harris poll based on social identity group membership. For example, 88 percent and 83 percent and African Americans were "extremely" or "very" offended by Imus's and Richards' comments, respectively. Washington "extremely/very" offended a smaller proportion, 66 percent, of GLBT adults surveyed; less than half, 40 percent, of GLBT survey respondents were "extremely/very" offended by Don Imus. There were racial differences in the perception of offensiveness regarding "Isaiahgate," as well. Thirty-four percent of those surveyed found Washington's use of "faggot" to be "extremely/very" offensive; however, a larger proportion of African Americans (46 percent) found this to be "extremely/very" offensive than Whites (33 percent), perhaps reflecting some feelings of collective responsibility or stronger levels of group entiativity on behalf of Black people. A higher percent (37) of Hispanic respondents found the term more offensive than Whites, as well. Though this research does not constitute an academic study subject to the rigors of peer review, it is meaningful in that it was disseminated as sociological evidence of how American actually reacted to these incidents by demographic variables.

After Washington was fired, Kevin Nance (2007) wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote that people understand the word faggot as "a nuclear weapon in the American

name-calling arsenal, rivaling the N-word in sheer wounding power” (p. B1). In discussing Washington, Nance asserted, “Today, ‘faggot’ seems to have grown even more offensive, and to more people, than ever before” (p. B1). “In fact,” he continued, “‘faggot’ shows signs of becoming the new N-word....” Some papers, such as the *Washington Post*, did not print the term; others, such as *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, did print “faggot,” as opposed to the increasingly commonplace “anti-gay epithet.” In the midst of several highly publicized racist, sexist and homonegative articulations by public figures, such comparisons to other slurs were inevitable and constituted news – or entertainment, at least. In the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Michael Smerconish (2007) ranked these “bone-headed and off-color comments” with a “Muzzle Meter” (p. D03). Gibson and Richards earned a 10 out of 10, while Washington earned a 9. In contrast, Joe Biden earned a 0 for calling Obama “‘articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy,’” because, “He was complimenting Obama,” according to Smerconish (p. B03). Coverage such as the Harris poll and Nance’s column, intriguingly, turned comparison into an opportunity for normative ranking. In other words, in talking about Imus, Washington, Gibson, Richards and others together, the discourse consistently shifted toward deciding which words or phrases are worse and worst.

As in the Imus scandal, the attribution of blame and speculation about punishment were common themes in coverage of “Isaiahgate.” A few months prior to his column about the term “faggot,” Nance (2007) wrote: “Poor Isaiah Washington, forced to apologize....: If you were about to lose your lucrative gig on one of the highest-rated shows, you’d have agreed to go to rehab, too” (p. 37). The *Chicago Sun-Times* (2007) quoted Glenn Beck as asking, “What is the controversy? One of the guys called another

guy a naughty name” (p. B2). The *Times* also quoted Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) President Neil G. Giuliano, who said, “This kind of anti-gay slur – whether on set or in front of the press – does more than create a hostile environment for his cast mates and crew. It also feeds a climate of hatred and intolerance that contributes to putting our community in harm’s way” (p. B2). Actor and playwright Harvey Fierstein wrote in an op-ed for *The New York Times* that:

What surprises me, I guess, is how choosy the anti-P.C. crowd is about which hate speech it will not tolerate. Sure, there were voices of protest when the TV actor Isaiah Washington called a gay colleague a “faggot.” But corporate American didn’t pull its advertising from “Grey’s Anatomy,” as it did with Mr. Imus, did it?

Washington and Knight’s co-star Katherine Heigl, who is White, became a more prominent figure in the controversy than Dempsey because of her comments in defense of Knight and the reality of her bigger stardom. “I’m going to be really honest right now, [Washington] needs to just not speak in public. Period. I’m sorry, that did not need to be said. I’m not okay with it,” she told a reporter after the Golden Globes (“‘Grey’s Anatomy’ smackdown, round 2: Heigl vs. Washington”). Though it is unclear if she actually defended Knight to the press on more than one occasion, she was scripted as the Knight’s stereotypical best straight girlfriend who was not afraid to stand up to an angry Black man, and her comments were frequently reprinted.

After the Golden Globes, the *Associated Press* reported that Washington was, “in therapy for his use of an anti-gay slur against a castmate” (Elber, 2007). The *AP* also noted, “Whether Washington was receiving outpatient counseling or had entered a facility was not specified....” Conservative pundit Ann Coulter sparked a controversy of

her own in March 2007 when she made a reference to rhetoric of Washington's treatment as "rehab" for homophobia and insinuated that then South Carolina Senator John Edwards was gay. The *Washington Times* reported that, while addressing a question during a presentation at a conservative conference, she responded that she "was going to have a few comments on the other Democratic presidential candidate, John Edwards, but it turns out you have to go into rehab if you use the word 'faggot'" (qtd. in McCain & Morton, 2007; p. A02). The New York *Daily News* reported that acquaintances of Washington thought he had anger problems for years and his 30-day anger management program was the right move. A former co-star was quoted as saying, "I'm just really happy that he's going to stand up and take responsibility and fix this." (qtd. in Rush & Rush Molloy, 2007; p. 18). Washington released his own statement after entering counseling, saying "I appreciate the fact that I have been given this opportunity and I remain committed to transforming my negative actions into positive results, personally and professionally" (qtd. in Elber, 2007). The *AP* also was reported to have met with gay activists from GLAAD and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (Elber, 2007). Journalists and commentators speculated as to the outcome, which was perceived by Harris (2007) and others, including Lisa de Moraes (2007) of *The Washington Post*, as fitting seamlessly into an increasingly standardized celebrity apology-cycle, *a la* Imus, Richards, Gibson, etc. Washington's apologies and attempts to seek forgiveness were deemed either insufficient, fruitless or both, and he was ultimately fired in June 2007.

Though perhaps not obviously so, this crisis represents a productive opportunity to consider about how multiple axes of oppression influence discourse about and experience of White guilt, especially insofar as White guilt may often remain

unarticulated and characterized by discursive silences. I do not imply that White people did feel or should have felt racial guilt during the “Isaiahgate” crisis. Nevertheless, the discursive silence around Washington and Knight’s respective racial identities, as well as attribution of collective blame for “homophobia” when Washington’s race was named, point to group-based power relations that operated implicitly during this moment. Consistently, the racial dynamics of the controversy – which from some perspectives, including my own, was unavoidable – remained unspoken. A dark-skinned, tall, angered/angry Black man was fighting with at least one White man when he referred to one of them, the shorter and less (hetero)sexual one, as a “faggot.” All of this unfolded in the context of *Grey’s Anatomy*, an exemplar of neoliberal multiculturalism in which racial, ethnic, gender and sexual differences abound but are largely ignored (Brennan, 2005). The ideological hegemony of neoliberal multiculturalism was on full display during “Isaiahgate,” as reporters avoided dealing with any dimension of difference, besides the *unavoidable* one: sexuality. But even then, references to Knight’s sexuality were routinely buried in stories or avoided altogether. The raciality of the situation was rhetorically *detached* in exchange for a unidimensional approach to thinking and talking about hate, oppression and inequality. Unlike the recent Gibson, Imus and Richards incidents, not to mention the Duke lacrosse scandal and Hurricane Katrina, a White person was not culpable for this hate speech, making “Isaiahgate” a politically and affectively appealing story for White news media and audiences. Based on the recent barrage of stories about racist White public figures, a potential lede could have read something like: “For the first time in months, a non-White celebrity has become embroiled in a controversy about hate speech.” Most of the time, however, reporters and

their sources refused to address the racial dynamics but covered the story with voracity – despite relatively few actual points at which something verifiable happened. At least one avenue of interpretation could lead to the conclusion that journalists did not have to say it out loud: the differences between Washington and Knight were so stark that their mere juxtaposition conveyed the racial dynamics without needing to be made explicit. The script was so schematic it did not warrant explanation; it could operate silently.

“Isaiahgate” was both always already and never allowed to be about race. In the few instances in which race was articulated, Washington’s Blackness was the only raciality mentioned. “I’m sorry that the overall non-reaction to Washington’s behavior helped to reinforce a perception that some quarters of the African-American community tolerate homophobia, a stereotype that is only going to divide us more unless both groups fight it at every turn,” asserted Mark Harris (2007) in *Entertainment Weekly*. Harris’ comments are notable for their explicit references to stereotypes about Black attitudes toward gay people, but he was not the only reporter to make such connections. In “Diary of an Angry Black Man,” *Newsweek* reporter Allison Samuels (2007) writes about Washington’s public statements after being fired from *Grey’s Anatomy*. “Washington is bitter about the whole situation,” she said, “especially since he did everything the network asked to atone for his mistakes.” Similarly to Imus, Washington’s acts of contrition did not ultimately suffice. From Samuels’ perspective, race does not explain the reaction to Washington’s comments, but it does explain why he said them. Samuels waxed sociologically about his predicament:

Washington’s use of the “F” word seems surprising, given that he portrayed a gay character in Spike Lee’s 1996 “Get On the Bus” – and wrote an essay

condemning homophobia in the black community a few years back. One thing that's also been lost with so much focus on Washington is the sad reality of homophobia in the Black community. From rap music to Eddie Murphy jokes, insensitivity to the homosexual community seems to be a mainstay of African-American culture.

Samuels' observations seem peculiar in light of the tremendous consumption and cooptation of Black culture by White American consumers, not to mention Ann Coulter's simultaneous and related use of the term, which arguably became a much bigger story than Washington's. Why does Washington's use and – albeit bizarre – denial of the use of the term confirm Black people's deep-seated hatred about queer people, who are presumably *distinct* groups in Samuels' framing? Why come to this conclusion when the most outspoken and powerful advocates against gay rights are White men and women, such as Coulter, George W. Bush, Sarah Palin, Mike Huckabee, David Duke, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, etc.? Why, indeed, is Blackness and Black people constructed as a site to deposit the majority of and responsibility for “homophobia”?

By Washington's estimation, the answer is racism. “It was a fight between two men that shouldn't have happened,” Washington told Samuels (2007). “But someone heard the booming voice of a black man and got really scared and that was the beginning of the end for me. I see that now, but I didn't then,” he said (Samuels, 2007; also cited by Fromm, 2007 in *People*). Washington's perspective is as culturally situated as *Entertainment Weekly's* Mark Harris, a White gay man whose social minority group Harris perceived as victimized by Washington's actions. “The problem is a lot bigger than Isaiah Washington,” said Harris (2007), “and the solution doesn't come gift-

wrapped in the words ‘I’m sorry.’” From Washington’s perspective, he was at fault for his saying “faggot”; but in admitting fault, Washington claims he was then made into a victim himself because of racial and gender discrimination toward Black men:

Well, it didn’t help me on the set that I as a black man who wasn’t a mush-mouth Negro walking around with his head in his hands all the time. I didn’t speak like I’d just left the plantation and that can be a problem for people sometime....I had a person in human resources tell me after this thing played out that ‘some people’ were afraid of me around the studio. I asked her why, because I’m a 6-foot-1 black man with dark skin and who doesn’t go around saying ‘Yessah, massa sir’ and ‘No sir, massa’ to everyone? It’s nuts when your presence alone can just scare people, and that made me a prime candidate to take the heat in a dysfunctional family....My mistake was believing I could correct a wrong thing with honesty and sincerity. My mistake was thinking black people get second chances....I was wrong on all fronts. (qtd. in Samuels, 2007)

Samuels and others describe Washington as both externalizing blame for his actions and detaching from the situation – i.e., failing to sufficiently see and own his responsibility. Despite the fact that “faggot” is an infinitely more commonly used and socially accepted term (e.g., I just heard a group of young White men use it outside a dining hall on campus today), Washington’s culpability is framed throughout journalistic discourse on “Isaiahgate” as comparable to if not the same as Gibson’s and Richards’ racist infractions. Leonard Pitts Jr. (2007), a Black columnist, wrote in the *Houston Chronicle* that Washington is exemplary of the practice of finding racism “where it does not exist.” “I mean, is it so hard to believe people feared him because they thought he was a volatile



jerk? Or that a white actor of middling fame who disrupted his workplace would have also been fired?” said Pitts. He sees the incident from a Black standpoint, but one quite different from Washington. “He lost his job for saying an awful thing. I wish he’d stop whining and deal with that. Step one is to realize that black is not an excuse,” Pitts concluded. The conclusion to be derived from Pitts’ argument is that race only matters in issues of racism. But how do we identify and deconstructed to “epidemic racism in this country” to which Pitts refers if claims such as Washington’s are so easily discredited and we do not talk about race unless a shock jock calls a women’s basketball team a bunch of “nappy headed hos”? Figure 5 lays out some of the positions taken with relation to blaming Washington and perceptions of whether or Washington’s social identity group memberships (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, etc.) influenced the reaction to his actions.

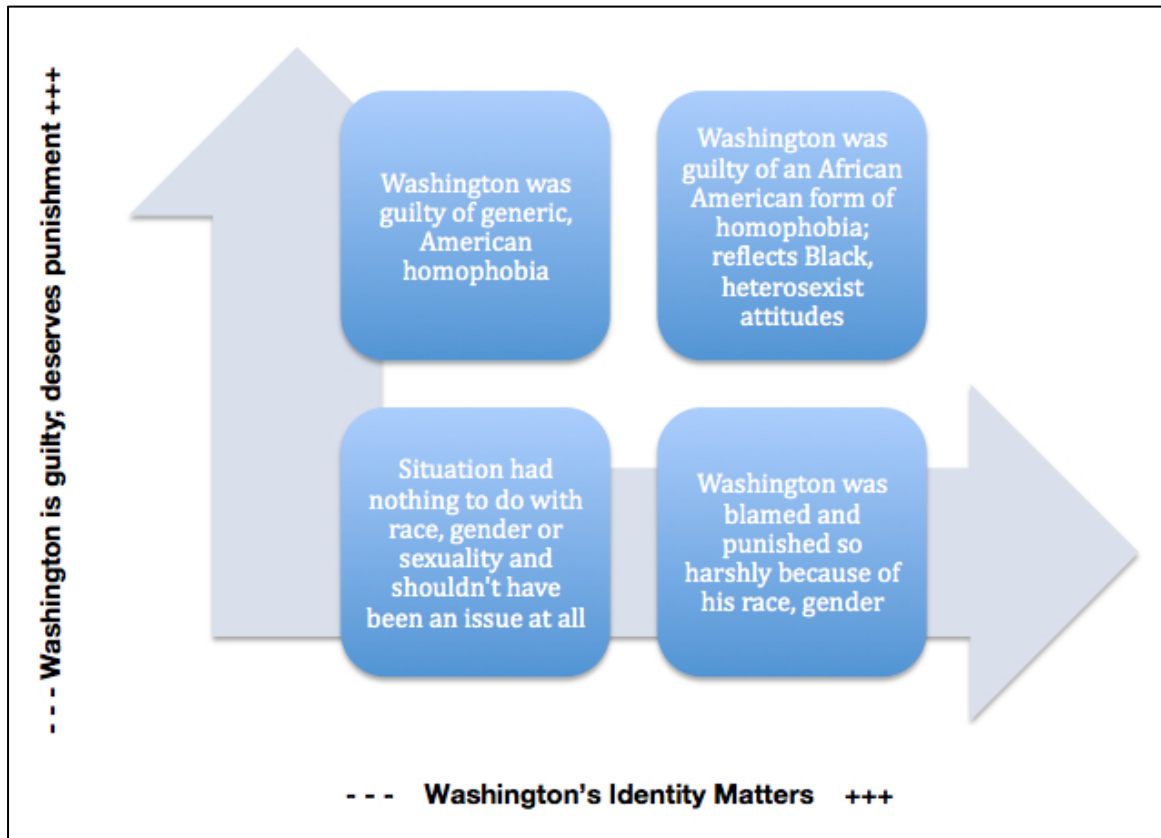


Figure 5: Positional Map: Isaiah Washington and the *Grey's Anatomy* "Isaiahgate" Scandal

My purpose in investigating the discourse of blame and responsibility of this crisis is not to defend Isaiah Washington's actions or to insinuate that he should not have been fired from *Grey's Anatomy*. At least one time and likely twice, he used a hateful word – his inability to initially recognize the severity of his actions *and* the significance of his role as a public figure both reflects and reifies the notion the such language is merely in poor taste, but ultimately tolerable. However, Washington's actions are historically situated within a cultural moment in which multiple White celebrities and public figures became embroiled in scandals related to problematic behavior. Though each of these controversies mentioned in this chapter are different, it would be a mistake to insist that discourse about the Imus and Washington scandals did not interface with

one another (indeed, they did quite often), or that ideologies of race, gender and sexuality do not together influence the constitution of these crises in the journalistic sphere, as if somehow Imus, Richards and Gibson's comments and the Duke lacross scandal were *only* about race; "Nipplegate" was *only* about gender; Katrina was *only* about class; and Isaiahgate was *only* about sexuality. Just as these controversies are discursively organized and experienced via multiple dimensions of difference and inequality, those implicated in these crises are rarely limited to singular social actors. To the contrary, each of these events sparks talk about and feelings of collective responsibility, particularly collective anxiety and guilt. Though White guilt is the topic of this conversation, we see different kinds of collective guilt – potential or actualized – circulating through, around and within these discourses. In "Isaiahgate," White people may have experienced temporary relief from the consistent pangs of White guilt and taken distinct affective pleasure and/or release in the culpability of a Black man's use of an identity-based slur. Did Washington's admission of guilt and responsibility materialize a new form of collective guilt – straight guilt – through which to defer so-called serious conversations about identity and inequality? Might Washington's Blackness served to alleviate heterosexual White people's *straight* guilt, as well, while *all* Black people were assigned differential and disproportionate responsibility for heterosexism? How might some Black people's negative attitudes toward queer people alleviate some White people's racial guilt through the positioning of all Black people as generally *more* "homophobic" than Whites? How are gay White men's lived experiences and politics uniquely positioned in these discourses? Mark Harris was an out-spoken critic of Washington who expressed righteous indignation at his behavior. In the anti-intersectional context of neoliberalism,

is White gay men's raciality ignored and their collective responsibility for racism alleviated somehow because of persistent homonegativity and heteronormativity? Discourse analysis does not answer these questions, but opens up these questions for further empirical investigation. We see in "Isaiahgate," as well as coverage of Cooper's reporting during Katrina and the Don Imus scandal, that multiple dimensions of difference co-constitute these crises – whether or not anyone is saying it.

### **Conclusion: Crisis Averted**

Arriving at a more empirically grounded and feminist-objective understanding of White guilt means situating the construct within concurrent and contradictory, identity-based, affective processes (Haraway, 1988). The actions of Cooper, Imus and Washington motivated tremendous discursive activity, which offered insight into contemporary epistemologies of race, multiple social identities and inequalities. By foregrounding neoliberalism and multicultural hegemony in the analysis of these discourses, we can identify and articulate nuanced and typically invisible cultural processes, such as the ways in which race, sexuality and gender frame social interactions even as they remain unspoken. These nuanced, qualitative data help to contextualize and historicize the emerging cultural psychology of White guilt in this dissertation.

During each of these crises, various social actors – celebrities, public figures, journalists, commentators, pundits, business executives, audiences – were working through negative, self-conscious affect by way of producing and redistributing responsibility, blame, punishment, guilt and shame. These processes are not mutually exclusive, but they also occurred in different moments and ways. Anderson Cooper became a proxy for White television viewers to feel their way through a painful national

tragedy without interrogating the role of Whiteness in producing Black victims of Katrina. Journalists differentially celebrated Cooper's empathy or critiqued his emotionality, but most at least articulated Cooper's unique style of affect – largely without explicating how his sexuality shapes the performance and perception of his affectivity. Katrina was a “national shame,” but Cooper's performance of guilt and anxiety helped position him as a righteous hero in discourse about journalists' coverage of the storm and its aftermath. Though Isaiah Washington was ultimately fired from *Grey's Anatomy*, there is little discursive evidence that “Isaiahgate” was about his public shaming. This may be attributable to his ultimate refusal to embrace guilt or culpability after losing his job. Discourse about Washington remained focused on what he did or did not do, and how his actions might be reflective of pathological attitudes of an imagined collectivity of African Americans. On the other hand, Don Imus was constructed as guilty and shameful throughout the “I-Mess,” but especially once he was fired. Journalistic rendering of Imus illustrates the centrality of identity in the rhetorical construction of guilt and shame: his culpability was dependent not only on his actions, but about what his personality and identity (e.g., race and gender) came to signify. Moreover, a consistent discursive trend in each of these crises is the complexity and interconnectivity of guilt, shame and responsibility.

If conclusions can be drawn from this diversity of data, it is that the epistemology of neoliberalism – where agency is the dominant factor in social relationship and the significance of identity is minimized – is the framework through which guilt and shame are experienced, deferred and negated. In each of the crisis moments explored in this chapter, Habermas' (1975) concept of legitimation crisis is approached, but multicultural

hegemony is ultimately sustained. The inherent instability of neoliberalism, whereby the logics of neoliberal policy and ideology must constantly adapt to incorporate contradictions and inconsistencies, is trumped by the *stability* and *power* of neoliberalism. Don Imus's hate speech could have changed the position of racist, sexist and homonegative shock jocks in contemporary American entertainment media, but Imus is already back on the air. Washington, meanwhile, has largely disappeared from popular culture. Cooper's emotional coverage could have motivated Americans to seriously consider and change the ways in which race and class together position so many people in vulnerable geographies and cultural spaces; instead, New Orleans remains in disrepair and Cooper is famous. Washington's "faggot" comments could have motivated leaders in the entertainment media to begin a conversation about how *all* Americans continue to harbor or tolerate negative attitudes toward queer people; instead, Washington, specifically, and Black people, generally, took the blame. Nonetheless, these crises – and their subsequent re-stabilizations of neoliberal hegemony – are illustrative of situations in which contemporary White people in the United States may be forced to face the significance of race and other dimensions of identity as structuring factors of everyday life, as well as their own roles in these processes. In other words, these are the situations on which potential experiences of White guilt are dependent. From here, we can begin to investigate the affective and cognitive strategies that everyday White people use to negotiate these potentially guilt- and shame-provoking situations in everyday life.

### Factor: *Negation*

The words “externalize” and “detachment” sounds so clinical, but they are fairly accurate descriptors of what happens when you try to blame someone else for something *you* did or pretend that you’re not implicated in a conflict. I’ve done both of them before, and you have, too. To me, externalization and detachment are ultimately just as painful as shame or guilt, and that’s probably because I can’t remember ever doing this when it wasn’t actually my fault. In my experience, externalization and detachment wind up feeling as gross and horrible as the pangs of shame, because they’re fairly ineffective as avoidance strategies. I am motivated by my values and beliefs to try – every day – to be the best kind of *White* person I can be: antiracist; conscious of identity and inequality; perceptive of mine and others’ problematic behaviors. My strongest memories of externalization and detachment –what together I refer to as “negation” – are those moments when I failed miserably at embodying any of these qualities.

This is ugly. Are you ready?

On Monday, July 25, 2005, the *Washington Post* published an op-ed titled “Why Our Black Families Are Failing,” by William Raspberry, a socially conservative African American columnist. The provocative title grabbed my attention on the home page of the *Post*’s Web site while I was taking a break from work. That summer I was employed full time as a research assistant and Webmaster at the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity, a think-tank on the University of Maryland’s campus devoted to the study of “intersecting inequalities.” That summer I was building the “Intersectional Research Database,” the world’s first archive of annotated intersectional research. I had just successfully completed my first year of grad school. These details are all important,

because it will help you understand the profound arrogance with which I approached this situation.

Raspberry's column made me furious, and I stand by my initial reaction to his writing – even today. At this point in his career, Raspberry's ideas about the sociology of race and inequality were outdated and offensive. In his column, he resurrected the Moynihan report, a political-rhetorical strategy that was picking up steam at the time as Bill Cosby traveled the country lecturing to mixed audiences about how Black people needed to get their shit together and stop whining about racism. Grab onto your bootstraps, folks.

Come on, people.

I had just encountered Daniel Patrick Moynihan's influential report on "The Negro Family" that year in my graduate coursework in American Studies, but it does not take graduate education to glean the racism, misogyny, heterosexism and classism that oozes from the 'well-intentioned' document, which was initially commissioned by President John F. Kennedy, Jr. Just like Raspberry's conclusion that Black families are failing *primarily* because of single-parent households, Moynihan concluded that Black women were the problem with Black America. Not criminalization. Not Vietnam. Not racism. Black women's strength through profound adversity was once again being attacked and blamed for the macro-sociological consequences of structural racism. Patricia Hill Collins calls this the ideological dimension of African American women's oppression: persistent racist and sexist imagery and logic that attributes negative characteristics to a universal Black woman.



Therapists and physicians also have a phrase for this: treating the symptom, not the problem.

As a budding Black feminist who was working at an organization founded by a leading Black feminist, I felt particularly motivated to do something about what I read as Raspberry's hateful diatribe. I asked my boss, a White woman, for a few hours to write a response. I carefully crafted a letter to the editor in which I expressed my displeasure with Raspberry's writing and the decision of the *Post's* editorial staff to publish this antiquated argument, which only fuels the racist logic of White neoliberals and (hetero)sexists everywhere. In my letter, I made sure to note that I worked at the Consortium, was a Ph.D. student and an alumnus of the prestigious Philip Merrill College of Journalism.

Empowered, or at least self-congratulating, I drove home from work to my new apartment in Columbia Heights, the predominantly Black but rapidly gentrifying neighborhood to which I had moved the month prior. As I drove onto the 1300 block of Fairmont Street, I saw that there were no parking spots available and proceeded to drive east onto following block, which was a more attractive and middle-class block than my own. I must have come home later than normal, because I remember distinctly that it was dark outside, even though it was the middle of the summer, and there were lots of cars looking for very few remaining spots. I saw a person pulling out of a spot on the opposite, westbound side of the street.

Here's where I made my mistake. It is not fair or civil or neighborly to do this, but I wanted the parking spot, so I turned my blinker on to signal that it was mine – even though I was facing the wrong direction. I planning on doing a three-point turn into the

empty spot once the person who was leaving had pulled away. While I was waiting to take the spot, a car came up the street in the opposite direction. The man who was driving this oncoming car drove past my car and the coveted spot. He then proceeded to turn his blinkers on and got into position to parallel park his car in the spot I had been waiting for. This really pissed me off, because – from my perspective – he had obviously seen me waiting for the spot.

As soon as the car finally pulled out of the spot, I floored the nose of my car into the spot. Just as I did this, the man who was in position to parallel park started backing into the spot, effectively blocking me in. So now I'm perpendicular to the flow of traffic and stuck. I cannot move my car. Other cars begin to back up on both sides of me, because there is no way to get around me. Meanwhile, this old man won't move. His trunk is less than 10 feet from my driver's side door and he's just sitting there. I begin to honk for him to move. At this point, I realize that I've lost the fight and just want to get out of this situation, but I suppose that my honking was not an effective way to communicate my capitulation. After what feels like a few minutes of this stalemate, the man emerges from his car.

I'd like to think that I waited patiently for him to come to my car. I'd like to think that I was prepared to have a polite conversation and to apologize for what I'd done. In reality, I think that I lowered my window and started yelling at him. He was an older Black man, and his companion in the passenger seat was an older Black woman.

He came up to my car and interrupted my belligerence. I stopped talking. There is something about an older, distinguished-looking Black man that just has a way of shutting you the hell up.

“Son, let me explain something to you.”

Don’t call me “son,” you asshole.

“This is my spot. I drove around the block to get it. That woman waited for me to drive around the block, and that’s why it took so long for her to leave. She was politely waiting for me.”

Sorry, but this isn’t a deli. They don’t give out tickets corresponding to the order in which we park.

“Now you created this mess, and here’s what’s going to happen. I’m going to pull up a few feet so that you can get yourself out of here. Go find your own spot now.”

Do not tell me what to do. Who the hell do you think you are? Are you the fucking goddamn mayor of Columbia fucking Heights?

I speak up and protest, but before I can even utter a coherent protest, he talks over me.

“Welcome to the neighborhood.”

I rolled my window up and started screaming. I was rageful. I watched him calmly walk back to his car and I wanted to throw something at him. I literally lost control of my emotions. I almost cried I was so angry.

I found a parking spot around the block and stormed into my apartment to relay this dramatic encounter to my roommate, a White woman my age. I told Alexis some edited version of the story that likely made me sound like the victim of this old-timer’s patronizing and senile logic.

Then I wrote a letter, which read something like this:

“To the Man Who Ruined My Night and Took My Parking Spot: You don’t know me. You don’t know my name and you don’t know anything about me. You have no idea how if I’ve lived here for 5 months, 5 years or my entire life. You are a disgrace to yourself and to Columbia Heights. I hope we never see each other again. Sincerely, Your Neighbor.”

I walked down the block and looked for his car. I’m not even sure that I found his car exactly, but I looked for an old Buick or Oldsmobile, which I thought was his. It didn’t even matter, probably. I just had to get rid of my rage – I had to deposit it somewhere. I put the letter under his windshield wiper and walked home feeling vindicated.

I never told anyone else about this. Even though it was months before I stopped being angry and admitted how truly wrong I was, I knew right away that I needed to keep this one to myself. I felt hung-over the next day, as if I had gone on a bender and drunkenly embarrassed myself in public. The contrast between my self-righteous antiracism earlier in the day and the reality of my horribly inappropriate behavior was sickening. It wasn’t a racist act to take that parking spot, but what he said to me...he made crystal clear the dynamic that I wanted to ignore. It was all his fault, I thought. He was an arrogant asshole and I had done nothing besides try to get myself a parking spot. First come, first served. Right?

My logic was a racist house of cards that soon collapsed, and I was no longer able to blame him for my behavior. I gave into the guilt. It’s not the kind we normally think of, but it was as White as guilt comes.

## CHAPTER 3:

### The Differences Between and Within Guilt and Shame: Quantitative Perspectives

#### **Introduction**

The previous two chapters have critiqued traditional academic approaches to the study of White guilt and analyzed recent journalistic discourse about race, responsibility and social identities in the U.S. public sphere. Chapter 3 turns toward the project of refining the construct and assessment of White guilt<sup>11</sup> in the field of psychology and specifically the domain of psychometric survey research. This chapter represents the first stage in the development of a new survey-based instrument to measure individual respondents' proneness to the construct "White guilt," and to distinguish between White guilt and White shame. White guilt is defined as negative, self-directed feelings about one's White racial identity (Swim & Miller, 1999). White guilt is typically motivated by recognition of unearned and unfair racial privilege, the acknowledgement of personal racist attitudes or behavior, and/or feelings of responsibility for others' racist attitudes or behavior (Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003; Tatum, 1992; Steele, 1990). White guilt is somewhat ambivalent: it appears to predict certain antiracist attitudes, such as support for compensatory affirmative action programs, but it is also self-focused and demonstrates limited political utility (Swim & Miller; Iyer et al.). When learning about historical and contemporary racism in the classroom, White students may sometimes become mired in feelings of racial guilt to the extent that more extreme forms of negative, self-conscious

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<sup>11</sup> In this chapter, "White Guilt" and "White Shame" are capitalized when referring to specific measurement instruments or factors, such as Swim and Miller's (1999) White Guilt scale. When referring generally to emotions or constructs, only "White" will be capitalized. The terms "White" and "Whiteness" are only written in lowercase when quoting authors who choose not to capitalize these terms.

affect manifest, including depression and profound anxiety (Romney, Tatum & Jones, 1992; Tatum, 1994). Some scholars, such as Spanierman and Heppner (2004) have researched the affective dimensions of racism and asked whether or not the presence of White shame – a more severe form of White guilt directed at the whole racial self – might influence some White people’s racial attitudes and identity-contingent emotions.

A clearer understanding of the construct White guilt necessitates a) refining the research instruments with which we assess the construct, b) parsing it out from White shame, and c) ultimately exploring the relationships between White guilt, White shame and other dimensions of social identity, including gender and sexuality. This project extends and expands prior approaches to the empirical study of White guilt in at least three primary ways. First, as opposed to extant psychological research on White guilt that assumes that race is the only dimension of social identity pertinent to the study of racial affect, this project centralizes the intersectional complexity of experience and draws upon queer theories and psychological research on guilt and shame that have shown meaningful differences in affective experience along the intersecting axes of gender, sexuality and race (Cole, 2009; McCall, 2005; Stein & Plummer, 1996). Second, this study seeks to integrate the literature on “generic” guilt and shame (i.e., self-conscious and moral emotions research) with the literature on White guilt, which has conflated guilt and shame. Exemplified by the scholarship of June Price Tangney, psychological research on self-conscious, negative affect has conceptualized guilt and shame as distinct but related emotions with unique behavioral and emotional antecedents as well as consequences (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, Stuewig & Mashek, 2007). These differences have considerable import to thinking through how White guilt develops and

influences White people's experiences. Third, unlike much psychological research on race and affect that fails to adequately address how cultural conditions and popular discourse influence the phenomenology of affect, this project aims to ground the psychology of White guilt and shame in a situated socio-historical moment: namely, the United States in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century in the era of neoliberal multiculturalism (Gergen, 1973; Kitayama & Markus, 1994; Melamed, 2006; Duggan, 2003; Ahmed, 2004b).

## **Review of Literature**

### **Race, Gender and Sexuality: The Intersectionality of White Affect**

As the title of the chapter indicates, our attention here is focused on the differences between *and* within White guilt and White shame, which points to an underlying assumption that racialized, negative, self-conscious affect is not experienced in the same ways by all White people in the U.S. today.<sup>12</sup> However, meaningful similarities in experience do likely exist. As Frankenberg (1993) famously asserted in her landmark text of critical Whiteness studies:

First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (p. 1)

Whether explicitly recognized or not by White people living in the U.S. today, White raciality is a structuring structure of experience for *all* people living in this contemporary racial formation (Omi & Winant, 1994). For the people who are generally able to claim

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<sup>12</sup> Following the traditional rhetorical practices of disciplinary psychology, I will use the plural first person throughout this chapter. Herein, "we" and "our" refer specifically to the following persons: Dr. Sheri L. Parks, dissertation director; Dr. Ruth E. Fassinger, the primary advisor of this quantitative study; and myself, the student/degree candidate.

membership in the large and dynamic social group of White identity, Whiteness influences, as Frankenberg (1993), Helms (1990) and many others have shown, how one sees the world. Nonetheless, not all White people share the “same” perspective, and there is tremendous diversity of White experiences, even as White people’s lives are linked through unfair and unearned privilege in U.S. racial hierarchy. “While whiteness is understood as a socially constructed category, the internal variation within this category is often leveled,” noted Gallagher (2008) in his discussion of the epistemological and methodological issues that arise when studying contemporary White racial attitudes (p. 173). “Without acknowledging how culture, politics, geography, ideology, and economics come together to produce numerous versions of whiteness, researchers will continue to frame and define whiteness monolithically,” according to Gallagher (p. 173). This diversity is meaningful in multiple ways, but we are most concerned here with how differences in identity and social location influence White affect, i.e., racialized emotions and feelings.

Sara Ahmed (2004b) argues that emotions are discursive formations created through political interactions between people and things. Affect, according to Ahmed, is literally how we come to know others and ourselves. In the contemporary United States, emotions themselves are gendered as feminine; *feeling* is associated with femininity, vulnerability and sometimes weakness, and feeling is constructed in discourse as opposed to rationality, logic and reason (Ahmed, 2004a). Psychologists have successfully documented differences between men and women’s experiences of affect, including guilt and shame. In the United States, sexism and misogyny create cultural environments in which women may be more likely to be blamed for social phenomenon or held



accountable for things that are endemic to social systems, as opposed to individual choices and behaviors. Similarly, women may be prone to disproportionate amounts of stress and anxiety related to culturally situated discourses (both symbolic and material, or “material-semiotic”) of fear, violence, unequal distribution of labor and family work, as well as other unequal gendered power relations (Haraway, 1997). Simultaneously, women may be encouraged to express themselves in certain social settings and to be more “in touch” with their feelings than men. Men, on the other hand, receive covert and overt social messages that consistently silence their emotionality; however, men are not *inherently* less likely to feel. Nonetheless, depending on how a man performs his gender and conceptualizes his gender role, he may be less prepared to deal with these feelings in productive and self-supportive ways. Accordingly, it is reductive and inaccurate to think simply that women feel more (everything) than men, or that men experience feelings of shame more than guilt. In certain circumstances, and in the context of particular formulations of affect, women and men may feel differently, and their emotional experiences of guilt and shame may differ in general, observable ways (Roberts & Goldberg, 2007; Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005; Sedgwick, 2003; Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

Sexuality and sexual identity further complicate a simplistic rendering of gender differences in the phenomenology of guilt and shame. As a founding mother of queer theory, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990) prominently argued that, a) many (most) major Western modes of knowing since the 19<sup>th</sup> century are structured by the hetero-homo binary, which was explicated and historicized by Foucault (1978), and furthermore b) any analysis of Western thought and culture that neglects to consider the oppressive centrality

of the hetero-homo binary is “not merely incomplete, but damaged” (p. 1). Gender and sexuality are not the same, but the experience of gender identity and oppression is closely linked to the expression and practice of sexuality and sexual identity, especially in the contemporary context of heteronormative and sexually oppressive/repressive social structures that position heterosexuality as the unmarked and privileged norm (Stein & Plummer, 1996; Butler, 1993; Sullivan, 2003).

Much work in psychology has yet to be done, as Fausto-Sterling (2000) expertly highlighted, to reconcile the connectedness of sexuality and gender and to reveal how heterosexuality structures the assumptions that undergird much psychological research into sexuality, especially sexual difference. Mallinckrodt (2009) reported that only 18 empirical studies of lesbian, gay or bisexual identified persons were published in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* prior to 2009. Some psychologists, however, have begun to foreground concerns about sexuality in their research and praxis that resist the legacy of social scientific and clinical “treatment” of non-normative sexuality that approached anything but heterosexuality through the lens of deviance and which posited queer identities and practices as inherently pathological (Stein & Plummer, 1996; Foucault, 1970, 1978). Perez, DeBord and Bieschke (2000) published the first handbook of counseling and psychotherapy with lesbian, gay and bisexual clients at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century and offered a research-based guide to sexuality-positive and respectful treatment of gay, lesbian and bisexual identified clients, as well as those who may live in various forms of “the closet.” Perez et al. illuminate the implications of hostile environments and heteronormative social institutions (e.g., workplaces, governments, families, churches and religious institutions, housing, etc.) upon the identities and experiences of lesbian,

gay and bisexual people (in the U.S.). Fassinger and Arseneau's (2007) sexual identity enactment model anchors the second edition of the handbook, which notably incorporates transgender clients and issues. Fassinger and Arseneau argue for a re-thinking of sexual identity development and categories to account for the inconsistencies and variations in diverse LGBT peoples' lives which contradict the static, linear and mechanistic models of social identity development commonly employed by social scientists, especially psychologists, and which negate the co-constitution of gender and sexuality.

A recent special issue of the flagship *Journal of Counseling Psychology* featured a range of innovative theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of sexuality that addressed issues ranging from sampling difficulty and multiple social identities/categorization; much of this work implicates the study of identity and affect. For example, Moradi, Mohr, Worthington and Fassinger (2009) outline the conceptual issues facing psychologists before empirical research begins; namely, what do we mean by "sexuality," and how is this term related to and distinct from "sexuality identity" (i.e., labeling of the self), "sexual orientation" (i.e., manifestations of sexuality as related to other persons on the basis of their gender(s)) and "sexual orientation identity," (i.e., the conscious claiming of predispositions toward particular sexual feelings and practices) (p. 6). Herek, Gillis and Cohen (2009) used social psychology to explore how sexual minority adults deal with sexual stigma, including overt prejudice (e.g., hate crimes) and institutional forms of discrimination (i.e., heterosexism). Their framework incorporates the effects of self-stigma, which refers to the internalization of negative attitudes about sexuality that are directed at the self. Their definition of self-stigma is congruent with our definition of shame: negative attitudes toward the self. According to Herek et al., queer

people may be susceptible to painful and maladaptive affective experiences, including persistent shame about one's sexuality. Moradi, van den Berg and Epting (2009) explore how internalized anti-lesbian and gay prejudice manifests in feelings of "guilt" about the self, which we would read here as shame, as well. Internalized negative attitudes about sexuality, which encompass the terms homonegativity, heterosexism and homophobia, are "...used to reflect that growing up in families, institutions, and societies that denigrate lesbian and gay identities may drive some lesbian and gay individuals to internalize such prejudice and direct it toward the self" (Moradi et al., 2009; p. 119). Indeed, it is likely that marginalized sexual identity has profound influences on a wide range of affect and identity formation processes. Though queer and otherwise non-normative sexuality may not necessarily intersect in meaningful ways with the experience of White guilt and White shame, it is essential to conduct research that enables these interactions to be seen and heard – to open possibilities for interactions and co-constitution of sexuality, gender, race and affect. This chapter and the following one, which involves qualitative interviews, are designed to allow these experiences to emerge.

"Intersectional" perspectives not only highlight the differences in experiences, but primarily explore how identity categories actually constitute the social, historical and cultural relations of power that create identities and inequalities (Dill, Nettles & Weber, 2001; Dill, McLaughlin & Nieves, 2007). In this sense, intersectionality is not merely about the study of within- or between-group *differences* (e.g., Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; Szymanski & Gupta, 2009), but how unique cultural conditions create unique experiences that may challenge normative – academic, middle class, White, male, heterosexual, American, Christian, able-bodied, etc. – ways of knowing and doing

(Collins, 1998). Elizabeth Cole (2009) encourages psychologists to conduct intersectional research using the following interpretive strategy, which involves asking three methodologically oriented questions: 1) “Who is included within this category?” 2) “What role does inequality play?” and 3) “Where are there similarities?” Note that Cole’s third question “looks for commonalities cutting across categories often viewed as deeply different,” which purposefully disrupts those approaches, such as the gender-differences paradigm/hypothesis, which are preoccupied with *perceived* group-based differences that are rooted in the assumption that binary categories *determine* experience (p 171; see also: Cole & Stewart, 2001). In order to hear and see these similarities, as well as diversities, we as social researchers must let our respondents speak freely, even in the somewhat constrictive realm of quantitative survey research. Using instruments such as the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) alongside traditional demographic items (e.g., “What is your gender?”) is a method designed to give voice to respondents’ own thinking and feeling about their social and personal identities. The identity subscale of the CSES enables respondents to indicate how positively they feel about certain aspects of their identity, such as gender, sexuality and race, and how salient they believe these social identity group memberships are to how they live and view themselves, society and others. Though these self-report data about dominant group identities (e.g., heterosexuality, maleness and Whiteness) may not *necessarily* reflect more reliable or valid assessments than those conducted using implicit association tests (Knowles & Peng, 2005), in-depth interviews (Frankenberg, 1993) or sociological analyses (Perry, 2002), these methods do reflect a commitment to feminist, anti-racist and social justice-committed research and to constructing partial and situated accounts of

experience that (more) accurately reflect diverse people's lived experiences (Haraway, 1988).

### **(White) Guilt Does Not Equal (White) Shame**

One of the most problematic elements of prior psychological investigations of White guilt is rooted in the failure of these researchers to more seriously consider extant literature on “generic” guilt and shame and, accordingly, to adequately theorize White guilt as a construct that is measurable (i.e., quantifiable) using psychometric methods. This insufficient theorization has resulted in both conceptual and methodological problems; this project attempts to serve as a corrective to these interconnected issues.

First, as I stressed in Chapter 1, guilt and shame are *not* interchangeable terms, concepts or emotions; nor are they expressed or experienced in the same ways. Empirical research by Tangney (2002, 1996) and others (see Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005) have elucidated the ontological distinctions between these two forms of affect and their consequences for psychology. Tangney, Stuewig and Mashek (2007) explained that psychologists have used several conceptual definitions to taxonomize shame and guilt, which include distinctions of public (shame) versus private (guilt) and extreme (shame) versus mild (guilt) discomfort. They assert that the most empirically grounded distinction between the constructs is based on severity and target of the emotion. Guilt is operationalized as negative, unpleasant feelings about one's actions, behavior or attitudes. People do not have to actually, personally engage in negative behavior in order to feel guilty; mere association with a group that is viewed negatively in the past or present can trigger feelings of guilt (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears & Manstead, 1998). Though Tangney and Dearing (2002) insist upon guilt's self-focus or self-consciousness,

some amount of guilt is likely a positive element of the self and productive social behavior. These positive or adaptive characteristics are what motivate psychologists to classify guilt as a “moral emotion” (Tangney, Stuewig & Mashek). For example, Benetti-McQuoid and Bursik emphasize that “Many researchers espouse the adaptive nature of guilt,” which may aid psychosocial development (p. 134). Notably, guilt is not characterized by negative feelings about the global *self*. Rather, when feeling guilty, the negative evaluation is aimed at behaviors, i.e., what one has *done*. Conversely, shame is operationalized as a more unpleasant and painful emotion that targets the entire self.

When contrasting guilt and shame, these primary differences in degree and target can be anecdotally characterized as: “I feel bad about what I did,” versus “I hate myself.” Shame does not have adaptive properties, and tends to coincide with other maladaptive feelings and behaviors, including depression, anxiety, anger and frustration (Tangney & Dearing; Tangney et al., 1996). Tangney & Dearing argue that shame is closely associated with cognitive-affective strategies to avoid or defer shameful feelings, which they group into two categories: *detachment* and *externalization of blame*. Though an individual who is feeling guilty or the threat of guilt may engage in these strategies, those feeling shame or the threat of shame may more commonly use detachment or externalization to alleviate or cover-up the painful feelings that are endemic to shame. Detachment is characterized by attempts to avoid whatever issue is provoking guilt and/or shame and cognitively removing one’s self from the controversy. A person who is detaching from a guilt- or shame-provoking situation might say: “I had nothing to do with this. Why are you looking at me?” In this conceptualization, total detachment is essentially impossible, because motivation to detach necessitates a sense of implication in the controversy. In

other words, one would not feel the need to detach if one was not feeling the threat of culpability. Similarly, externalization is operationalized as cognitive-affective strategies that avoid guilt and shame and remove the self by putting blame on someone else: “It was his fault; not mine.” Though neither is about accepting guilt or shame, both are affective experiences and do not necessarily signal and absence of feeling.

These theoretical and definitional distinctions have meaningful implications for the measurement or assessment of guilt, especially when attempting to quantify this emotion and distinguish it from other feelings and attitudes in the constellation of self-conscious affect. Accordingly, Tangney and Dearing (2002) developed the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) to measure guilt- and shame-proneness, as well as the constructs of externalization and detachment.<sup>13</sup> Through three major revisions, Tangney and Dearing arrived at the TOSCA-3, which is a scenario-based measure that presents respondents with brief vignettes designed to provoke hypothetical feelings of guilt and/or shame. The eight scenarios in the standard short-form of the TOSCA-3 are each accompanied by four items, each of which constitutes a potential response to the hypothetical situation. Respondents are asked to indicate how likely they would be to respond in each of the four ways, which reflect shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, externalization and detachment, respectively. This construction is quite purposeful, as Tangney and Dearing insist that guilt and shame can be experienced simultaneously and

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<sup>13</sup> The long form of the TOSCA-3 also includes items to tap Alpha and Beta Pride, which are essentially forms of arrogance that may resist guilt and shame. In the realm of racialized affect, the analogs of these feelings are overt racism and White supremacy. Because an abundance of instruments already exist to measure racism, including Saucier & Miller’s (2002) Racial Argument Scale used in this study, the pride constructs and subscales are excluded from this present conversation and research. Furthermore, Tangney & Dearing (2002) report suboptimal estimates of internal consistency for both of these subscales (Cronbach’s alpha = <.50).



that significant correlations between likely responses may be indicative of guilt and shame, whereas exclusive rankings of items might mask such affectivity. Furthermore, Tangney and Dearing arrived at the scenario-based format of the instrument because of perceived weaknesses in extant guilt and shame measures that include the words “guilt” and “shame” in individual items, which necessitates respondents’ willingness to endorse feeling these particular emotions. Shame and guilt can be experienced in different contexts (e.g., both shame and guilt are variably “public” and “private”) and both may be intimidating to respondents in the self-report process (Tangney, Stuewig & Mashek, 2007). Furthermore, the validity of these instruments is dependent upon shared understanding of the constructs between the researcher and respondents. In other words, a person responding to a survey item that uses the terms “guilt” or “shame” should share a common definition of the term with the psychologist who administers the survey, as well as all other respondents taking the survey. Benetti-McQuoid and Bursik (2005) directed their respondents with definitions of both “guilt” and “shame” prior to administering the survey, but survey methodologists argue that this is a psychometric minefield and may produce artificial reliability (DeVellis, 2003; Fowler, 1995).

In light of these myriad psychometric concerns, the prevalence of the term “guilt” in survey components of White guilt research, as well as the absence of any distinction between guilt and shame prior to survey administration, is troubling. Swim and Miller’s (1999) five-item White guilt scale, the proverbial ‘gold standard’ in psychological White guilt research, is limited in at least two respects. First, the scale uses the term “guilt,” and its reliability and construct validity pivot upon a shared cultural understanding of the concept. Second, the instrument severely limits the universe of possible responses and

reduces White guilt to a generic racial attitudinal feeling, as opposed to a range of practices that may be differentially triggered by certain scenarios or actual social controversies. Though the “face” validity of Swim and Miller’s items may be strong, I have asserted that neoliberal multiculturalism complicates racial hierarchy and identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to the extent that explicit endorsement of “feeling guilty” about Whiteness is unlikely as a general social milieu. Not surprisingly, in the absence of priming for racial anxiety, observed levels of White guilt using Swim and Miller’s five-item scale tend to be low, i.e., less than 2.5 on a 5-point Likert scale (Swim & Miller; Iyer et al., 2003).

By focusing exclusively on White *guilt*, psychologists who use psychometric methods to study racial affect have foreclosed on the potentiality of White shame by artificially and arbitrarily limiting participants’ responses to feelings of White guilt (e.g., Swim & Miller, 1999). In other cases, items that may tap White shame have been included in measures of White guilt – a strategy that may unintentionally conflate the emotions. For example, Spanierman and Heppner’s (2004; see also Poteat & Spanierman, 2008) Psychosocial Costs of Racism to White (PCRW) scale is psychometrically sophisticated in its multidimensionality and includes a White Guilt subscale in addition to scales of White Fear of Others and White Empathic Reactions toward Racism (p. 254). Nonetheless, the White Guilt subscale includes the following item: “I never feel ashamed about being White.” The White Guilt subscale demonstrated sufficient internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .73) in its initial validation, but we assert that the theoretical problems with using the term “ashamed” in the context of measuring White Guilt outweigh the psychometric adequacy of the subscale. White Guilt was not the primary

focus of inquiry for Spanierman and Heppner's PCRW validation study, but future psychometric attempts to measure and analyze White Guilt should take into account the complexity of differences between guilt and shame and the well-documented challenges of assessing these self-conscious emotions using self-report measures. In fact, Swim and Miller (1999) and Spanierman and Heppner (2004) both recognize inconsistencies in survey response data and counter-intuitive patterns which may indicate the presence of White shame and its "invisible" influence on White experience. Spanierman and Heppner note:

White individuals who experience high levels of guilt and shame may be too overwhelmed to empathize with people of other races. Similarly, sometimes Whites become "stuck" in guilt and shame (e.g., self-pity, self-absorption, and so forth), which consequently may inhibit them from increasing their racial awareness beyond their current levels and further prevent them from taking action to challenge racism. (p. 260)

Swim and Miller offer this conjecture:

The tendency to seek corrective action for guilt feelings is consistent with our findings that stronger feelings of White guilt are related to more support for affirmative action programs. It may be that White shame rather than White guilt would lead to lack of support for affirmative action or to the resistance to learn more about race and racism that Tatum (1994) described. (p. 512)

In order to adequately address these astute observations and to establish the effects of White shame (if any) we must refine the instruments that we use to explore the psychology of White guilt.

To summarize, there are at least three major advantages to using a scenario-based measure that does not use the terms “guilt” or “shame” and which measures *prone*ness instead of state (i.e., at the time of test administration) levels of White guilt. First, by constructing items that describe a range of situations that may provoke guilt or shame about Whiteness, the researcher avoids the pitfall of abstraction. Abstract ideas about general or macro-level ‘sociological’ guilt may not help respondents reflect their genuine feelings when dealing with racial hierarchy, racism, White privilege, etc. Furthermore, “colorblind” and post-racial ideology and cultural contexts may even impede comprehension of items that insist upon the existence of racial hierarchy or which presume the presence of White guilt in White people’s lives. In other words, specific items about hypothetical but tangible interactions and anxiety-provoking concepts help respondents to refer to actual, material, psychosocial practices – i.e., lived experiences. Second, by describing hypothetical scenarios and potential responses, researchers may better access respondents’ feelings in terms of consistency and validity. Shame and guilt are emotions that people do not generally want to experience or to admit experiencing, so hypothetical measures may tap these feelings more accurately than measures that force respondents to indicate what they are feeling during the survey administration or interview itself. Finally, a scenario-based measure with multiple responses encourages the complexity of self-conscious emotions to emerge by allowing respondents to indicate simultaneous affective experiences, including detachment, externalization of blame, shame and guilt. Life does not typically feel as simple as psychological models or reflect the parsimony and parity so valued by psychometrics; a multidimensional scale that

permits respondents to indicate concurrent and potentially contradictory feelings better approximates reality, even if this increases statistical complexity.

### **The Cultural Psychology of Whiteness**

Cultural psychology is still an emergent, interdisciplinary domain of psychology that includes researchers in social, cognitive, cross-cultural, clinical, developmental, counseling and other areas. Cultural psychologists have argued, "...that psychologists may be prematurely settling on *one* psychology, that is, on one set of assumptions about what are the relevant or most important psychological states and processes, and on one set of generalizations about their nature and function" (Markus, Kitayama & Heiman, 1996; p. 858). Cultural psychology fosters a culturally grounded psychology that relies primarily on cross-cultural perspectives to a) alter the assumptions that traditional psychologists make about the universality of basic principles, and b) to promote empirical science that accurately reflects human cultural diversity in a global(ized) context. Psyche and society are theoretically positioned as inextricable, and cultural psychologists have arrived at these core beliefs by drawing upon cultural, social and psychological theories of pragmatists, such as G. H. Mead, as well as poststructural critics, such as Foucault (Kitayama & Markus, 1994; Markus et al., 1996). In cultural psychology, the person is seen as cultural participant who is a social construction and a social constructor.

Though their methodologies and methods are different, pioneering cultural psychologists Kitayama and Markus (1994) agree with Sara Ahmed (2004b) in their assertion that emotions are "constructed and experiences within a social and cultural context" (p. 10). Markus and Kitayama (1994) argue that, "...the physiological and

neurochemical patterns that accompany private feelings can also be constructed as the bodily elements of habitual tendencies of subjective emotional experience and expression, and that these habitual tendencies are themselves part of the vast repertoire of individual and collective social practices that make up a culture” (p. 340). For example, Menon and Sweder (1994) applied a cultural psychological framework and found that expression of *lajya*, which roughly translates to the Western, English language concept of “shame,” is bound up in religious imagery of the goddess Kali and is associated with other forms of affect, including happiness and shyness. A cursory understanding of Hinduism and Indian cultural imagery fundamentally impedes any attempts to empirically measure or understand the affective logics of shame in the Orisha community, according to Menon and Sweder. Their findings not only demonstrate that emotions are literally experienced and interpreted through the culture in which they are co-constituted, but highlight how much of what we – Western academics – call “psychology” is actually “Western, White psychology” that has been created through racist, sexist and colonialist social science (Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008). Cross-cultural approaches advocated by Markus, Kitayama and Heiman (1996) and others and push psychological science forward by developing nuanced frameworks for studying psyche and society *together* while refining and particularizing extant models that are conceptualized as “basic” (read: universal). In other words, these approaches demonstrate that in by better understanding others, we better understand ourselves.

Unlike the orientation here, the dominant research programs of cultural psychology have been directed toward cross-cultural and comparative work. This involves the interrogation of several core binaries of Western psychology, including

self/culture, public/private, individual/collective, etc. In developing a culturally grounded psychology of White guilt, we extend Markus and Kitayama's (1994) conceptual framework of cultural emotions to refocus the particularities of White people's affective lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century United States. For example, they posit the following:

In the United States, men and women, African-American or European-American, Jewish or Christian, may share similar culturally organized ways of thinking about the self and others because they share a single, broadly defined cultural and sociopolitical reality. However, each person must *also* respond to a set of cultural requirements that are associated with being of a particular ethnic group, gender, religion, age, generation, region of country, and so on. (p. 347)

While Menon and Sweder (1994), Markus, Kitayama and others have expended substantial effort to incorporating cultural dimensions and considerations in their empirical projects that focus on communities outside the United States or to minority groups within the United States, the same attention has not been directed toward dominant groups, such as White people. But if we are to take seriously the quote above, the psychological study of White Americans' emotions also must be localized and particularized by intersectional dimensions of age, geography, religion, gender *and* sexuality, which they neglect to mention. The effect of *not* doing this (i.e., giving the same critical attention to cultural factors when studying members of dominant identity groups, such as White people) is to reify the normative positionality of Whiteness, maleness, heterosexuality, Christianity, middle-class status and "American" values by insinuating that dominant groups are culture-less. Indeed, the cultural psychology of emotions is not just about discovering how culture influences Others' emotions, but the

pursuit of a more accurate reflection of how invisible, taken-for-granted and normative cultural practices influence the particular form and content of dominant groups' affective experiences. In the context of critically studying Whiteness, we must centralize considerations of how historically specific racial ideologies, such as neoliberal multiculturalism, colorblind racism and persistent White supremacies, interact with sexism and heteronormativity to shape the lived experiences of racial guilt and shame.

Extant research and theoretically informed critique constitute the exigency of this project, which is the first step in a series of questions that should explore the effects of consequences of White guilt and shame on social interactions, identity development, political attitudes and structures of cultural experience. Before those questions can be answered, we must develop a more theoretically and empirically sound tool of measurement. Accordingly, our attention now shifts toward the practical considerations of instrument development and our specific proposal of the Test of White Guilt and Shame (TOWGAS). Linking the psychological research on racial self-focus and moral emotions research demands attention to the multidimensionality of White guilt and shame with an instrument that a) distinguishes between White guilt and White shame, but b) allows these emotions to be experienced simultaneously, and c) incorporates the potential for feelings of detachment and externalization of blame. As such, the following hypotheses guided this study:

*Hypothesis 1:* The TOWGAS will have a multidimensional, 4-factor structure of White shame, White guilt, externalization and detachment.

*Hypothesis 2:* The TOWGAS subscales (White guilt, White shame, externalization and detachment) will relate in statistically significant and conceptually



meaningful ways to measures of convergent validity (racism, White guilt, White shame, and each of four TOSCA-3 subscales, which will each be explicated in the *Results* section to follow).

## **Method**

### **Scale Construction**

**Construct definition.** The constructs under investigation were labeled “White guilt,” “White shame,” “externalization of blame” and “detachment,” and were defined as follows. “White guilt” is the negative, self-conscious affective experience that White people may feel about behaviors or attitudes, as well as contemporary or historical injustices, that are perceived as racist. White guilt can be experienced on both individual and collective levels, whereby individuals may feel White guilt by association (Doosje et al., 1998). “White shame” is a more painful form of negative, self-conscious affect than White guilt and is directed toward the entire (White) self; the differences between White shame and White guilt are primarily located in severity of and target of affect. “Externalization of blame” denotes the cognitive-affective strategies taken by White people who may feel implicated by a racial injustice or controversy and who place blame and responsibility for the injustice/controversy on others. “Detachment” describes the resistance expressed by White people when they refuse to acknowledge that an issue or controversy has anything to do with race and structural inequity. Each of these constructs was derived from the integration of three groups of literature: a) critical studies of Whiteness (e.g., Wise, 2008; Ingtiev, 1995; Frankenberg, 1993; Roediger, 1991/2007), b) prior psychological approaches to White guilt (e.g., Swim & Miller, 1999; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004), and c) the research on self-conscious emotions led by J. P. Tangney

(e.g., Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy, Robins & Tangney, 2007). The specification of four unique factors was directly influenced by Tangney and Dearing's most recent (2002) organization of the short-form TOSCA-3 into four factors and corresponding subscales: guilt-proneness, shame-proneness, externalization of blame and detachment.

***Item generation and response format.*** The response format of the TOWGAS was designed to be identical to the response format of the TOSCA-3 and reflective of the theoretical and methodological assumptions outlined in the preceding literature review. Accordingly, the TOWGAS response format is a Lickert-type scale ranging from 1 (“*not likely*” to respond in that way) to 5 (“*very likely*” to respond in that way). Scenarios and potential responses for the TOWGAS were developed first in consultation with a nine-person team of counseling psychology doctoral students (all but one of whom were White) in an American Psychological Association-accredited program (which included myself and Dr. Fassinger), as well as with established scholars in humanities and social science fields, including American, African American and women's studies; sociology; art history and visual culture studies; and literature. In consultation with these experts, we developed scenarios (i.e., situations) that could elicit guilt and/or shame based on group membership (i.e., the actions of other White people), as well as one's personal behaviors or attitudes. Our rationale was that too little was empirically known about the constructs to distinguish between individual and collective experiences of White guilt. At the end of the item-development process, two White graduate students in American studies completed the survey and were asked to reflect qualitatively on the face validity of the items and suggest other alternative scenarios. Based on feedback from these experts, a total of nine scenarios with four responses each were retained, which resulted in a 36-

item scale for the pilot study. Responses were scored such that lower scores indicated less proneness to affective experiences of White guilt, White shame, detachment and externalization of blame, whereas higher scores indicated a higher proneness to experiences of White guilt and these related forms of affect (see Appendix F).

### **Part I: Pilot Study**

The purpose of the pilot study was to conduct a preliminary, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and to examine the basic psychometric properties of the scale, including factor structure. We also hoped that any feedback from participants would help to identify and correct any potential problems with the instrument before deploying it among a larger sample, which would constitute the formal EFA and analysis of scores with the Collective Self-Esteem Scale and other demographic variables. These methods were informed by DeVellis' (1995) guide to scale development and Worthington and Whitaker's (2006) recommendations for best practices for instrument development in counseling psychology research.

The pilot study consisted of the demographic questionnaire intended for use in the main study (see Appendix C for complete list of measures), the TOSCA-3 short form, the proposed version of the TOWGAS, and the measures planned for later analysis of construct validity, including convergent validity (e.g., the Racial Argument Scale (Saucier & Miller, 2003), White guilt (Swim & Miller, 1999), the White guilt subscale PCRW (Spanierman & Heppner, 2003)). The survey also included three adaptations of the identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), adapted for race, gender and sexuality.

A random sample of 500 White undergraduate students registered during the fall 2007 semester at the University of Maryland, College Park, were recruited to participate via a list of randomly generated emails from the Office of the Registrar. Only undergraduate students who self-identified as White when enrolling at the University were eligible to be sampled. The University of Maryland, College Park, is a large public land-grant university with over 25,000 undergraduate students, of whom just under half are not White according to recently published demographic characteristics on the University's Web site. We were interested in sampling young adults at the University, because this population would be used later to recruit interview participants for the study in Chapter 4. For the initial validation of the instrument, we preferred a controlled sample as opposed to "snowball" recruitment in the general population, which would be used in later validation tests of the instrument (Grzanka & Fassinger, 2009). Participants were contacted via email and incentivized with the opportunity to win one of five \$25 gift cards, which would be distributed via random lottery (see Appendix D for sample recruitment email). The email included a link to the Survey Monkey address at which respondents were instructed to complete an informed consent form and were then directed to the actual survey. Survey Monkey is a widely used online survey service with which students are increasingly familiar. Per instructions from the Institutional Review Board, the informed consent form responses (which included an electronic signature) and the actual survey responses were collected via two different survey instruments, so that item responses could not be connected to respondents' names (see Appendix E).

Participant response rate was disappointing and reflected that we had overestimated the response rate of the sampled students via email. Eighty-one

respondents began the survey, which represented only 16.2% of those sampled. Of that 81, only 58 respondents completed the entire survey; only these 58 respondents' surveys were analyzed. With a completion rate of just over 70 percent, we concluded that the survey was not prohibitively long and all existing demographic questions and validity measures would be retained for the main study. Respondents were divided equally among years in school, with roughly a quarter each representing one of four classes (i.e., freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior) and one student in the fifth or greater year of college. Sixty-four percent ( $n = 37$ ) of respondents were women, and 36% ( $n = 21$ ) were men; none identified as transgender or other. Their political affiliations were as follows: 57% ( $n = 33$ ) Democrat; 17% ( $n = 10$ ) Republican; 16% ( $n = 9$ ) Independent; 9% ( $n = 5$ ) none; and one respondent identified as "Democratic Libertarian/Centrist." One lesbian and two bisexuals took the pilot survey; all others ( $n = 55$ ) identified as heterosexual or straight. Only one non-U.S. citizen (an Australian) participated in the pilot, and that woman's responses were retained.<sup>14</sup> Respondents were skewed slightly toward the upper-middle class, with a combined 72.4% ( $n = 42$ ) selecting the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> highest points on the MacArthur Social Status Scale (SSS). Forty-six percent ( $n = 26$ ) were not religious; 21% ( $n = 12$ ) were religious and 37% ( $n = 21$ ) were somewhat religious. Only four respondents (7%) indicated that fewer than half of their friends were White.

Though the total number of respondents ( $n = 58$ ) was too small to conduct factor analysis according to DeVellis' (2003) guidelines, these responses were reviewed and analyzed to consider the face validity of the items and the instruments' basic

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<sup>14</sup> The choice to retain this non-U.S. participant was motivated by the low sample size; we also realized that citizenship status alone does not say qualitatively much about an individual's relationship to U.S. race relations and cultural values.

psychometric properties. We were especially concerned with variance in responses and found that our TOWGAS demonstrated at least as much variability of response as the TOSCA-3. When items responses were particularly skewed in one direction, this appeared to make conceptual sense. For example, items which we hypothesized to elicit White shame-proneness tended to demonstrate the least variability, with the majority of respondents indicating that they would *not* likely respond in that way particular way. This mirrored response patterns to items in the shame-proneness subscale of TOSCA-3. Based on feedback from the respondents, slight modifications were made before moving into the first study. For example, the initial survey instrument asked several times if respondents' had read the instructions before they could proceed, and some respondents indicated in email correspondence that this was confusing (or at least annoying). No respondents emailed with questions or concerns about any of the TOWGAS items, but three did initiate contact about items in the Racial Argument Scale (RAS; Saucier & Miller, 2003). The RAS is also a scenario-based instrument that presents respondents with several correlational statements (i.e., the "argument") about a race-based issue and concludes with a causal, racist statement. Respondents are asked to indicate how well they feel that the argument supports the conclusion, and this is thought to be an indicator of latent racial attitudes. In our experience using this instrument in a variety of survey research projects, respondents tend to take issue with these items and initiate contact with us to learn more about the instrument or to offer their opinion that it is unfair, misleading, etc. Though we do not think it is the "perfect" measure of racism, respondents' difficulty with the RAS items was viewed as reflective of the overall strength of the survey. Our hope was that the RAS would prime respondents to be thinking about racial issues and

their own racial attitudes before they arrived at the TOWGAS items, which were the final items in the survey. Based on the perceived success of the psychometric properties of the instrument, including means and standard deviations, all TOWGAS items were retained and the research moved forward with only those slight adjustments to the survey instrumentation already discussed.

## **Part II: Exploratory Factor Analysis and Initial Validation**

The following section describes the procedures used in the main EFA study, as well as further explication of the extant scales included in the survey. We also explore differences in TOWGAS scores based on CSES and race, gender and sexuality.

### ***Participants***

Participants in this study were White undergraduates recruited via a random sample of email addresses obtained through the University of Maryland's Office of the Registrar; this random list was generated in the same way as the list in the pilot study. From the total pool of students emailed ( $n = 2,200$ ), our response rate was 16 percent, with a survey completion rate of 76 percent. The final sample ( $n = 260$ ) was split evenly between men ( $n = 130$ ) and women ( $n = 130$ ). No trans- or other-gendered participants indicated a non-normative gender on the survey. Table 1 presents additional demographic characteristics of the study participants. Further discussion of the potential impact of these characteristics, as well as variations in responses that correlated with particular forms of social identification, are explicated in the results section.

Table 1  
*Participant Demographic Characteristics (n = 260)*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>
Age	253		21.3
Year in College (not credit level)	260		3.12
First Year	23	8.8	
Second Year	57	21.9	
Third Year	70	26.9	
Fourth Year	84	32.3	
Fifth Year +	26	10.0	
Cumulative Grade Point Average	259		3.4
Religiosity (Do you consider yourself to be religious?)	260		
Yes	57	21.9	
Somewhat	101	39.0	
No	106	40.8	
Gender			
Woman	130	50	
Man	130	50	
Transgender FTM	0	0	
Transgender MTF	0	0	
Other	0	0	
Sexual Orientation			
Straight/Heterosexual	246	94.6	
Gay or Lesbian	5	1.9	
Bisexual	2	0.8	
Queer	3	1.2	
Questioning/Uncertain	1	0.4	
Declined to answer	3	1.2	
Political Affiliation			
Democrat	118	45.6	



Republican	55	21.2	
Independent	40	15.4	
None	39	15.1	
Other	7	2.7	
Citizenship Status	257		
U.S. Citizen	252	98.1	
Dual U.S./Other	1	0.4	
Europe	3	1.2	
Resident	1	0.4	
Family Education Background	256		
First Generation College	28	10.9	
Second+ Generation College	228	89.1	
Subjective Social Status (lowest to highest)	257		6.7
1	0	0	
2	1	0.4	
3	5	1.9	
4	11	4.3	
5	23	8.9	
6	67	26.1	
7	81	31.5	
8	55	21.4	
9	13	5.1	
10	1	0.4	
Percentage of Friends Who Are White	260		
0-5%	2	0.8	
6-25%	4	1.5	
26-50%	11	4.2	
51-75%	72	27.7	
76-95%	136	52.3	
96-100%	35	13.5	

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## ***Instrumentation***

***Demographic questionnaire.*** The survey opened with a demographic questionnaire constructed for the purposes of this study. Respondents were asked in the following order to indicate: age, year in college, grade point average, religious affiliation, religiosity, race, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, citizenship status, first-generation college, social class status (MacArthur SSS) and percentage of friends who are White (see Appendix C; Table 1).

***Racial Argument Scale*** (RAS; Saucier & Miller, 2003). The RAS was developed as an alternative to the Modern Racism Scale (MRS), which Saucier and Miller (2003) assert is limited in its ability to tap aversive and non-conscious forms of discrimination and prejudice, and is subject to social desirability influences. On the spectrum of racism measures – with implicit association tests on one end and self-report measures on the other – the RAS can be characterized as taking a centrist approach. The 13-item scale presents short paragraphs about an “unresolved societal debate,” and then concludes with a statement that expresses either a positive or negative attitude toward Blacks. Participants are asked to rate how well the argument supports the conclusion on a 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) scale; because the items do not ask for participants’ own beliefs, the RAS it thought not to inhibit racist responses. Positive items are reverse coded and scores are totaled to yield scores that range from 13 to 65, with higher scores indicating higher levels of racism. Saucier and Miller presented extensive psychometric data about the RAS in their initial validation studies of the instrument, including strong test-retest reliability and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .74). The estimation of internal

consistency of the RAS during this administration was similarly sufficient (Cronbach's alpha = .75).

***White Guilt*** (WG; Swim & Miller, 1999). The White Guilt scale consists of five items developed for Swim and Miller's study of racial guilt and its consequences for affirmative action. Each of the items uses the term "guilt" and are phrased so that responses should reflect the participant's self-perception of her experience (or lack thereof) of White guilt. Respondents indicate their endorsement of each of the five items on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 is *strong disagree* and 5 is *strongly agree*. Scores are summed with higher scores indicating higher levels of White guilt. Swim and Miller reported strong internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach's alpha = .86), and this was confirmed in our administration (Cronbach's alpha = .86).

***Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites*** (PCRW; Spanierman & Heppner, 2003). The PCRW is a multidimensional instrument with three subscales: *White Guilt*, *White Empathetic Reactions toward Racism* and *White Fear of Others*. We included all subscales, but were most interested in the White Guilt subscale, which includes five items that tap racial guilt and anxiety (i.e., fear) about being a White person in a society that unfairly privileges White people and imposes discrimination on non-Whites. Items include the words "personally responsible," "guilty," "afraid" and "ashamed." Respondents indicate their endorsement of each of the five items on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 is *strongly agree*; two items are reverse-coded. The same format is used for the White empathy subscale (six items) and White fear subscale (5 items, one reverse-coded). Total scores were summed, with higher scores indicated higher levels of White Guilt, White empathy and White fear. Spanierman and

Heppner (2004) reported satisfactory levels of internal consistency for the White Guilt subscale (Cronbach's alphas of .73 and .70) in the two studies that constituted the initial validation of the instrument; alphas for empathy (.78 and .79) and White fear (.63 and .69) were also strong. We examined the coefficient alphas in this administration and found similar data (White Empathetic Reactions toward Racism = .79; White Fear of Others = .69; White Guilt = .75).

*Collective Self Esteem Scale, Importance to Identity subscale* (CSES-R, CSES-S, CSES-G; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The Importance to Identity subscale of the CSES helps assess the degree to which a membership in a particular social identity group influences a respondent's sense of self. Specifically, this subscale gauges the positive valence and centrality of identity-group memberships. The subscale is easily adaptable for use in the measurement of various identity categories, such as race, gender and sexuality. We adapted the scale for each of these three dimensions of difference. Sample items include: "Overall my [race, gender or sexual orientation] has very little to do with how I feel." Two items in each of the five-item versions of the subscale are reverse-coded; scores are summed, with higher scores on the five-point scale (1=*strongly disagree* and 5=*strongly agree*) indicating higher levels of CSE. In prior research, we found the race adaptation of the subscale to demonstrate strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .84); we did not have reliability data for the gender and sexual orientation versions of the subscale. In this administration, we found the subscales' internal consistencies to be sufficient with each demonstrating high coefficient alphas: CSES-Race = .77; CSES-Sexuality = .80; and CSES-Gender = .74, respectively.

***Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3, short form*** (TOSCA-3; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The TOSCA-3 short form consists of 11 scenarios with four responses each. Respondents indicate how likely they would be to react in that particular way for each of the four responses by selecting one point on a five-point scale (1=*not likely* and 5=*very likely*). Scores are summed in each of four corresponding subscales: *guilt-proneness*, *shame-proneness*, *externalization* and *detachment*. Tangney and Dearing report sufficient internal consistency data for the subscales that are strongly correlated with the long-form version of the test, which includes two additional subscales excluded from the present study (*alpha pride* and *beta pride*). Reported Cronbach's alphas were as follows: shame = .88; guilt = .83; externalization = .80; and detachment = .77. We did not replicate these high levels of reliability, and found that the TOSCA-3 did not retain its four-factor structure in our administration; these data are discussed in the results section. Cronbach's alphas were: shame = .70; guilt = .75; externalization = .59; and detachment = .63.

***Other items.*** We included some items that we developed in pilot research leading to this project, including a 10-item scale to measure White shame (Cronbach's alpha = .83) via expressed anger and externalization of blame, as well as a previously untested 14-item instrument to measure perception of racism in American television. These items were essentially fillers and were ultimately not included in our analysis. We included the 13-item Marlowe-Crowne Form C test of social desirability (Reynolds, 1982; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), but a data collection/scoring error prevented us from using this instrument to assess whether social desirability influenced participants' responses.

### ***Procedure***

Approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board. Participants were contacted via email (see Appendix D) to participate in a study of racial attitudes (“Contemporary Racial Attitudes, Part 2”). Based on the response rate in the pilot study, we obtained a list of 2,200 White students who were registered for classes in spring 2008. Participation was incentivized via a random lottery for one of five \$50 gift cards. The email contained a direct hyperlink and Web address for the informed consent form, which is the first part of the survey. After completing and informed consent form, students were asked if they would be willing to be contacted regarding a follow-up study (see Chapter 4). Regardless of their willingness to participate in future research or volunteering an email address to enter the lottery, participants were forwarded to the actual survey, which was once again separate in order to protect participants’ anonymity. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were thanked for their participation and provided once again with the researchers’ contact information. Of the respondents who took the survey ( $n = 342$ ), we eliminated 82 respondents because they did not complete the survey, and therefore did not give responses to TOWGAS items. These 82 eliminated cases included all ( $n = 3$ ) respondents who at some point in the survey indicated that they were not White. We asked the question “Do you identify as White?” twice so that students who might not identify as White in certain contexts (e.g., Jewish and Persian-identified persons) would self-select themselves out of the survey administration. Though these perspectives are quite valuable, we consider this kind of highly situation-contingent racial identity to be sufficiently distinct from the racial experiences of White people who *always* racially identify as White. As such, we excluded them ( $n = 3$ ) from this preliminary investigation.

## **Results**

## Exploratory Factor Analysis

Prior to conducting the exploratory factor analysis, we examined two indicators that help assess the suitability of a dataset to factor analyses. First, we used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy to determine if the same size ( $n = 260$ ) was large enough to conduct a factor analysis. The KMO index was .87, which is quite strong; Worthington and Whittaker (2006) suggest levels greater than .60. DeVellis (2003) suggests that a sample size of 200 is usually adequate for a factor analysis involving 40 items or less. Second, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < .001$ ). The theoretical development of the items, which was based on the format of the TOSCA-3, suggested that we perform principal axis factoring (PAF) with a four-factor solution and an oblique (i.e., Promax) rotation, because the factors should be correlated. For example, scores on the hypothesized factor White guilt should be negatively correlated with scores on both the detachment and externalization subscales. A Promax rotation, accordingly, is more appropriate than a simple orthogonal (i.e., Varimax) rotation (Worthington & Whittaker). However, the data resisted a four-factor solution. We examined the pattern and structure matrices, which indicated a fourth factor of only two items. Furthermore, analysis of the psychometric properties of the instrument indicated that the items were loading onto these four weak factors in ways that did not make conceptual sense. At this point, following Spanierman and Heppner's (2004) procedure for developing the PCRW and Worthington and Whittaker's recommendation, we examined the scree plot, which suggested a three-factor solution because of a sharp drop in eigenvalues between the third and fourth factors. We then conducted an exploratory factor analysis with PAF, specifying a three-factor solution and suppressing all items

with loadings of less than .35 on any individual factor, which is a slightly more rigorous criterion for analyzing item cross-loadings than suggested by Worthington and Whittaker. Upon examination of the pattern matrix, we found that one scenario – about “driving while Black” – behaved erratically. We subsequently eliminated it, this increasing the parsimony and conceptual clarity of the instrument. Based on strong negative factor loadings, three items were made candidates for reverse coding. The three-factor structure had the best overall statistical characteristics: very few (< 5) cross-loadings, strong factor loadings and a relatively even distribution of items across factors. With two of the cross-loadings, the ‘difference’ between the two loadings is sufficient enough to be confident in the items’ location on a single factor. These procedures resulted in a 32-item instrument with four responses each for eight scenarios. These three factors accounted for 42% of the cumulative variance. The pattern matrix produced in the final EFA for the 32-item TOWGAS is presented in Table 2. This matrix reflects the factor loadings for each item, controlling for the other factors in the solution. This table does not contain the final scenarios, which are presented in Appendix F.

Before proceeding to name the factors and assess other psychometric properties of the instrument, we wanted to examine the factor structure of the TOSCA-3 in this administration of the test because our design was so strongly influenced by that of the TOSCA-3. Furthermore, Tracy, Robins & Tangney (2007) report that scenario based measures, including the TOSCA-3, tend to exhibit lower levels of internal consistency and more complex psychometric properties than one-dimensional measures or ones without subscales. We ran the same EFA on the TOSCA-3 (PAF with Promax rotation) and found that a three-factor – as opposed to the previously established four-factor



structure – was the better fit for the data. Similarly to the behavior of items on the TOWGAS, externalization and detachment items on the TOSCA-3 collapsed onto the same factor (3).

### **Naming of the Factors**

We entered the EFA having written a total of 36 items for four hypothesized subscales, predicting that each subscale would have 12 items. This format of four subscale items per scenario was derived directly from the TOSCA-3's structure. We learned through the EFA process that our instrument instead demonstrated a three-factor structure, which nonetheless coalesced in conceptually meaningful ways. Factor 1, White Guilt, consisted of 11 items and accounted for approximately 26% of the variance. This factor included items that describe guilty reactions to White racial anxiety, including some corrective behaviors. This subscale also includes a reverse-coded item that reflects detachment from the racial elements of a scenario. A sample item is: "You would think: 'I wish there was something I could do to make up for all the harm slavery caused Black people.'" Higher scores indicated higher proneness to feeling guilty about being White. Factor 2, White Shame, consisted of 8 items and accounted for approximately 10% percent of the variance. This subscale includes items that describe painful feelings of White shame, which includes disdain for one's racial identity. Only one item includes any corrective behavior, and two items are reverse-coded because they reflect aggressive detachment from racial issues. Higher scores indicate higher levels of proneness to feeling shame about one's White racial identity. A sample item is: "You would wish you weren't White." Factor 3, Negation, consisted of 13 items and accounted for approximately 7% of the variance. This factor was named because it consisted of a

mixture of items developed for our hypothesized “detachment” and “externalization” subscales. By loading onto the same factor, these items behaved in such a way as to suggest that the cognitive and affective strategies for avoiding White guilt and feelings of race-based responsibility hang together. Accordingly, we termed the amalgamated processes of detachment and externalization “negation.” Higher scores indicate greater proneness to deny, defer or detach from the experience of White guilt and/or shame. A sample item is: “You would think: ‘I can’t be held responsible for being born White.’”

Table 2

*Factor Loadings (Structure Coefficients) for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Promax Rotation of the TOWGAS and Item Descriptive Statistics*

Item	Factor Loadings			M	SD
	1	2	3		
<b>Factor 1: White Guilt</b>					
You would feel depressed and sad about the history of racism in the United States.	0.774			3.52	1.25
You would think: "I wish there was something I could do to make up for all the harm slavery caused Black people."	0.565			2.45	1.28
You would think: “That’s so awful. I hope they have to face consequences for their behavior.”	0.536			3.32	1.39
You would wish there was a way to make up for all your unfair advantages.	0.525			2.50	1.31
You would apologize and ask your instructor for the correct/appropriate usage of the term.	0.516			3.57	1.31
You would think: “People make way too big a deal over stuff like this.” (R)	-0.508		0.366	3.28	1.36

<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>			<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>		
You would stop laughing and tell the friend that you don't think racist language is OK, even when joking.	0.491			3.07	1.44
You would feel small and think about it for days.	0.487			2.09	1.26
You would feel bad for not noticing earlier but probably be more critical of the show.	0.399	0.352		1.96	1.23
You would think: "I'm ignorant."	0.388			2.03	1.18
You would feel sad and send whatever money you could to the relief effort.	0.38			2.94	1.25
<b>Factor 2: White Shame</b>					
You would hate yourself for being White.		0.781		1.27	0.65
You would feel bad for not noticing sooner and never watch the show again.		0.668		1.22	0.64
You would wish you weren't White.		0.552		1.58	0.94
You would feel miserable because of all your privileges.		0.527		1.79	0.99
You would feel horrible for ignoring the person and think about it all day.		0.521		1.93	1.12
You would go about your day as usual.					
(R)		-0.516		2.04	1.15
You would think: "I don't care what the characters look like as long as the show is entertaining." (R)		-0.463		1.75	1.02
You would feel bad about ignoring the person, and likely give some change to		0.378		2.07	1.21

Item	Factor Loadings			M	SD
	1	2	3		
the next person who asks.					
<b>Factor 3: Negation</b>					
You would think: "I would be broke if I gave money to every person who asks me for change."	0.54		0.632	3.25	1.43
You would think: "If Black people can use the N-word, why can't White people?"			0.605	2.60	1.43
You would think: "Slavery was awful, but people need to get over it and move on."	-0.364		0.519	3.01	1.38
You would think: "Race doesn't matter as much as people say it does."			0.51	2.71	1.33
You would think: "Labels don't really matter."			0.465	2.84	1.30
You would think: "I can't be held responsible for being born White."			0.452	3.86	1.18
You would think: "That's not a race issue. That's a social class issue."			0.437	3.45	1.23
You would think: "It wouldn't be realistic if there were lots of minorities on the show."			0.426	2.11	1.20
You would think: "It's not my fault – I can't keep up with all this political correctness."			0.423	2.76	1.38
You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless."			0.419	2.62	1.46
You would wonder why slavery is still discussed because it happened so long ago.			0.419	3.96	1.15

Item	Factor Loadings			M	SD
	1	2	3		
You would think: "I'm sure the students didn't mean any harm."			0.417	2.75	1.26
You would think: "Those people chose to stay behind."			0.353	1.83	1.12
Eigenvalue	8.17	3.07	2.20		
% Variance	25.52	9.58	6.86		
M	2.79	1.71	2.74		
SD	0.83	0.63	0.73		
Coefficient alpha	0.86	0.79	0.82		
Total Variance	41.97				

*Note: Factor loadings of absolute values less than .35 are suppressed in this table. "(R)" indicates that the item is reverse-coded.*

### **Descriptive Statistics and Factor Intercorrelations**

Descriptive statistics for TOWGAS individual items, including subscale means and standard deviations, are presented in Table 2. White Guilt and Negation scores exhibited a normal distribution with limited skewness; Negation scores were slightly positively skewed (skewness = .12) and White Guilt was slightly negatively skewed (skewness = -.21). White Shame, on the other hand, was somewhat positively skewed (1.0). However, we examined scores for each TOWGAS item and found that, despite the mild skewness on White Shame, scores for each of 32 items ranged from 1 to 5. Unlike consistently low mean scores ( $M = < .25$ ) for White Guilt reported by Spanierman and Heppner (2004) and Swim and Miller (1999), mean scores on our White Guilt subscale were above the midpoint ( $M = 2.79$ ). Mean scores indicated that, as a group, participants were prone to experience White Guilt most; then Negation ( $M = 2.74$ ), then White shame ( $M = 1.71$ ).

We examined two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlations between each of the three factors of the TOWGAS, using Cohen (1992) as a guide to interpret “small” (.10 and greater), “medium” (.30 and greater) and “large” (.50 and greater) effect sizes (p. 157). These indicated several significant factor intercorrelations (see Table 3). White Guilt and White Shame exhibited a strong, positive correlation ( $r = .57, p < .01$ ), whereas White Guilt and Negation exhibited a strong, negative correlation ( $r = -.51, p < .01$ ). Meanwhile, analysis indicated a medium significant negative correlation between White Shame and Negation ( $r = -.28, p < .01$ ).

### **Reliability Estimates**

We calculated estimates of internal consistency using Cronbach’s coefficient alphas, which were as follows: White guilt (.86), White shame (.80) and Negation (.82).

### **Convergent Validity**

We used several scales to provide estimates of convergent validity, one of the major elements of overall construct validity (DeVellis, 2003). We expected our White Guilt subscale to correlate positively with scores on the White Guilt subscale of the PCRW (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004) and Swim and Miller’s (1999) White Guilt scale, as well as the guilt-proneness subscale of the TOSCA-3 (Tangney & Dearing, 2002); we predicted a negative correlation between White Guilt (TOWGAS) and racism (RAS; Saucier & Miller, 2003). We similarly hypothesized that White Shame would be positively correlated with the TOSCA-3’s shame-proneness subscale; we also hypothesized that White Shame would negatively correlate with racism as assessed by the RAS. We hypothesized that Negation would negatively correlate with both Swim and

Miller's White Guilt scale and the PCRW's White Guilt subscale, but that Negation would positively correlate with racism.

Table 3

*Correlations Among TOWGAS and TOSCA-3 Subscales, White Guilt (Swim & Miller), White Guilt Subscales (PCRW) and Racism (RAS)*

	TOWGAS Guilt (Factor 1)	TOWGAS Shame (Factor 2)	TOWGAS Negation (Factor 3)	White Guilt (SM)	White Guilt (PCRW)	Racism (RAS)	TOSCA-3 Shame
TOWGAS White Guilt	.						
TOWGAS White Shame	.548**	.					
TOWGAS Negation	-.543**	-.330**	.				
White Guilt (SM)	.659**	.565**	-.459**	.			
White Guilt (Psychosocial Costs of Racism)	.612**	.578**	-.459**	.795**	.		
Racism (RAS)	-.567**	-.299**	.541**	-.503**	-.444**	.	
TOSCA-3 Shame-Proneness	.411**	.245**	-.073	.299**	.248**	-.103	.
TOSCA-3 Guilt-Proneness	.376**	-.020	-.215**	.169**	.040	-.196**	.376**

*\*\* Signifies that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Our hypotheses were confirmed in each of these statistically significant relationships (see Table 3 for Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients). Negation was significantly negatively correlated with the two extant White guilt scales (Swim & Miller and PCRW) and was positively correlated with racism (RAS). This indicates that participants who were prone to negate White Guilt and Shame (on the TOWGAS) were more likely to exhibit racist attitudes and less likely to experience White guilt. White

Guilt on the TOWGAS subscale was significantly positively correlated with the two extant White guilt measures and exhibited a weaker, but significant, correlation with the TOSCA-3's guilt-proneness subscale. This is conceptually meaningful, because proneness to feeling guilty and proneness to experiencing White guilt are not interchangeable, but should be positively correlated, as we predicted. Our White Guilt subscale was also significantly negatively correlated with racism. This means that participants who expressed a stronger likelihood to feel White guilt were less likely to express racist attitudes. We did not predict a relationship between White Guilt and generic shame-proneness on the TOSCA-3, but found a positive significant correlation between these constructs. White Shame was significantly positively correlated with its TOSCA-3 counterpart, as well as extant White guilt measures, and exhibited a significant negative correlation to racism. This means that participants who were prone to White shame were also prone to generic shame and expressed feelings of White guilt. These same participants were less likely to hold racist attitudes as measured by the RAS.

### **Relationship of TOWGAS Scores to CSES and Within-Group Differences**

Though we did not formally hypothesize significant differences based on gender, sexuality or race, we were interested in how scores on the TOWGAS might differ based gender and sexual orientation. Furthermore, we wanted to explore these differences not only using demographic variables (i.e., man/woman, gay/straight) but through relevant scores on the identity subscale of the Collective Self Esteem Scale (CSES), which allows participants to express the centrality of their gender, race and sexual orientation to their sense of self. To examine the relationship between TOWGAS factor scores and CSES scores, we conducted ANOVAs on each TOWGAS subscale with a variety of



independent variables: (a) CSES-Gender, (b) GSES-Race, (c) CSES-Sexuality, (d) religiosity, (e) social class, (f) percentage of friends who are White and (g) political affiliation. We used the median scores on the three CSES identity subscales to split the sample into high and low subsamples. No participants identified as transgender or intersex, so we compared men and women only. Our sample was overwhelming heterosexual, so we did not analyze differences between heterosexual or straight-identified participants and the LGBTQ subsample ( $n = 11$ ). We did, however, test whether differences in CSES-Sexuality of heterosexuals influenced scores on any of the three TOWGAS factors. Significant findings are reported below.

**CSES-Gender.** A (2x2) univariate ANOVA with the between subjects factors of gender (M/F) and CSES-Gender was performed on the TOWGAS White Guilt scores. Though there was no main effect for CSES-Gender,  $F(1, 244) = 2.21, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ , there was a main effect for gender  $F(1, 244) = 15.73, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$ ; however, this was qualified by a significant two-way interaction  $F(1, 244) = 7.01, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . This interaction effect suggests that men and women differ in proneness to White guilt only when they are highly gender-identified on the CSES identity subscale (see Figure 6). Furthermore, post hoc analysis revealed that highly gender-identified men show less proneness to White Guilt ( $M = 2.33$ ) than low gender-identified men ( $M = 2.77$ ). Another (2x2) ANOVA with the between subjects factors of gender (M/F) and CSES-Gender was performed on the TOWGAS Negation scores. There was no main effect for CSES-Gender,  $F(1, 241) = .97, p > .05, \eta^2 = .004$ , but we once again found a main effect for gender,  $F(1, 241) = 6.92, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ . This finding suggests that highly gendered men were prone to higher levels of negation ( $M = 3.0$ ) than men who were expressed

lower levels of CSES-Gender ( $M = 2.77$ ). This pattern was replicated directionally when we tested for gender differences in proneness to White Shame, but the results were not significant.

**CSES-Race.** One-way ANOVAs indicated that degree of CSES-Race (i.e., White racial identity),  $F(1, 150) = 4.23, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$ , was significantly related to White Shame, where those with higher levels of CSES in terms of their White racial identity expressed less proneness to White Shame ( $M = 2.67$ ) than those with lower CSES-Race ( $M = 2.89$ ).

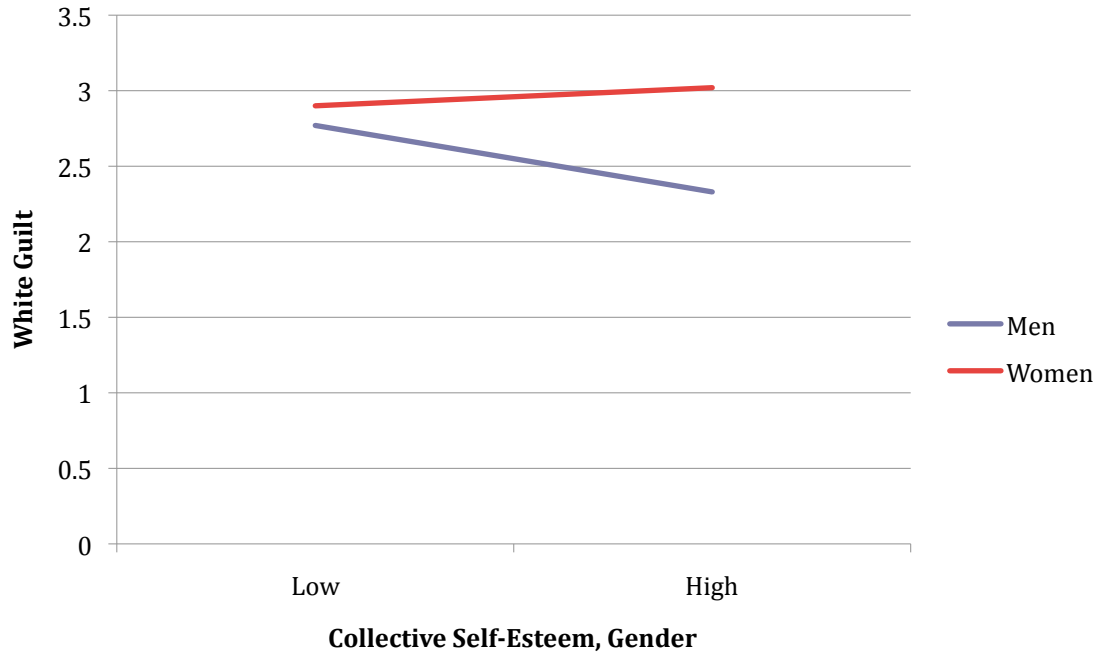


Figure 6. Two-Way ANOVA, CSES-Gender Identity and Gender (Dependent Variable=White Guilt factor, TOWGAS)

**Political affiliation.** We grouped political affiliations as follows: Democrats ( $n = 113$ ), Republicans ( $n = 55$ ) and Independents (including “no affiliation” and “other”) ( $n = 83$ ). We then conducted one-way ANOVAs to examine relationships between political affiliation scores on the TOWGAS subscales. For White Guilt, we found a main effect of

political affiliation,  $F(2, 251) = 5.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$ . Post hoc comparison revealed that Democrats ( $M = 2.93$ ) were more prone to experience White guilt than Republicans ( $M = 2.48; p < .01$ ), who were less likely to experience White guilt than Independents ( $M = 2.77; p < .05$ ), as well. No main effect was found between Democrats and Independents on White guilt proneness. We also found a strong main effect for political affiliation on Negation,  $F(2, 248) = 9.56, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$ . Pos hoc comparisons indicated that Republicans respondents expressed higher levels of proneness to Negation ( $M = 3.02$ ) than Democrats ( $M = 2.54; p < .001$ ) and that both Independents ( $M = 2.84$ ) and Republicans were more prone to experience Negation than Democrats ( $p < .01$ ). No such effect was found for White Shame,  $F(2, 253) = 2.86, p > .05, \eta^2 = .02$ , though directional trends indicated that Republicans were the least prone to White Shame.

The remaining one-way ANOVAS on White Guilt, White Shame and Negation using the factors of CSES-Sexuality, religiosity, social class and percentage of friends who are White did not reveal any significant results.

### **Discussion**

This study demonstrates the factor structure of the TOWGAS, which reflects three distinct but significantly correlated factors of: White Guilt, White Shame and Negation. These conceptually meaningful factors account for 42% percent of the variance. Each of the factors demonstrated optimal levels of internal consistency, with coefficient alphas ranging between .80 and .86. As we predicted in the design of the instrument, each of the TOWGAS subscales assesses distinct, correlated constructs, and the subscales should be analyzed and scored separately in future research and applications. We anticipated a four-factor structure with four corresponding subscales; instead, our items developed for the

“detachment” and “externalization of blame” subscales loaded onto the same factor, which we called “Negation.” We presented initial data on the construct validity in the form of predicted, significant correlations with measures of convergent validity, including White guilt (Swim & Miller, 1999; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004), guilt- and shame-proneness (Tangney & Dearing, 2002) and racism (Saucier & Miller, 2003). Finally, we explored the relationships between scores on the three factors of TOWGAS and demographic characteristics and self-report indexes of social identity (i.e., race, gender and sexuality).

### **TOWGAS Factor 1: White Guilt**

The first and strongest factor included 11 items that tapped proneness to White Guilt. Respondents generally scored the highest of this factor, and mean scores on this factor were above the scale midpoint (2.5), which contrasts with prior findings reported by Swim and Miller (1999) and Spanierman and Heppner (2004) and the mean scores of these extant measures during the present administration ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.01$  and  $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD = .75$ , respectively). Our higher means may be due to the hypothetical nature of the scenarios endemic to the TOWGAS’s response format. This factor is most accurately described as assessing *proneness* to White guilt; thus, “hypothetical” White guilt may be easier to measure in self-response format than state feelings of White guilt. Future studies should explore whether the TOWGAS is actually able to obtain a more reliable reflection of respondents’ propensity to feel White guilt than other state measurement instruments that force respondents to reflect on their personal feelings of White guilt during the test administration itself. This might be determined by observing the statistical relationship between scores on the TOWGAS and predicted behaviors in experimental settings. We

observed several identity-based variations in scores on this factor, particularly in terms of gender and CSES. While men and women scored similarly on White guilt when they indicated lower gender-identity centrality, their scores differed significantly as they indicated that gender was more important. These scores do not necessarily indicate differences in White guilt based in masculinity and femininity, for example, because the gender identity subscale of the CSES does not prescribe *how* gender is central to a respondent's identity – just that gender is or is not important. However, these findings do correspond with existing literature on guilt and shame, which suggests that men are less likely to admit feeling guilt than women (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005). We also found that political affiliation and White Guilt were significantly correlated, with Democrats indicating greater proneness to White guilt than Republicans or Independents. Overall, proneness to White guilt was associated with lower levels of racism and proneness to Negation; similarly, White guilt-proneness was significantly correlated with proneness to White shame, as well as proneness to generic forms of guilt and shame. This reflects a general sense of ambivalence regarding White guilt, because it is associated with both lower levels of racism and a potentiality for maladaptive forms of shame.

### **TOWGAS Factor 2: White Shame**

The second factor of the TOWGAS consists of 8 items that assess proneness to White shame, i.e., profoundly negative feelings about being White. Two of these items are reverse-coded and reflect how unlikely a respondent would be to detach or externalize their connection to a race-based situation of inequality. Respondents scored lowest of this factor, which may reflect how maladaptive and relatively rare feelings of White shame

actually are in the contemporary United States. On the other hand, shame is commonly avoided via a variety of cognitive and affective strategies, so scores on this factor should not be examined in isolation from scores on either Negation (Factor 3) or White Guilt (Factor 1). Furthermore, the significance of this factor's emergence and distinction in the factor structure of the TOWGAS should not be understated. Though our findings are preliminary, this factor does suggest the existence of this distinct form of negative racial affect that is highly positively correlated with, but is not the same as, White guilt.

Notably, we observed a significant relationship between White Shame and CSES-Race. This means that respondents who indicated higher centrality of their Whiteness to their sense of self were less prone to White shame than were respondents for whom their Whiteness was less important to their identity. Future studies should investigate what these higher levels of White identity centrality actually mean. This could, for example, indicate that people who express high CSES-Race are critical and aware of the role their Whiteness plays in unequal power relations in the United States, and that these people are therefore less likely to respond to racial controversy and conflict in maladaptive and self-focuses ways. On the other hand, high CSES-Race could indicate feelings of White pride or White supremacy, and corresponding low scores on White Shame could be reactionary. In other words, these people could be aware of and comfortable with their unfair and unearned racial privilege. It is important to note that White Shame was the only factor that expressed this relationship with CSES-Race, however, so this finding can be not extrapolated to the domains of Negation and White Guilt. Finally, we found that White Shame demonstrated a weaker, negative correlation with racism than did White Guilt. This finding is meaningful because it suggests that White shame-proneness may be

less likely to predict antiracist attitudes or endorsement of diversity programs and initiatives than White guilt (Iyer et al., 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999).

### **TOWGAS Factor 3: Negation**

The third factor of the TOWGAS is Negation and includes 13 items that reflect respondents' proneness to externalize blame for White privilege or racial conflict and to minimize the role of race in their social interactions. Contrary to our expectations, the items we developed to correspond with the TOSCA-3's Externalization and Detachment subscales loaded onto the same factor, suggesting that these processes may not be as distinct as prior literature proposes (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, Stuewig & Mashek, 2007), or that there is something unique about our sample that caused this effect.<sup>15</sup> Though the processes of externalization and detachment from racial conflict and anxiety-provoking situations are conceptually distinct on a definitional level, these distinctions appear to wash out when respondents were asked to reflect how they actually feel. Qualitative research, such as the one presented in Chapter 4, should examine if the lived experiences of White people also reflect the inextricability of externalization and detachment. Furthermore, an EFA conducted on the TOSCA-3 confirmed that detachment and externalization from generic forms of shame and guilt are not distinct factors, either. Through analysis of variance in scores on this factor and demographic variables, we found a main effect such that Republican-identified respondents were more likely to express proneness to Negation than Democrats, who were significantly less prone to Negation than Republicans or Independents.

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<sup>15</sup> However, this effect has already been replicated for the TOWGAS and the TOSCA-3 in a follow-up study that used snowball sampling in the general population (Grzanka & Fassinger, 2009).

Our choice to name this factor “Negation” reflects the literature on self-conscious emotions and racial attitudes, as well as research outside of psychology that explores neoliberal forms of multiculturalism. As explicated in prior chapters, neoliberal social policies and practices organize social reality in terms of race, gender, sexuality and other dimensions of inequality, but concurrently and contradictorily obscure this reality through the rhetoric of multiculturalism and “colorblind” civil society (Duggan, 2003; Melamed, 2006; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 1994). Negation literally denotes cognitive and affective strategies taken to deny the potential for feeling White guilt, much less White shame. Negation is so important as a constellation of attitudes and feelings because it illustrates that the primacy given to White guilt in psychological research may obfuscate that more salient processes taken up by White racists to avoid feeling any responsibility – collective or individual – for racial inequity.

### **Intersectionality**

This research illustrates the emerging paradigm of psychological research and praxis called “intersectionality.” The inherent complexity of intersectional research, particularly the emphasis on history and multiple, co-constitutive dimensions of social identity, has traditionally been viewed as an obstacle for social scientific research, especially quantitative inquiry (Cole, 2009; McCall, 2005; Dill, McLaughlin & Nieves, 2007). Intersectionality pushes psychologists, specifically, and social researchers, generally, beyond attempts to better understand difference by simply quantifying identity-based differences and assessing difference as an independent variable or experimental condition (McCall; Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008). Intersectional approaches recognize and centralize the interconnectedness of social identities and



compel researchers to situate identity categories within a complex and historical “matrix” of unequal power relations (Collins, 2000).

In this study, for example, we would not have been able to observe meaningful diversity in participants’ experience of White guilt had we not attempted to measure gender in a variety of ways. By using a test of identity centrality and salience (CSES) alongside traditional demographic variables, we found a significant interaction effect of CSES-Gender and gender identity (M/F). Similarly, a significant main effect of CSES-Race on White Shame would have been missed if we had not conceptualized White racial identity as more than just identifying as “White.” In allowing these identity variables to be multidimensional and subtle, we uncovered significant findings that would have been obfuscated by more traditional approaches to studying gender- and race-based differences. McCall calls this multidimensional analytic approach “intracategorical complexity”; in this case, we examined how multiple dimensions of difference inform the experience of Whiteness, as race remains our primary analytic category.

Furthermore, the TOWGAS itself was designed as a historically and culturally situated psychometric tool. Each scenario in the TOWGAS reflects real and historically contingent social interactions, i.e., actual situations encountered by real White people in everyday life. By drawing on recent events in U.S. history, including Hurricane Katrina, debates over “political correctness” and controversies on actual college campuses, we developed items that we hoped would be sufficiently culturally salient to our young adult sample. This not only reflects a commitment to culturally grounded psychology, but better approximates our working model of White guilt and shame, which posits both as emotions that are created at the intersection of identity, attitudes, affect *and* situation.

## **Limitations**

There are several limitations of the present investigation that merit explication. First, our sample was limited to White-identified and relatively affluent college students in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Accordingly, the external validity of our findings is highly limited, and future studies should incorporate more age-, regional- and occupation-diverse samples. For example, the findings from our college student sample may reflect latent cohort effects that are characteristic of White U.S. college students, who have been found to move through developmental trajectories as they develop autonomy from their parents and begin, potentially, to form their own attitudes and values (Spanierman et al., 2007). Such developmental periods, in terms of the capacity to process and understand the complexity of social problems, have been found to have at least some bearing on perceptions of race and racism (Spanierman et al.). The next stage of this instrument validation project, which has already been completed, involved a “snowball” sampling procedure in the general population designed to address this particular issue (Grzanka & Fassinger, 2009). Though we were satisfied with the diversity of our sample in terms of gender and differential experiences of White raciality, we could not examine intersectional differences in sexuality-based experiences because of the homogeneity of our sample in terms of sexual orientation. Furthermore, a more socioeconomically diverse sample might allow class-based differences in White guilt and shame to emerge.

A scoring error rooted in a mistake in survey design resulted in an inability to test whether participants were responding in socially desirable ways. Though initially we did not find any significant correlations between social desirability and the three TOWGAS

factors, latter analyses illuminated the scoring error and the unsuitability of these data. Future studies should utilize the M-C Form C, as well as other measures of multicultural social desirability or measures of political correctness, to further determine if social factors are impeding authentic responses to the TOWGAS. Moreover, application of the TOWGAS in experimental settings might also better minimize various forms of response error and bias through experimental manipulation and targeting priming.

We intend on continuing to use the TOSCA-3 (Tangney & Dearing, 2002) alongside the TOWGAS to compare the Negation subscale with the TOSCA-3's Externalization and Detachment subscales, which were not empirically distinct in this study. These analyses may continue to improve claims to the construct validity of the TOWGAS, which are limited at this time. Future studies should included additional measures to establish discriminant validity, including measures such as the CoBRAS (Color-Blindness Racial Attitudes Scale; Neville et al., 2000) and the Modern Racism Scale (McConahey, 1986). The present study did not address temporal stability of the TOWGAS, and a future study should assess test-rest reliability over at least a two-week period.

Our study of White guilt is restricted to White people's feelings about racism toward African Americans and Black people exclusively. Further research should expand the study of White racial guilt and shame as it manifests in different multicultural contexts. For example, do White people experience race-based guilt when confronted with inequalities between Whites and Latinos? Do we see a reverse affect – i.e., a decrease in White guilt – when dealing with the relative economic affluence of East Asian Americans or other non-White racial and ethnic groups that are perceived as

affluent? What about Native Americans? In an increasingly multiracial United States and globalized society, such questions will become increasingly important to psychologists and cultural researchers.

Finally, as is part of any instrument development procedure, individual TOWGAS items and scenarios should be refined to reflect any undesirable psychometric properties. The problematic scenario on “Driving While Black” will be adapted and retested, but future studies should also explore whether additional scenarios and items enhance reliability estimates and construct validity. One item (“You would think: ‘I would be broke if I gave money to every person who asks me for change.’”) cross-loaded onto the Negation and Guilt factors equally; the reasons for this double-loading are not immediately apparent and should be explored and rectified.

### **Implications and Directions for Future Research**

We interpret three primary findings of this initial validation project. First, distinguishing between White guilt and White shame on the TOWGAS is the arguably the most important finding of this study. A conceptually meaningful group of items loaded distinctly onto these first two factors with desirable levels of mutual exclusivity, which we assessed via eigenvalues. Based on our knowledge of existing literature, we assert that this is the first formal and successful attempt to study White shame in quantitative psychological research. We hope that future validation studies of the TOWGAS, including experimental research, will illuminate relationships between White shame and relevant variables, such as racism. For example, the weak significant negative correlation that we observed between White Shame and racism may yield productive findings in future empirical and field research to investigate the maladaptive properties of

White shame. Second, the emergence of the Negation factor signals the potential for a related research line to look into how Negation influences social and political attitudes, identities and behaviors. Finally, the intersectional design of the present study is a direct response to Cole (2009) and Dill, McLaughlin and Nieves's (2007) call for methodological innovations in intersectional research that refines and improves extant quantitative approaches. We will continue to exercise and expand these methods in future validation studies and applications of the TOWGAS. Once the instrument is refined, the TOWGAS should be used in future intersectional research projects to explore the implications of variations in experiences of White guilt that map onto dimensions of difference such as sexuality, gender, class, age, etc. The observed similarities and differences we found in the present study are indicative of the intersectional complexity of Whiteness, which goes far beyond quantifiable differences in attitudes and emotions. Concurrent qualitative studies, such as the one presented in Chapter 4, will help illuminate these diverse experiences and complicate quantitative findings that may encourage a static or hastily concretized theory of White guilt.

Overall levels of White Guilt-proneness and related constructs remain low in studies such as this one that are conducted in non-experimental settings. We suggest that instruments such as the TOWGAS and PCRW are brought into field and laboratory contexts. Moving beyond Web- and classroom-based administrations of these instruments will create opportunities to tap these constructs in culturally meaningful environments. We have begun to establish that White guilt, White shame and negation are distinct, but many questions remain. What happens with White guilt in multicultural pedagogy in the classroom and diversity training in the workplace? How are White guilt, as well as

negation and shame, implicated in moments of highly racialized crises, such as Hurricane Katrina, and how do the affective experiences of these situations intersect with White guilt to shape political attitudes? During the presidency of Barack Obama, we see productive opportunities for real-world testing and application of the TOWGAS of other measures related to White racial identity so that we can learn more about how aversive and subtle forms of racism manifest in emotion, cognition and attitudes. Such studies should not be conducted in disciplinary isolation; political psychologists, sociologists and scholars working in a variety of applied social and cultural research should interact to produce better knowledge about White guilt and its myriad implications. These investigations may ultimately aid in the development of a culturally grounded model that accurately reflects the historically and contextually constitutive elements of White people's experiences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century United States.

The next two chapters illustrate how such a model should develop as a result of interdisciplinary research and praxis. Chapter 4, the final empirical study of this dissertation, involves qualitative research with a subsample of our survey respondents who participated in in-depth, one-on-one interviews. Finally, Chapter 5 puts the qualitative and quantitative data from the prior three chapters in dialectical conversation to explore how these diverse methodologies challenge and inform each other.

Factor: *Guilt*

I remember the first time I felt White guilt, too.

It was during fall 1995 and I was 11 years old. I was on a community soccer team in Aberdeen, Maryland, the middle- and working-class military town in which I grew up. Though Aberdeen was racially diverse, largely because of the federal and military workforce there, my soccer team was not. Out of the 20 or so boys on the team, only one was Black. The rest of us were White.

I don't remember his name anymore, but my best buddy on the team was Black. I don't remember any of my teammates' names, which says something about how much I enjoyed playing soccer. I was sort of a fish out of water on the team. Unlike the other boys, I went to Catholic school, not the public middle school at which we practiced. I was chubby and not a very good athlete, but my parents made me join the team each year to get some exercise and make friends. I always hated soccer in the beginning of the season, but had fun in the end. I was so competitive that I would practice really hard and always become a starter by the end of the season.

I got along OK with all of the boys on the team, but this year, this Black kid and I became good friends. He was kind of a nerd – like me – and, retrospectively, I realize that he wasn't girl-crazed like the rest of the boys were quickly becoming. I'm sure this drew me to him, because there would be less pressure to act like I wasn't terrified of dating. He was also one of the best players on the team, and would help me practice.

According to my memory, one day we were all lined up in a long row for some sort of kicking drill. My friend was going down the line of White boys asking "Is O.J. guilty or innocent?" The "Trial of the Century" was unfolding at the time. Even though I

understood little of what the Simpson murder case was actually about, I remember watching it and pretending to get it. I had formed my opinion, too: O.J. was guilty. So, when he got to me, at the end of the line, I said so.

“Oh, I forgot all White people are racist,” he replied.

I am *positive* I said nothing at the time, but I was furious. As soon as my mom picked me up from practice, I told her all about it. Rather than yell at the Black boy, I yelled at her. I must have ranted all the way home about how wrong he was, and how unfair and ridiculous it was to call *me* a racist. O.J. was a murderer! That’s it.

My mom and I were sitting on the couch in the basement – the same place where I had sneaked a peanut butter cup years earlier and experienced my first pangs of guilt – and I was still fuming over my friend’s absurd accusation. My mother interrupted me, and told me to settle down. I don’t remember her exact words, but the gist was something like this:

“You see the world from a particular place. You’re White, and we’re White, and you don’t know what it’s like to be Black. You don’t know what it’s like to see all these White people so sure that a Black man committed this crime. You *cannot* know what that feels like. But you can think about it. And you can consider what it feels like to live in a racist world, because you live it, too. You’re just on the other side of it. So don’t be so sure of things.”

Looking back, it wasn’t only the first time I felt White guilt. It was also the first time I had been encouraged to see the world sociologically. There were invisible, intangible things that I was implicated in, but that I couldn’t control. It wasn’t fair, and I didn’t have to like it. But I was White in a racist world. I was inexorably part of a group



of people who were the beneficiaries and perpetrators of racism. I could have the best of intentions, but I would always be White.

Fast-forward 13 years. I'm 24 and now an adult. I'm getting out of a cab and approaching my cousins' bar in Northeast Washington, D.C. It's summer, and happy hour time, so it's still light outside. I'm headed toward the bar with my boyfriend, and there are a bunch of Vespa scooters parked outside.

To provide some context, I'll tell you that my cousins' bar is in a rough part of town that has become a nightlife hotspot in recent years. Not many White people live there, but they come to H Street NE to drink at night. Also, the Vespa brand of scooters is the favorite mode of transportation for a certain kind of hippie and hipster when the distance is too far to travel on a bike.

As we approached the bar entrance and prepared to show ID to the bouncer, we were interrupted by what appeared to be a drunk, high or otherwise not-sober Black woman who was asking people for change to get on the bus. She was approaching us from the left, but there was a White woman chaining up her scooter in the Black woman's path.

She asked the White woman for change to get on the bus. The White woman did not respond or look at her.

The Black woman began to yell. Loudly.

It would be dishonest to quote her, because I can't remember the order of what she said or all of the exact words she used, but I heard her. We all heard her.

She screamed at the White woman and threw up her hands. She said that her grandmother was that woman's grandmother's slave. She used the word "foremothers," I'm sure. Not "forefathers." Foremothers. She kept saying that her foremothers were that White bitch's foremothers' slaves. She said she was just asking for change to get home on a bus. The Black woman was so angry, and she was throwing her arms in the air and moving toward the White woman. She looked as if she might hit the White woman, though I'm not sure of this. A bystander, a Black man, intervened and pulled the Black woman down the street toward the nearby bus stop. She continued to yell and scream as the Black man walked her to the bus stop. I remember watching them and not being able to tell if they actually knew each other, or if the man was just being kind.

I looked at the White woman, who was 10 shades whiter than she had been before. She spoke softly to a friend, who had come out from inside the bar. I couldn't hear what she said. We went inside and left them on the street.

At first, I judged the White woman. Serves you right, I thought. Stupid White girl with your stupid Vespa. Got what you deserved. Do you even know where you are?

Once that went away, I heard the Black woman yelling in my head. All I could think was: What if I had done the same thing? I probably would have done the same thing. I would have tried to ignore her. And then she would have yelled at me about my proverbial ancestors and their slaves. Then I would have been that stupid, racist White person getting told about himself on the street. It wasn't me, but it could have been. That was enough to feel guilty.

I believe in my own antiracism, and I don't think that White guilt motivates me to believe what I believe or do what I do. I can confidently say that I don't feel White guilt all the time. I don't feel it *most* of the time. But I feel it some of the time, and I think that is OK. In fact, I think it's important. I don't want to give it up. I don't think I should give it up. I'm still White. That means there's some stuff to feel guilty about.

## CHAPTER 4:

### Upsetting Whiteness: Guilt and Shame at the Intersections of Difference

*“My response to racism is anger. I have lived with that anger, ignoring it, feeding upon it, learning to use it before it laid my visions to waste, for most of my life.”*

-Audre Lorde (1984) in “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism” (p. 124).

*“I don't really, personally, I don't think you should ever have a reason to be angry; I don't think it's a very constructive emotion. Your anger is the reason – you should address that, as opposed to thinking that being angry is really gonna do anything for you.”*

-Steve, a participant.

### **Introduction**

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 helped to establish what White guilt and White shame actually are. Now, I turn our attention to the phenomenological and subjective experiences of White racial affect. The present chapter is organized around a fairly simple question: how does White guilt happen? In order to build answers to this question and the many subsequent questions it evokes, I employ qualitative methods – specifically, in-depth interviews and the theory-methods package of grounded theory (GT) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) – to construct explanatory narratives of White racial attitudes and experience that are based in the lives of a group of young White people. These 10 interview participants constitute a purposefully recruited group of students from within the random sample of 2,200 undergraduates who were contacted to participate in survey research in Chapter 3. I met with each of the 10 students twice to discuss their opinions and feelings about the three crises analyzed in Chapter 2. In the process of these interviews, my participants shared their thoughts on celebrities Isaiah Washington,

Anderson Cooper and Don Imus, and expressed how their interpretation of those figures' respective controversies is informed by their personal politics, background and identity-group memberships.

My participants' articulations both confirm and challenge the findings presented in Chapter 3. Overall, they contribute an additional level of theoretical nuance and depth to my investigation, because each of their lives reflect certain aspects of research-based thinking about White guilt while refusing to conform to any universal framework of White racial affect. In reflecting on and representing White guilt and the dysphoria associated with feeling responsible for racism, sexism and heteronormativity, they upset any inclination to simplify or reduce White people to a one-dimensional subjectivity. The young White adults who participated in this study engaged in affect negation in ways that reflect the findings in Chapter 3 and that appear to use some of the same rhetoric employed by the journalists in Chapter 2. However, these interviews yielded new findings about the dynamic processes involved in deferring, denying and avoiding the personal implications of racial conflict, inequities and discrimination. These strategies involve but are not limited to: relying on inaccurate history to explain contemporary inequalities; the construction of logic that defies reality to accommodate neoliberal ideologies; the creation of other guilty and culpable individual and collective subject positions; the privileging of other aspects of identity over race; and the absence of feeling, which I term "inaffectivity."

By asking how White guilt happens, we open the discursive arena up to a variety of explanations of how White people come to feel bad about being White in a racially unjust social and cultural context. This involves exploring the specific conditions under

which White people feel connected to one another. In other words, when does the group-ness of Whiteness become strong enough so White people feel that the actions of other White people reflect upon them (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007)? Under what circumstances do the actions of White individuals come to reflect White people generally? What historical and culturally contingent situations motivate such collective racial guilt and anxiety (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears & Manstead, 1998)? If and when such feelings manifest, what strategies – both attitudinal and affective – are used to deal with and manage them? Though I have worked in the prior chapters to better specify and explicate what exactly White guilt and shame are as categories of emotion, we must concurrently consider that feelings manifest in different ways for different people. In terms of racial affect, this means rejecting an explanatory framework such that being White alone determines the phenomenology of White guilt and/or shame.

This chapter presents the affective lives of young White adults as narratives with the potential to destabilize uniform or normative accounts of Whiteness. First, I explain the methodological orientation of this qualitative project with a focus on how several root assumptions distinguish this work from prior chapters in the dissertation. Second, I discuss the methods used to gather and analyze data. Next, I present my findings and focus on the theoretical insights that emerged from my respondents' words and their self-representations. I conclude with thoughts on how these findings might contribute to a theory of White racial affect and opportunities for future qualitative inquiries.

### **Methodology**

Corbin and Strauss (2008) define methodology as, “a way of thinking about and studying social phenomena” (p. 1). “Methods,” which describe the precise techniques

used to gather and analyze data, arise from the methodological position taken by a researcher. In Corbin and Strauss's definition, methodologies are epistemological and shape how researchers go about using and constructing "theory," which is the term used to denote accounts and explanations of social phenomena. Though my theoretical commitments are present and active throughout the entire dissertation, three primary methodological assumptions inform the analytic core of this chapter, which is distinct from the discourse analyses of Chapter 2 and the psychometric work of Chapter 3. I explicate each of the following assumptions below: 1) individual lives inform collective experience, and vice versa; 2) multiple dimensions of identity, including but not limited to race, have bearing on the social and political perspectives of White people; and 3) White guilt and shame may feel differently for different White people. Each of these assumptions is based in extant theory and my findings in the prior two studies. These assumptions undergird my construction of this qualitative study and the interpretation of the data herein. This methodological exposition is followed by a detailed account of the research process itself (i.e., the methods) from research design through data analyses.

### **The Significance of the Subjective**

It is conceptually easier to theorize and study how being a part of a group influences an individual's life than it is to comprehend how an individual's specific life experiences might reflect the characteristics of a greater collectivity of people (Côté & Levine, 2002). These are the kinds of difficult problems and questions that qualitative researchers face when studying a small group of people and theorizing from the position of these localized experiences. Reflecting my training in ethnography and the tradition of symbolic interactionism, I presume that the qualitative messiness of real people's lived

experiences is productive of meaning and serves as the basis for macro-level theory building about widespread social phenomena. This means that while the claims that result from my analyses of these interview data are restricted to this research situation (i.e., lack ‘generalizability’), individual subjectivities and life histories are valuable sites of meaning-making that inform how we make sense of other, future observations (Clarke, 2005). Quite literally, the transcripts of these interviews are archives of each respondent’s racial epistemology. Taken collectively and in conversation with one another, they offer insight into how actual, particular White people experience their race, gender, sexuality, nationality and class, and how these dimensions of identity and difference co-constitute their perspectives on race, responsibility and affect in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Caughey (2006) asserts, critical consideration of even one person’s life story can elucidate cultural phenomena just as well as scientifically inflected demographic research or projects that attempt to use qualitative methods within a positivist paradigm that privileges the experiences of “representative” participants and tends to obscure the tremendous variation in any one person’s beliefs and values (p. 8).

In focusing attention on the unique perspectives of a diverse group of individuals who are connected by little beyond geography, nation and race, explanations of social problems (e.g., White guilt) may emerge from *differences* as opposed to *sameness*. Embracing the rich qualitative sociological tradition of symbolic interactionism (hereafter, SI) (Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959; Denzin 1992), this investigation is concerned with how my participants make meaning in their own lives and how they come to understand their own relationship to social controversies outside of their immediate surroundings or involvement. Ascertaining an imagined genuine or authentic response to



racial conflicts is neither my goal nor positioned as empirically possible. In this sense, my concern here is with the cultural and interpersonal dynamics of my participants' psychologies, instead of searching for an intrapsychic and uninhibited sense of self. Goffman, for example, disregarded the latter conceptualization of identity as naïve. From his position, which is that of a dramaturgical interactionist, all social interactions are rooted in performances, which are a kind of citational taking up of typically extant or expected social roles (see also Butler, 1993). What matters to the relative success of a given interaction, accordingly, is not whether someone is performing truthfully or not, but if they are performing convincingly or believably to their audience, which includes observers and themselves (Goffman). To Goffman (1959), a performer may be "fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality" (p. 17). As opposed to these "sincere" performers, some performers may not believe their performances at all; he calls these performances "cynical" (p. 18). Most performances fall in the space between total sincerity and cynicism, because performers constantly practice and make sense of their roles in specific social contexts.

The interviews in this study are framed as performative, highly constructed spaces where both my participants and I are assuming social roles and presenting ourselves in culturally and situationally specific ways. Goffman's (1959) division of the "front" performance area and the "back" region of preparation for impression management have their origins in Mead's root 'formula' of SI: the "I," the "Me" and the "Generalized Other" (Mead, 1934). The "I" is the social actor in (inter)action; for my participants, this is their subjective experience of our interviews. The "Me" is the way the social actor sees

herself, and the “Generalized Other” is the aggregated audience perspective from which the “Me” is viewed. In my interviews, I am likely not the only person whose perspective matters to the constitution of their Generalized Others. Indeed, an idealized White person or an imagined non-White witness may be part of their metaphorical audience (Goffman). Though our interviews are the specific “setting” in which my participants’ performances are manifesting, discursive elements and social actors outside of the interviews undoubtedly permeate our shared situation (Goffman). I embrace and draw upon the discursive strengths of our interview situations, namely the following: my participants’ guarantee of anonymity, our shared Whiteness and the privacy of our conversations. The goal of interpreting these responses is to examine how these White people’s individual experiences might dispute extant theoretical assumptions and, accordingly, enrich my emerging explanations of White guilt by developing a theory that is both sufficiently explanatory and accommodating of attitudinal and experiential diversity.

While poststructural accounts of culture beneficially help to reject a universalizing subject position (Foucault, 1978), such perspectives may also have the effect of reifying a structural rendering of social relationships that denies individual subjectivity, agency and resistance (Collins, 1998). Accordingly, a feminist ethnographic standpoint rooted in SI draws on the strength of poststructural criticism to trouble the subject without displacing it. Adele Clarke (2005) and others (e.g., Mamo, 2007; Joyce, 2008; Shim, 2005) have done the work of explicating and demonstrating how such a position actually manifests in ethnographic research. Clarke’s “situational analysis” effectively takes qualitative research, specifically grounded theory (hereafter, GT), through the postmodern turn while balancing the opposing impulses of structure versus

agency and subjectivity versus objectivity. Indeed, feminist ethnographies and situation analyses attempt to implode such reductive and illusory binaries by emphasizing the meso-level dynamics of experiences and grounding eventual macro-level theorization in micro-level negotiations of power and identity between humans and non-human actors, actants and elements. From its origins in the work of Anselm Strauss and the early interactionists, GT involves a process of self-reflexively “coding” data for thematic, recurrent themes and reducing such codes continually so that a unifying explanation quite literally ‘emerges’ from the qualitative data set (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Fassinger, 2005; Clarke). Though such a methodology might appear profoundly reflexive and subjective to researchers trained in quantitative social science methods, Clarke explains that some postmodern, feminist, Marxist and otherwise social justice-committed qualitative researchers have critiqued GT as positivist and invested in modernist notions of truth and objectivity (Haraway, 1988). By centralizing the always-already postmodern and poststructural elements of GT and SI, Clarke proposes new methodological “root metaphors” that emphasize a) Foucauldian discourse analysis, b) accommodate the role of nonhuman elements and c) promote topographic representations of discourse. Consequently, Clarke posits a version of GT primed for use in feminist ethnographic projects. Positional maps, such as those used and presented in Chapter 2, appear once again in this chapter and are constructed from the articulations and silences of my respondents, but once again represent the discursive terrain of inquiry – not specific individuals or groups. These maps are the discursive topography of my research and are based in my interpretation of my respondents’ self-representations. Through these maps, the “situation” of Clarke’s situational analysis becomes an interpretive framework with

which to build theory that is reflexively co-constituted by the subjectivities of the researcher(s) and her participants. Accordingly, situational analysis and a feminist reflexive GT draw on the strength and rigor of interactionist methods *and* poststructural and postmodern accounts of identity, difference and culture without falling into structure/agency, individual/collective analytic traps.

### **Intracategorical Complexity: White People**

Intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Dill, Weber & Nettles, 2001) mandates a recognition of how multiple categories of difference and identity co-constitute human experience in history and culture. Cole (2009), Dill, McLaughlin and Nieves (2007) and McCall (2005) have all recently wrestled with the complexity of intersectional analyses as a methodological paradigm. More specifically, their writing has evidenced how intersectionality is best conceptualized as a theory-methods package *a la* GT, and how the project of producing more valid and liberatory knowledge about diverse human experiences is bound up in questions of methods and methodology (Clarke, 2005).

In mapping the terrain of extant intersectional research, McCall (2005) constitutes a continuum of complexity that is anchored by *anticategorical* and *intercategorical* approaches at opposite poles. Anticategorical analyses tend to be the most hostile toward the use of social categories to structure history and experience, reflecting critical postmodern and poststructural theories that have troubled modernist and structuralist ontologies of the universal, normative subject. Anticategorical complexity compels researchers to build qualitative genealogies that describe and explain how specific categories such as race and gender came into discourse and have affected material distributions of power and resources. On the other end of the spectrum, intercategorical

complexity may retain a critical stance toward social identity categories, but it deploys these categories in research to observe differences and similarities between groups. For example, a researcher may want to examine potential variation in frequency and severity of depression and anxiety disorders among LGB-identified persons and consider how racial identity may be significantly correlated with these psychological issues. Because intercategorical complexity actually necessitates the provisional adoption of identity categories, these methodological strategies tend to be most commonly used in the social sciences and in quantitative approaches that require the constitution of variables.

Intracategorical approaches fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum of complexity, because these strategies are skeptical of social categories but rely on them to the extent that social categories tend to provide clues about how inequality has been constructed and reproduced over time. With a critical stance toward social categories and identity-based group membership, intracategorical approaches “often [focus] on particular social groups at neglected points of intersection,” or otherwise underrepresented intersections of identity. Accordingly, intracategorical complexity recognizes the diversity of experiences within a particular dimension or site of difference, such as being a U.S. Latina.

Black feminists (e.g., Dill, 1978; Collins, 1990/2000, 2005) and scholars building the emergent queer of color critique (Muñoz, 1999; Ferguson, 2004) have illustrated the tremendous scholarly and academic potential opened up by intracategorical approaches directed at neglected areas of inquiry or communities that have been studied using oppressive and one-dimensional models of race *or* class *or* gender *or* sexuality (Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008). In this dissertation, the methods of intersectionality are targeted at

an over-represented but under-critiqued site of experience: Whiteness. The exigency of this intracategorical approach is rooted in the research questions, which aim to probe White subjectivity for insight into how affect shapes racial identity and attitudes and to examine how these phenomena are differentially constituted and inflected by intersections of difference. This intracategorical approach is inherited from Black feminist scholarship on the intersections of race, class and gender and queer theories that have unsettled the categories of sex, gender and sexuality in their varied deployments across history and cultures. The political goals of these projects can be generally described as liberatory and emancipatory. In other words, these extant intersectional projects were designed to fairly and accurately represent the under- or mis-represented, i.e., those groups who have historically and contemporarily been subject(ed) to what Haraway (1988) called the “god-trick” or the disciplining, colonizing, masculinist gaze of hegemonic knowledge projects (Foucault, 1977). The political objective in the present inquiry is not emancipation but *destabilization*. By using the tools of feminist and antiracist social scientific and humanist scholar-activism to denaturalize and mark Whiteness – to literally show how these varied but connected racial experiences are constituted within the same unequal relations of power that produce and materialize White supremacy – the hope is to better account for and critique the practices that produce hegemonic Whiteness.

In Chapter 3, quantitative methods and analyses were used to demonstrate how subjective *ideas* about gender, not gender identity itself, influence proneness to feeling White guilt. This important finding would have been elided had gender not been operationalized as anything more than an independent variable, i.e., a finite condition of

social identity. Sexuality (including heterosexuality) and gender differences (including men and masculinity) produce meaningful variations in White people's lives.

Frankenberg's (1993) landmark work took up the task of demonstrating the influence of race in White women's experiences, which included (but were not limited to) sexual and intimate relationships, friendships with other women, experiences of space/place, understanding of ethnicity and the perception of history. Frankenberg's intracategorical approach employed ethnographic methodology to deconstruct categories of "woman" and "White" while exploring their co-constitution and inextricability in White women's subjectivity. Similarly, Pamela Perry (2002) produced an impressive ethnography of White teenagers and the intersections of race, class and space in the development of their racial identities in high school. Perry interviewed and observed students at two different high schools in California – one predominantly White, and another in which White students were in the minority – to see how young White people might differentially imagine and experience race depending on the context in which they were living and learning. She found that:

White students' experiences of racial-ethnic difference was complicated by such things as the ways gender, class, age-group, and other identities influenced the experience of race in a given moment; the degree of diversity whites saw among people of color; and the different sentiments and meanings attached to different racialized relations, such as white-Asian or white-black relations. (p. 3)

Reflecting on her role as a participant observer, Perry described how she gathered the data to make these claims: "...I attended class with students, hung out with them during lunch and school breaks, worked with them on school committees or in after-school

activities, attended school games, rallies, and other events, and chaperoned the Junior Prom and Senior Balls of each school” (p. 211). Through community immersion, in-depth interviews and the production of massive qualitative data sets, both Frankenberg and Perry illustrate how the dynamic, contradictory and process-based elements of White racial identity emerged at the intersections of multiple dimensions of difference, especially gender, class and sexuality.

It is difficult to imagine how this dissertation could have been conducted using solely quantitative methods, which necessitate the relative or provisional stability of certain categories in order to make observations and claims about statistically significant relationships between variables. Qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, generally requires much less adherence to the sanctity, parsimony or mutual exclusivity of categories; hence, the utility of qualitative methods to the study of intersectionality. According to McCall (2005), “Thus new practices of ethnographic representation have been developed to allow feminist research to proceed while the authenticity of both the subject and the researcher—as if either had a single, transparent voice— is questioned” (pp. 1778-1779). The reflexivity and critical stance toward subjectivity, objectivity and the data-gathering process so central to ethnography (Caughey, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007) facilitates the transformative and counter-hegemonic epistemology of intersectionality.

In this dissertation, both quantitative and qualitative (i.e., “mixed”) methods are used to push intersectional thinking about Whiteness and affect forward. The topic of mixed-methods and mixed-methodologies and their influence on the claims I make herein



will be discussed in greater length in the final chapter. For now, I turn to another topic area that is effectively “opened up” by a qualitative methodology in the present chapter.

### **Opening Up Guilt and Shame**

In much the same way that intracategorical approaches to intersectionality motivate the researcher to examine social identity categories at an oblique angle, a feminist, interactionist approach to the study of White guilt and shame necessitates a conceptually dynamic framework with which to interpret how White people define, understand and make sense of their own feelings of racial guilt and shame. The three prior chapters have directed analytic and empirical attention toward developing working definitions of both of these concepts. Chapter 1 drew upon critique of extant literatures to distinguish between guilt and shame and historicize racial affect in 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberal multiculturalism. Chapter 2 examined how these forms of affect were (not) articulated in contemporary popular discourse about race, identity and responsibility. Chapter 3 used a new survey instrument to tap my definitions of these constructs and examine their relationship to other psychometric scales and variables of interest, such as Collective Self Esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) and racism (Saucier & Miller, 2003). What has emerged up until this point is a distinction between White guilt and White shame that pivots upon emotional direction and intensity, whereby guilt describes negative feelings directed at specific behaviors or attitudes of the White racial self or White others, while White shame is more painful, self-directed hate about Whiteness. Of distinct theoretical import is the associated concept of “negation,” which describes the cognitive-affective strategies taken up and performed by White people to defer, deny or displace feelings of White guilt and shame. However, these definitions are only useful for the study of White

racial affect insomuch as they adequately and consistently reflect the lived experiences of actual White people.

Accordingly, the qualitative methodology of the present study holds these definitions as tentative conceptual placeholders for a range of affective performances, utterances and articulations. A root assumption of this study is that White shame and White guilt may not – indeed, may likely not – be felt, performed or understood in the same way for all White people in the United States in our current historical moment. Recognizing intersectional differences is imperative, because gender, sexuality and class may influence the tendency or intensity of one’s White racial guilt or shame. As a researcher of emotions, however, it is also essential to allow for the feelings themselves to be fundamentally different for different people. Guilt may manifest in radically different ways for different White people, and these differences may sometimes be based in individual differences not captured by traditional social categories, such as social class, age, geography, etc. Before moving into a discussion of my specific research methods, two empirical strategies to capture these individual differences merit explication.

First, just as the my Test of White Guilt and Shame (TOWGAS) does not use the terms “guilt” and “shame,” I avoided using these terms in interviews unless my participants brought them up. Instead, I asked questions that described the concepts as I understand them, which is similar to the TOWGAS’s response format. The motivation for such a rhetorical strategy is that by using descriptive language to talk about these feelings, as opposed to psychological jargon that requires the participant and I to share understanding of the constructs, I am better equipped to understand what my participants mean when they talk about self-conscious racial affect. During the analysis process, as

opposed to the interview itself, I can then evaluate whether or not we share similar understandings of these affective forms. Second, the interviews themselves would be organized around similar topics of conflict and controversy as the discourse analysis conducted in Chapter 2. By asking for my participants to reflect on their perceptions of Cooper's coverage of Hurricane Katrina and blame assignment after the storm, Imus's firing from CBS Radio, and Washington's conflict with T. R. Knight and termination from *Grey's Anatomy*, I could ultimately compare and contrast their responses with those of journalists and media figures. More importantly, their words could present direct challenges to my emerging framework of White guilt and shame that is considerably based on the findings of my discourse analysis of these specific events.

The goal of this research process is to develop a grounded theory of White guilt and shame that possesses satisfactory explanatory power while accommodating ample phenomenological diversity. The specific research methods of the project, which I next describe, were designed especially with this in mind.

### **Methods**

When completing the informed consent form for the TOWGAS instrument development study presented in Chapter 3, participants were asked if they were willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview. If they answered "yes," they were asked to provide an email address along with their gender identification and sexual orientation. When data collection for that study closed in summer 2008, I began to contact participants who indicated they would be willing to speak with me in a follow-up interview (see Appendix D for sample interview request email). I contacted participants based on their gender and sexual orientation with the goal of recruiting a gender- and

sexuality-diverse group of men and women that included people who identified as straight gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer. No participants identified as transgender in the original sample; thus, none were included in this subsample. All of the participants were U.S. citizens, and all of them grew up in the Mid Atlantic region. I did not contact any student participants whom I knew personally or was professionally connected to in any apparent way. I ultimately contacted every non-heterosexual student on the list who met this criterion ( $n = 7$ ), and two (one gay man and one bisexual man) were willing and able to participate. The remaining participants were straight men and women who composed a total participant group of 10 people (see Table 4).

Table 4  
*Participant Demographic Characteristics (n = 10)*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	<b>Year in School</b>	<b>Hometown/state</b>
Jeff	M	21	Straight	Jewish	Senior	California, then Columbia, Md
Mike	M	19	Straight	Not religious	Junior	Columbia, Md.
Steve	M	22	Gay	Not religious	Senior	Vienna, Va.
Noah	M	22	Bisexual	Jewish	Senior	Potomac, Md.
Tom	M	21	Straight	Atheist	Senior	Burtonsville, Md.
Stephanie	F	21	Straight	Catholic	Senior	Conowingo, Md.
Rachel	F	21	Straight	Jewish	Senior	Silver Spring, Md.
Jamie	F	19	Straight	Not religious	Sophomore	Sykesville, Md.
Amy	F	19	Straight	Catholic, not religious	Freshman	North Potomac, Md.
Claire	F	21	Straight	Catholic, not religious	Senior	Frederick, Md.

Interviews were conducted between September 2008 and March 2009. I asked each participant to meet with me twice over the period of two weeks. The interviews were conducted in my private office in a professional suite on the first floor of a residence hall on the university campus. Individual interviews lasted between one half hour and one hour and a half. During each interview, I sat in an office chair in front of a desk approximately five to eight feet away from the participant, who sat in a lounge chair facing a laptop computer on which several video clips were displayed. Each interview

followed a fairly consistent format and was semi-structured by a standard list of questions (see Appendix G); however, additional questions were asked and question order shifted slightly depending on participant responses.

The first interview began with introductory questions about the participant's background and reasons for participating in the research. For example, I asked: where they grew up; their age, major and year in school; how they would describe their personality; and what are the best ways for a stranger to get to know them. We then watched the first clip of Anderson Cooper's interview with Senator Mary Landrieu and proceeded into a discussion of their impressions of the clip and political debates about Hurricane Katrina. The interview concluded with the scheduling of the second interview. The second interview was held one week after the first to provide the participant with time to potentially reflect on our conversation. Our second meeting began with a viewing of the MSNBC simulcast of *Imus in the Morning* from 2007 during which Don Imus called the Rutgers University women's basketball team "nappy-headed hos." We discussed this controversy and the participant's opinions about whether White people might feel some sense of responsibility in moments when figures such as Imus make public, racist slurs. We then watched two clips related to Isaiah Washington's firing from *Grey's Anatomy* for allegedly calling co-star T. R. Knight a "faggot." The first clip was from backstage at the Golden Globes when Washington told a reporter, while on stage with the whole cast who had just won the award for best drama, that he had not called Knight a faggot. Then, we watched Knight's appearance on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* from later that week in which he discussed the entire controversy and his reactions to it in some emotional detail. After talking about the Washington-Knight dispute in some detail,

specifically her views on Washington's firing and the relative force of the word "faggot," the interview concluded with me offering to talk about any of these issues further with the participant if she felt that she had more to say at a later time. I offered to send a copy of the completed manuscript for feedback and input after the dissertation was completed and expressed my appreciation to each participant for volunteering time to my project.

After each interview, I wrote notes about my initial impressions of the interview, especially my sense of the rapport between the participant and me, as well as any interesting comments I wanted to return to in future interviews and data analysis. Transcription began immediately using HyperTRANSCRIBE software. Only I had access to the digital audio files of the interviews besides me. Open coding began in spring 2009 and proceeded through the composition of the manuscript. Coding was conducted using HyperRESEARCH software. Open coding is the process by which the researcher develops loose and flexible descriptors for phenomena in the data that should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and is the first step in organizing the qualitative data into meaningful categories. Axial coding followed; this process involves refining codes based on the emerging theory, which is articulated through extensive memo writing and the gradual incorporation of outside literature and existing theoretical perspectives (Fassinger, 2005). HyperRESEARCH enables memos to be embedded into the coded interview transcript, so that coding, memoing and even additional transcription (for editing) can occur simultaneously. All of the procedures followed the general principles of CT research outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Fassinger's (2005) specification of how to use GT in psychological research. Additionally, positional maps and ordered situational maps were produced following the

principles of situational analysis explicated by Clarke (2005). Positional maps, such as the ones that appeared in Chapter 2, represent the variety of positions taken up in the discourse and are organized along two axes. Situational maps are theoretically informed lists of empirical evidence that help to identify and conceptualize the relevant social actors, implied actors, nonhuman actants and macro-level discourses implicated in a given research situation.

### **Findings: Upsetting Whiteness**

In the following sections, I explore the concepts that emerged in my participants' responses to the controversies we discussed in both of our interviews and reflect on how their individual responses map onto each other's. There was substantive variability in their responses, but rhetorical and ideological trends coalesced around how these people think race does and does not matter in certain social settings, and how members of the same race, gender and sexuality may differentially feel responsibility for the behaviors of other identity group members. Notably, my participants were the most forthcoming and explanatory around the ways in which collective responsibility and structural forces do *not* influence individual behaviors, attitudes or feelings. Their responses shift analytic attention away from codified emotions of White guilt and White shame and toward the various strategies taken to negate these feelings.<sup>16</sup>

### **Histories and the Present**

Popular rhetoric about young Americans might have us assume that college students do not know or think about history often (Loewen, 1995). However, my participants invoked history's influence on the present with remarkable consistency.

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<sup>16</sup> Ellipses appear in direct quotes from participants to reflect pauses and drop-offs in their speech, not words that I chose to omit.

History as a concept, more than specific historical events, was constructed as an amorphous but powerful factor that exerts a special kind of power on contemporary social relationships.

Tom, a 21-year-old senior from a Washington, D.C. exurb who had been accepted to law school, felt that situations like the Don Imus scandal remind Americans of a painful racial past that is best left alone. He explained:

It just sort of feels frustrating that we can't sort of move past these kinds of things and sort of really move forward and make something constructive instead of always reverting back to such a bad past. And that sort of...it just keeps bringing those sorts of things to light. Not only do those comments just as bad in today's society, it sort of brings up the history and then people think about the history of race relations when people say things like [Imus did].

Jeff, a 21-year-old engineering senior from an affluent, racially diverse suburb between Baltimore and Washington, said that history influences the ways in which media corporations deal with employees whose behavior incites negative press or a public outcry. For Jeff, the American response to 9/11 was not dissimilar to how CBS fired Don Imus:

You know we, especially as Americans, we would prefer action to inaction. 9/11 is a perfect example. Almost immediately, we bombed out Afghanistan, and then we got a lot of backlash for that. And now people are even blaming President Bush for, "Oh, look at all the harm you caused in Afghanistan." But we were the ones who demanded that he do this. I mean, if history has shown anything, it's if you stand and do nothing, then you're probably going to get overwhelmed and taken down by the general public. Especially in big, charged moments like this.

What can generally be described as U.S. social and cultural history was framed as the context in which contemporary social issues are negotiated, and different renderings of our collective past helped my participants make sense of Imus's and Washington's firing, as well as outrage over the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Consistently, race, gender and sexuality were each paired with the concept of history to



explain why these markers of identity remain politically charged, or alternatively, why they not longer retain explanatory power.

Despite the rhetorical significance of history to my participants, history itself was a vague and sometimes inaccurate invocation of meta-narratives or anecdotal historical episodes. In comparing and contrasting Hurricane Katrina and the gay rights movement to past events, participants cited things such as sinking of the Titanic, the Civil War, the Holocaust, 9/11 or Hurricane Andrew. The power of history was insisted upon, but what history is and how exactly individual people settle upon a collective history and deal with history was not explicated. Instead, references to the American past remained mostly ephemeral. For example, I asked Rachel, a 21-year-old senior from a suburb close to campus, whether she thought racial conflicts or debates over sexuality were more important to the American public today or, alternatively, if they were equally important and salient political topics. She said:

I think they're equally important. I think maybe a little more salient is homophobia maybe just because it's a newer issue compared to race, which that issue has been going on for a long time, since the Civil War and before that. You know, they're both still having struggles and challenges, but maybe just a little bit, homophobia being more the topic for today.

Rachel, who is straight, saw race as deeply engrained in American history, whereas sexuality is, “because of the newness of the topic,” still congealing into a coherent political debate. “Homophobia,” accordingly, may be a slightly more important topic to Americans, but this judgment is rooted in Rachel’s perception of an American social history in which sexuality just recently came into the public sphere. To my participants, the influence of this history stretches beyond political discourse, however, into social psychology. Because of sexuality’s relative “newness,” heterosexuals do not feel as much group affiliation or connectivity as White people or Black people. Sexuality joins straight

people together less, because it only recently became a point of political affinity; race, on the other hand, has been historically salient since before the American Civil War.

Respondents asserted that when social identity and group membership influences the interpretation of controversies, Americans use the history of their groups to make political judgments. The histories of minority groups – or the histories of majorities in terms of minority group subjugation – were the most salient histories.

Steve, a 22-year-old gay senior from Northern Virginia, reflected on how history shapes collective Black identities in the United States. For him, this story begins with slavery:

So I mean, having absolutely – not even being like a paid individual and something like that – and then being thrown into the world economy...and I mean like, I would imagine that Black families do not have as much inherited wealth as your average American family in the sense that, you know, they have a shorter history in that sense. And then like I mean the general attitude that has evolved because of that, and the sort of racial tensions that exist, I feel like that helps to develop a sort of distinct identity among the African American community that is lots of times at odds with the, uh...I guess like the White community.

For Steve, history is the setting in which political ideas develop for both Whites and Blacks. Steve takes up an extremely environmental approach to thinking about how people come to have prejudicial attitudes. “I have friends in Michigan and stuff, and in Detroit and stuff, and they just genuinely feel like they have more of a conflict with the Black community,” he said. He referenced a friend who felt uncomfortable voting for Barack Obama, because, “he felt that it would give them a one-up on him type of thing.” When I asked Steve if he thought this represented a racist opinion, he said yes but qualified his response with: “[My friend] doesn't really think about it as that type of thing. It's just that for whatever reason...the way that he group up, then way that he came to view the world...so I mean, there's...nobody's colorblind.” In the domain of

prejudice, individual agency is largely irrelevant; history and context predetermined these attitudes. Accordingly, individual people cannot be blamed or held responsible for their discriminatory feelings or behaviors if they grow up in a geographic and historical context that is perceived as likely to produce such attitudes. Steve perceived his friend's attitudes to be rooted in community conflicts that preceded him. "It's probably just representative of underlying tensions that there are between the two communities there. Yeah, that's just...he just felt that tension, and he knew what side he was on, obviously," he said.

Respondents used the past to contrast or oppose identity categories against one another. Stephanie, a 21-year-old engineering senior from a rural county in northeastern Maryland, explains why racial inequality remains a more heated political issue in the U.S. than gender and sexism:

And I think that there was a lot of racial issues, in the history of this country, and we're just burned by it, and scarred by it. And that's why we're very, you know, aware. The gender issue, I think, has been going on, but it wasn't such a stark contrast, you know. We didn't go from like slavery to no slavery; it was like...but even though, you know, with that, there was progression. But, it's kind of...there was no real significant, I think, women's movement. There was a little bit, but it wasn't a big thing; it's been a gradual thing that's gone on, and I mean they're still kind of doing like "equal pay for equal work" and that kind of thing. But it's been so slow. And it's been so progressive, that it's...we're not as scarred by it. And society still allows for that kind of situation and women haven't; like, it hasn't been like a massive movement for women to seek it to change, where there was a massive movement of African Americans to seek equality. There still hasn't been that; like, there has been the feminist movement, and there have been a couple like significant feminists throughout history, but it wasn't like a big movement, and I think that a lot of women right now still will say that they are less than their husband or whatever. As long as women aren't pushing for equality, it's not going to happen.

From her perspective of women's history and the African American Civil Rights movement in the United States, women have been complacent in their subordination and have not developed an organized, "big" movement for equality. This sits in contrast to

African Americans, who, according to Stephanie, have consistently demanded and achieved equal rights. Equal rights for African Americans is defined as not being enslaved by Whites, whereas women's marginalization is more cultural, pervasive and difficult to legislate. Though arguably reductive and eliding of Black women's experiences, Stephanie's explanation of women's inequality relative to Blacks' highlights the intersectionality of race and gender in the rendering of history. Quite literally, Stephanie's ideas about gender inequality are shaped by her perceptions of African American emancipation for slavery in the U.S. and vice versa.

Along with a range of rhetorical strategies I observed, the deployment of historical factors to account for prejudice prevents nearly all people from being identified as racist or prejudiced in the present or recent past. No one can be blamed for racist, sexist or homonegative attitudes or behaviors, because a historical context can explain how these conflicts came to be. Conversely and contradictorily, historical structures of inequality *cannot* explain how other people contemporarily experience inequality, marginalization or discrimination. In other words, history can excuse racist acts but not account for why inequality persists "after" racism.

Whether or not my respondents' endorse an 'official,' consistent or accurate version of American history is less important to my interpretation of their responses than the regularity with which some version of history was invoked to explain contemporary phenomena. Their reliance on a vernacular history is distinct from Steele (1990) or Ellison's (1996) explanations of collective guilt, which move through distinct social historical formations – where conceptually discreet historical movements frame White people's experience of White guilt. My participants' responses more fully reflect the

subjective reflections presented by Wise (2004) and Berger (1999), whereby political attitudes shape the telling of history and vice versa. For Berger, myths of Whiteness are created in everyday experiences of racial inequity, and history becomes a way of explaining away inconsistencies in ideology and logic. My respondents similarly use individualized framings of history to make sense of their perceptions of inequality; *histories* serve as the basis of sociological interpretations of contemporary life.

### **Anything But Race**

Stephanie's perception of the U.S. women's rights movement exemplifies an important pattern in responses whereby identity categories other than race are used to explain (away) highly racialized phenomena, specifically White people's attitudes, feelings and behavior. For my participants, race was the least desirable explanation for social problems, and they would typically try to attribute any other cause to systemic inequity or an act of discrimination. In the case of the government's failed response to Hurricane Katrina, my participants would acknowledge – sometimes emphatically – how horrible the response to the storm was and how the victims in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region should have received more support, protection and aid. Nevertheless, when asked to explain the government did not adequately or expeditiously help the storm's victims, respondents would insist that the cause of inaction was either circumstantial, accidental, or attributable to other factors that are supposedly divorced from race, such as tax systems, social class or government ineptitude. Stephanie explained the failed response to Katrina accordingly: “I think that it's, you know, it's bureaucracy and it's paperwork and it's stupid little tiny writing that makes things unable to happen.” Sometimes, in another distortion of history, Hurricane Katrina was simply described as

an awesomely powerful storm whose destruction could simply not be avoided. For example, Noah, a 22-year-old bisexual man from an upper-middle class family in an affluent Washington suburb, said simply, “It’s a hurricane. Hurricanes don’t know good and bad.” Jeff also expressed concern over what it would mean to connect Katrina to race. “I think it’s harder for me to accept that view,” said Jeff, whom I asked if Katrina was a racialized disaster. He said, “...Partially because that notion reflects on all of the United States; it reflects on me, as well. I personally...and see that’s the thing – maybe it is true?”

Jeff, like most of my participants, elaborated at length on how “tragic” conditions were in New Orleans after the storm, and how the situation could have been remedied by a more thorough and efficient governmental response. When I asked him whom he thought Anderson Cooper was representing, Jeff said, “[He’s] representing all the frustration and anger of the people who live down there, who, you know, they’re trying to survive and they’re not receiving the aid that they feel they should be getting in quantity, quality, speed, all of that. So I mean he’s representing the people.” But Jeff felt that Cooper and others were fixated on assigning blame, which he felt was a fruitless exercise during the recovery. To him and other participants, blame is not productive or useful whatsoever, especially in situations such as Katrina. Furthermore, when blame is associated with race or racism, it becomes a discourse that misplaces and misappropriates blame. As Jeff continued to explain, he cannot bring himself to conceptualize Katrina as having to do with race:

You can't label something – especially a society to which you belong...a lot of people will easily place a label as long as they're not involved in it. But with something like this, I can't – in my own views and my own ideas...and I guess the hope that other people share similar views and ideas, so I can't just go ahead and

say, "The U.S. doesn't like Black people or doesn't like minorities or doesn't like this and don't care what happens to them," because I don't agree with that. And I have several friends who I would feel safe to say that they don't agree with it, either. Now, there is – you can also discuss what's the demographic of our leaders in Congress right now...you know, you're gonna see a lot of John McCains, for example. People who are predominantly White, wealthy...so, obviously the demographic of our leadership probably doesn't match the demographic of our country in terms of like all races and all that. I mean I guess that's probably something I haven't considered enough, but I don't think you can put a label on something that huge without including yourself in that. By including myself I can't agree with it....

The only way that Jeff sees race could play a role in government response to Katrina is via a manifestation of explicit racism. He does not conceptualize race or racial inequality as being constituted as part of systemic or aversive processes. Ultimately, the individual choices of victims – i.e., agency – offer more reasonable explanations for the horrors of Katrina. From Jeff's perspective, "When Katrina came in, [the victims] refused to leave. Plenty of people said, 'You've got to evacuate.' And they were given the choice, unfortunately, of staying in their homes. And many of them chose to do that, and many of them died, unfortunately." According to Jeff and other respondents, personal choices to stay in New Orleans, combined with the uncontrollable circumstances of meteorology and geography, resulted in the devastation of the city and the thousands of lost lives in the Gulf Coast.

The youngest participant, Amy, a 19-year-old freshman from affluent Montgomery County, Maryland, was the only person in the study who articulated a multidimensional critique that privileged, as opposed to conceded, the role of race in the unfolding of Katrina's aftermath. She said:

When you think about -- if the Hamptons [laughs] had been hit by a hurricane, I think there would have been, you know, faster response. It would have been influenced by money and power. But the people of New Orleans and Louisiana didn't have that influence. So. I think partly it was due to class and race...why the response wasn't as speedy.

Amy's responses are also unique because she focuses on wealthy White people's privilege relative to working class African Americans to explain why some people could not evacuate the city. For example, she said:

I think [Hurricane Katrina] definitely opened the door in which people saw that, I mean, White people had more means...I mean, I don't know. They just had [laughs] better *everything*. They had more access, options to escape. I don't know.

In comparison to my other participants, Amy was the only participant to shift rhetorical attention away from Black people's perceived choices to stay in New Orleans and toward unequal resources with which to escape New Orleans and the storm's path.

From the perspectives of my most of my respondents, gender and class have more explanatory power than race in instances when identity matters. Stephanie, for example, thought that class and *not* race was the explanation for failed government response to the storm. "I remember people saying that it was racism, but I remember thinking 'I don't...it's not racism, it's people hating poor people'" she said. Stephanie arrived at this conclusion from an empathetic response. She felt connected to poor residents of the Gulf Coast because she herself feels victimized by an unequal education system that left her less prepared to secure scholarships for college than students from wealthier suburbs in Maryland. Rachel responded similarly, placing an emphasis on social class: "I don't think that racial injustice is, you know, a primary factor [in Katrina]. I mean I think this could have happened to any person or group. I think if it was a different socio-economic group, a higher group, then that group might have been more able to help themselves, if you will."

Attributing causation to race was avoided in the Imus and Washington controversies, as well. All of my participants felt that the *Grey's Anatomy* scandal was about sexuality primarily, and that if race played any role the public and corporation



reaction, it would have placed Washington in a position to avoid being fired. Jamie, a 19-year-old journalism major from a rural Maryland county west of Baltimore, said, “If he had been kept on, then it would have been because he was Black.” Hypothetically, to Jamie, if race had been an issue in his firing, “[People] would have said ‘Oh good, they fired him even though was Black.’” Steve thought it may have helped the news media tell a more salacious story about Washington, but ultimately he agreed with Jamie: “I mean, it might have helped the narrative in terms of, you have a bunch of racial tension and the sexuality tension going on, so maybe if they were the same race, it wouldn't have been quite as, you know, exciting or whatever, but I don't necessarily think that would have mattered.” According to my participants’, the public’s reaction to Washington’s behavior was not fueled by racism, but Washington’s behavior may have had something to do with his Blackness. Reflecting similar patterns of association made by journalists covering “Isaiahgate,” some of my participants had previously heard about or observed homonegativity in the Black community and thought that this might partially explain why Washington called Knight a faggot. None of them, however, thought that race alone could explain Washington’s behavior.

Because Don Imus made an explicitly racist comment when he called the Rutgers women’s basketball team “nappy-headed,” dealing with his Whiteness was a more delicate process for my participants than denying that race influenced responses to Katrina or Washington. Race became a lightning rod in media discourse during the “I-Mess,” but Tom thought the role of race was overstated. “I don't know,” he said, “I thought it was just an off-hand comment. I don't think [Imus] even means to be a terribly racist or evil type of person, so I don't think he's...I think he should have been

reprimanded, for sure, but I don't think it was as bad as they put him on to be.” Jamie, who admitted to never watching Imus’s show and not really knowing anything about him, similarly thought that too much was made of Imus’s comments. “I mean he was just doing his normal thing: trying to make a big deal out of nothing. So, I mean, it kind of stinks for him, because I don't think he has bad intentions,” she said. Steve echoed these comments, arguing that controversies like the “nappy-headed hos” slur can be reduced to, “essentially somebody making a politically incorrect slip.” Rachel, on the other hand, thought his being an outsider to the team and region was at least as important as his race.

Explaining racial oppression in terms of things other than race serves to shore up the boundaries and logic of neoliberalism on an epistemological level, which I will discuss later. But writing race out of these historical controversies also helps to create an emotional, cognitive and identity-based distance from situations in which my participants might feel implicated on the basis of shared identity characteristics with culprits of discrimination or otherwise guilty social actors. Indeed, how “close” one is to a given situation seems to play a significant role in whether or not my participants experienced affective responses to a situation. Sometimes, this meant not feeling connected to Katrina. For example, Mike said of the storm, “I did not watch a lot of news coverage. Most of what I heard was word-of-mouth. Every now and then I read about it in an article online, but at the time I was kind of busy with a lot of things, schoolwork, etc.” Noah, on the other hand, eventually went on an alternative spring break trip to Louisiana to help demolish homes irreparably damaged by Katrina. Nevertheless, he could not remember where he was during the storm itself. In other instances, distance protects people from

feeling culpable, and, in turn, from feeling guilty. Jeff wrestled with these feelings when thinking through the Imus scandal:

Anything that connects you to him, it just makes you more emotionally involved. Um, connecting me to him is just the fact that we're White, and that we're males. But the fact that he's older separates us; his background separates us. Clearly, his views separate the two of us, so do I...? Yes, it's upsetting that yes, I recognize that this has a negative connotation on all of White America, certainly just because he's White, by association, some of that fallout hits everybody. Because there are certainly people who are, for example, not White, or people who are... who will take his comments and say, "Yes, this is what's wrong. I can't believe White people are like this." And it's unfortunate that, you know, people who are not necessarily as open-minded would make this assumption and not realize, "OK, well obviously he's not everybody." So, I feel some of that, but not all of it. I try to focus on the differences when something like that comes up.

Jeff's words illustrate a cognitive and affective struggle that many of my participants reflected upon as they tried to conceptualize how they are or are not implicated in moments of racial tension. Many discussed how focusing on differences besides race helped, at least intrapsychically, to make them feel better. Jeff's comments illustrate, though, that such differentiation and detachment may ultimately exacerbate racial conflict. "But at the same time," he said, "it can be a negative, because removing yourself from that group, it also means you're removing yourself from potentially any responsibility whatsoever toward this kind of thing." Unless White people are able to recognize their roles in certain situations, they will not be able to recognize "progression that maybe needs to happen," he said.

### **Anything But Guilty**

Closely connected to my respondents' avoidance and denial of race as an explanatory or structuring component of these and other controversies was their resistance to name social actors as guilty. With consistency, they defended each person or group of individuals who were being held potentially responsible in each of the three

controversies we discussed. Washington, Imus and Landrieu, specifically, and the federal government, celebrities and public figures, generally, were continually defended, even when respondents had previously admitted that they did not feel as if they had sufficient knowledge of the issue to make judgments. For example, though some respondents felt that Landrieu was disingenuous, Cooper was more frequently framed as inappropriately aggressive or as someone misdirecting blame at Landrieu. Mike, for example, said, “I think he crossed the line a little bit. [Cooper] was like pointing fingers at her.” According to some of my participants, Cooper’s misattribution of responsibility extended beyond Landrieu to all government agencies that were responsible for responding to Katrina. For example, Steve said, “[Cooper] essentially, the entire time, he’s just really looking for someone to blame and looking to be angry and was clearly angry about it and really wanting to put it on somebody.” Steve continued to explicate his logic, noting that, “[Cooper] seemed kind of insulted that she would even dare to make any comments on the situation and think about the politics of it....Just because you’re pissed off about something doesn’t mean that somebody is to blame.”

Journalists called for Washington and Imus’s firings with such relative consistency (see Chapter 2) that, as a researcher, I was surprised at the apparent honesty and ease with which my many of participants came to resist assigning blame or endorsing punishment for either man. Claire, a 21-year-old senior from Western Maryland, was the biggest fan of *Grey’s Anatomy* and expressed strong sympathy for Knight and offense at Washington’s comment. However, even she did not want Washington to be fired. She said:

I am gonna say he deserved to be fired, but I was so mad, because he was such a good part of the show! [laughs] I was really hoping that he would get hired back.

And that's selfish of me, but it would have been better for the show. So, I know a lot of my friends were the same.

Claire and I also discussed situations in which she has personally been called a “faggot.”

Our conversation went accordingly:

Patrick: Has anyone ever called you a faggot?

Claire: Yeah!

Patrick: Really? In an aggressive way or in a joking way?

Claire: Both.

Patrick: Both. What happened? How did it make you feel when it's been used in an aggressive way?

Claire: Well I don't take such extreme offense, because I'm not gay. But it's still like – what? Why would you call me that? You know what I mean? Pick a different word. Like it makes no sense, it's just like...is that the only word you can think of right now? Does it make you feel better by calling me that? Like, fine.

In a joking way, it's just like, I'm just like, “Ok. Whatever.” I don't know, it's not really funny, but you don't mean it in a hurtful way, but...OK.

Patrick: Has it been among your friends or the social circles that you travel in, do you think that the word has been divorced from its negative connotation about gay people?

Claire: Yes.

Patrick: So people use it not to be hateful...

Claire: To gays. Right.

Claire went on to say that “faggot” is equally as powerful as the N-word, but indicated that straight people may not understand how hurtful “faggot” can be to “gays.” She spoke at length about how the 2007 film *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*, starring comics Adam Sandler and Kevin James as straight men pretending to be a gay for financial reasons, may spread awareness about the hurtfulness of the word “faggot.” For example,

she explained a scene from the film in which Sandler and James' characters are riding in a cab discussing their "pretend" marriage:

The cab driver calls them a faggot and they're like "What!?" and they're really straight, so they beat him up. So it actually brought up a lot of attention, I think in that movie, to how hurtful this word is. I think it, you know, created some awareness.

In her anecdote, straight men's outrage over being called "faggot" is seen as promoting tolerance. The experience of identity-based hate is the way that these fictional straight men, according to Claire, come to empathize with gay people.

Jamie was similarly sympathetic to Knight, but thought that Washington was chastised for primarily artificial reasons, such as ABC's wanting to retain advertising revenue and viewers. She said:

I don't think [Washington] expected him using faggot to be a big deal, otherwise he wouldn't have said it. I think that's probably how he feels about it. Sort of thinks he didn't want to raise the issue; he didn't want to make that person feel that way. He was in the moment; he was mad. If he could go back again, I don't think he would have said it. So, but, at the same time – he did say it. And he thought it was OK to say it. And I think that's the thing about straight people. Once it kind of raises the issue in your head, they wouldn't say it, but in general, I think it's not as quite as big a deal as it should be – yet.

Jamie lodges a fairly sophisticated critique of heteronormativity, including the qualification that most straight people do not yet think about the consequences of gay slurs when they use them, but she ultimately struggles to come to terms with his punishment, which she feels is as unfortunate as the offense itself. Her framing of the Washington's behavior is comparable to Steve's characterization of Imus's "politically incorrect slip." Tom explained that intention does matter in determining whether one should be fired for calling someone a faggot at work: "So obviously it depends if he's really meaning it in a terribly malicious way and things like that. I don't know, every workplace is different in how you do it," he said, though he conceded the firing was

probably justified. Rachel took a harder stance, arguing that calling someone a faggot at work should only result in termination after multiple offenses, and that terminations generally should be about performance, not workplace demeanor. To her, the same applies to usage of the N-word. According to Steve, the Washington situation merely played itself out just by the rules of a pattern of public chastising. “As soon as it got in the media's hands, it was, you know, equivalent to the Don Imus thing,” he said. “[Washington’s] fate was sealed. He had nobody to come to his defense, and he was in a position where the higher powers do not want to be associated with him anymore. It was inevitable.” From Steve’s perspective, both Imus and Washington were the victims of a public cycle of shame run by the media.

Jamie did not think that Imus should have been fired, but she ardently attacked his use of the term “nappy-headed hos,” outlining how the phrase is humiliating and degrading in terms of race, gender and sexuality. Nonetheless, even not knowing anything about him, she did not think he should have been fired: she thought he just made a mistake, but that he did not have bad intentions. Her interpretive strategy appears to be to name what is wrong about someone or some group’s actions, but to reject the idea that an individual should be blamed, punished, etc. With Katrina, Jamie admitted that the situation was about race but not *racism*, which for her is a term that only applies to intentional, malicious acts of discrimination. In her reading of the Imus, intentionality was once again invoked and served as the pivot point for her logic of responsibility and blame. In the absence of malice (the legal criterion for libel), a social actor cannot be held responsible for offensive, hurtful behavior. Indeed, intentionality is a concept used to separate the social actor from his actions. Steve and others resisted painting Imus as an

unequivocal, guilty villain. “You know, you can say what you want and I’m not gonna think that he’s a smart guy because of it, but I’m not gonna say that he’s an awful person, basically,” said Steve. All participants recognized that “nappy-headed hos” is an insulting slur that denotes racism and sexism, but the use of the phrase did not clearly identify Imus as a racist or a sexist. Once again, the incident was about dimensions of difference, but not oppression, *per se*.

Sometimes, participants invoked ideas such as freedom of speech and political correctness to defend them, but the displacement of Imus’s and Washington’s guilt was more consistently achieved by constructing other implicated social actors on which to place (more) responsibility and/or blame. My participants uniformly interpreted Washington and Imus’s firing as faceless corporate decisions that do not necessarily reflect the moral superiority or authentic antiracist/feminist/pro-gay politics of CBS, MSNBC or ABC. Their terminations were interpreted as being about money, not good will or harm, which rendered the significance and utility of the firings meaningless. But one group was regularly identified as the most culpable of all: “the media.” Universally disliked, a disembodied construction of “the media” was discursively constructed as the villain in each situation, stirring the proverbial pot out of self-interest and self-indulgence. “The media” – a singular, race-less entity outside of Cooper – exhibits predictable and superficial behavior, always inciting drama and directing public opinion. These controversial episodes were perceived as highly orchestrated because “the media” is so dependent upon grabbing the attention of uncritical viewers who are mindlessly thirsty for stories. None of my participants could relate to people who believe the media or who indulge these artificial crises. Even Katrina, which was acknowledged as a



legitimate news story, was simultaneously framed as sensationalized. Cooper was “doing his job” by emoting and empathizing with victims as broadcasters are trained to do. In this sense, Cooper was the least offensive, because at least Katrina presented so many real, tangible victims. In the case of Imus and Washington, participants viewed both stories to be entirely inflated. Only perhaps the Rutgers players and Knight deserved to be able to express dissatisfaction with their abuse, but Knight especially should have done so privately. “The media” are the constant aggravators, to most of my participants, because they make things “racial” when they are otherwise neutral. Mike said:

To be honest, I wouldn't rely too much on the media. I would go to more -- I wouldn't say high-tech, but more *professional* sources that don't [*sic*] really have to broadcast to the whole nation like the media does, because you know the media always does try to sucker up things to people. Like they won't show really graphic things on TV because that could disturb people. Yeah, I'd look for a better source than the media, normally. [Emphasis added.]

Jeff also elaborated on media coverage of Imus:

Well, I didn't follow all of the outcry too much, but this is kind of like flavor of the month kind of thing. There's always something going on. To an extent, it was probably just like several other events. In my mind, this is like a general observation that I have made, which is that things tend to get blown out of proportion. That's because the media is entertaining. So you know if they were like “Oh, you know this happened,” then no one is really going to care and no one is going to watch it. But if you say “Oh there was a big outcry! Millions offended! All these people! Riots!” then people are going to pay attention.

All of my participants, including one woman who was studying to be a magazine writer, expressed some degree of skepticism toward news media and journalists, specifically. In some cases, characterizations of “the media” were superficial themselves and lacked any specificity. In other cases, these criticisms revealed a sophisticated and internalized epistemology of skepticism toward capitalist news organizations that are designed to tell the news *and* make money. Their universal skepticism was not necessarily directed at

systemic oppression, the federal government or the social actors perpetrating discriminatory, hurtful or offensive behavior.

My participants' aversion to assigning blame and guilt to others reflects the seriousness with which they consider social labels such as "racist." Indeed, to some, the threat of being called "racist" or having one's behavior attributed to racist attitudes is considered a motivating factor for White people's "good" behavior. For example, Steve explained how fans of Imus might have modified their behavior and allegiances during the Imus scandal:

I think that responsibility is a strong word, however, if you're a Don Imus listener and all the sudden you hear that, you don't want to be...you know "racist" is a bad word, you don't want to be associated with it, so you're much more likely to take a step to, you know, call CBS and express your outrage – that type of thing. It's really not a good thing to be racist, so you want to make sure that nobody thinks that you're racist or anything like that. So in a sense that it might compel you to behave differently than another challenge than you're presented with, certainly people strive to not be racist is what I would say.

Anti-racist actions may be elicited through concern over being perceived or labeled a racist, according to Steve.

Other participants confirmed these sentiments with comments, such as "nobody wants to be racist," that reflected a desire not to be *labeled* a racist – not necessarily to challenge racism in one's self or others, much less society at-large. As Jamie said, "Like once [racism is] mentioned once, like it becomes an ordeal, so I guess that just to be passive about it would have been to like support it, almost." In not reacting to him, Imus's listeners and other White people would have been implicated in Imus's behavior and subjected to the label of "racist" had they not reacted negatively. The "genuine" or "authentic" interior attitudes of White people were not explicated, but the fear of being called racist was explained as the source of outrage over comments (and people) that are

perceived as racist. When asked to explain what he meant when he said that people want to “make sure that nobody thinks that you’re racist,” he said:

So I mean there are [*sic*] certain things that you know you shouldn't do or think or say because they are racist. But then do you necessarily – in your mind – do you really hash it out and really, you know, that's completely different. Most people do not want to be racist, however, a lot of them, especially if you don't have a lot of exposure to the Black community, if you're in like rural Iowa, you don't want to be racist. However, what is being racist, really? Because you've never in contact with that thing – you're never really given an opportunity to be racist, in a sense.

By postulating that racism may not even be ontologically possible in the absence of a (racially other) object for hate and discrimination to be directed toward, Steve demonstrates how, from his perspective, racism and other forms of discrimination are actually rooted in individual subjectivities – not structural process or systems. In this sense, I read his and my other participants articulations as confirming and obliging the logic of neoliberalism.

### **Accommodating Neoliberalism**

As a hegemonic ideological and historical configuration of power relations, neoliberalism has been discussed at some length throughout this dissertation. When I use the term, I draw on cultural theorists’ explanation of how, since the 1980s in particular, a globalized and globalizing logic of free market enterprise has influenced social relationships, domestic policy and power inequalities within the United States, but around the world, as well. As Duggan (2003), Melamed (2006) and others (e.g., Pieterse, 2007) have argued, neoliberalism embraces difference to the extent that differences can be commodified and sold in a marketplace of multiculturalism. In the contemporary moment, when difference troubles the status quo, it is marginalized just as it has been historically. However, neoliberal social projects make great efforts to appear inclusive and diversified, employing rhetoric such as diversity statements and commitments to

multiculturalism that Ahmed (2006) calls “nonperformative” antiracism, i.e., antiracism minus the actual antiracist act. Neoliberalism structures and organizes experience in terms of differentially valued identity categories, especially race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality, but obscures the relationships between these categories and their effects on material relations of power (Duggan). Phenomena such as colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville, et al., 2000) and “postfeminism” (see Jowett, 2005, for an overview) fall under the umbrella of neoliberalism and help shore up the ideological pillars of neoliberal hegemony. My participants reflected many aspects of neoliberalism in their responses and, similarly to the journalists’ writing about Imus, Katrina and Washington, created ways to accommodate these identity-based situations into an epistemology that rejects the importance of identity in constituting contemporary social relations and structures.

Each of the three organizing concepts outlined in the previous three sections are strategies taken up by my participants that represent everyday manifestations of neoliberalism. By framing these controversies in terms of opaque and nebulous U.S. social histories, participants were able to avoid explaining how present-day decisions actively promote inequalities. In these cases, history was constructed as the causal explanations for current social problems. Furthermore, history could be re-written – for example, to eliminate feminism as a major social movement – in order to accommodate the persistence of gender discrimination and to blame women for failing to organize a meaningful and successful movement for equality. In certain instances, such as Hurricane Katrina, past historical contexts in which actual racism did occur were positioned as precipitating present-day conditions of inequity. From this standpoint, racism was

constructed as a *historical* phenomenon, i.e., something that once happened in the past and no longer occurs today. Accordingly, this in-the-past racism could not be invoked to question the idea that individuals did not make better choices to avoid being victimized by the storm or to interrogate the government's inability to sufficiently respond to the disaster.

Intersectional thinking is oppositional to neoliberalism because intersectionality insists upon the interconnectedness and salience of identity categories in the shaping of social realities and dimensions of oppression (Dill, Nettles & Weber, 2001). Though I critically read my participants' responses as evidence of how multiple dimensions of difference influence how people make sense of themselves and others, few of them actually acknowledged any connection between social identity categories except in 'unusual' points of overlap. For example, when asked about whether they saw race and sexuality as connected social issues, participants commonly responded unequivocally "no." Sometimes, however, intersections were acknowledged. For example, to Jamie, race and sexuality intersect as social issues only in the realm of individual subjects who occupy two positions of marginal identity. "Um, maybe if you're a gay Black man," she said, "but I don't think they're together as one issue. I think they can be put together just as you could with any other social issue, because they all kind of progress, but I don't think they're – they're very separate." Therefore, as systems of inequity, the relationship between sexuality and race is rooted in subjects, not structures. Individual people may represent the connection between these categories, but they are not otherwise connected as systems of oppression outside of multiply marginalized individuals, according to Jaime. Moreover, my participants rarely articulated their identification as White and only

one – Noah – explained how being White might influence the way he perceived a clip or controversy during the interviews. For Noah, his “White perspective” denoted his proximal distance from people of color:

My White perspective is not having any Black friends growing up. My White perspective is not really having any non-Jewish friends growing up. My White perspective is living in an upper-middle class home. My White perspective is going to a school with like, because it was a private Jewish school, there was like one Black kid in my grade. My White perspective is only seeing, let's say – I don't know. I mean I don't know how else to say. My White perspective is having no communication with this group of people. I mean, part of the reason I chose this college was in order to meet people of other religions and ethnicities and things like that. My White perspective is just someone who was very out of touch because of lack of knowledge.

Noah’s articulation of Whiteness is unique among my participants, and he generally reflected a more self-reflexive view of his own politics and identity. However, Noah’s beliefs about race generally fit with my other participants, because race, i.e., Whiteness and Blackness, is rooted in subjectivity. Bonilla-Silva and Embrick (2007) call this subjectivity a “White habitus,” which designates the social segregation and interpersonal distance from non-Whites that produces White social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Bonilla-Silva and Embrick note that because this social segregation is so taken for granted by White people it is atypical for them to be able to express how their isolation from Blacks influences their perspective on other White people and racial Others.

In creating a metaphorical litmus test for oppressive behavior and specifying the essential criterion of racism, sexism and “homophobia” to be *intentionality*, participants engaged in ontological choreography (Thompson, 2005) of racism, sexism and “homophobia” to fit within neoliberal discourses of multiculturalism. Participants consistently argued that Imus, Washington, Landrieu, President Bush and other implicated social actors were ultimately well intentioned and that, without proof of racist,

sexist or homonegative intentions, they could not be labeled as “racist,” “sexist” or “homophobic.” The concepts of racism, sexism and homonegativity have been reconfigured as agentic phenomena that are straightforwardly impossible to prove without evidence suggesting that overtly prejudicial behavior has manifested. Everything ‘below’ overt hate is explained to be misunderstandings that are based in innocuously different cultural backgrounds and rooted in otherwise good intentions. They assumed the best of these actors, choosing instead to be hypercritical of “the media.” The media disturb the equilibrium of neoliberal hegemony by talking about certain controversies as potential manifestations of problematic social relations. Without the media, it is implicitly posited that these crises would have passed without incidence.

### **Inaffectivity: The Absence of Feeling**

Participants articulated a variety of opinions about the sociology of race, gender and sexuality that helped clarify the conditions under which White people, men, and straight people might feel collective guilt or shame when people of the same identity group make hateful comments or exemplify socially undesirable characteristics. The converse also became apparent; my participants voiced the many conditions under which members of dominant identity group categories would *not* feel guilt or shame.

Interlocking strategies such as externalization of blame and detachment (Tangney & Dearing, 2002) from politically sensitive areas of discourse, which together I call “negation,” were invoked to deny collective responsibility and foreclose on the potential of White guilt and White shame. Though psychological literature suggests some conceptual discrepancy between externalization of blame and detachment, my participants tended to invoke these concepts simultaneously and in ways that suggested a

deep interconnectivity between these cognitive-affective strategies. In other words, the insistence that a moment was not racialized, sexualized or gendered tended to coincide with the assignment of blame upon an outside party. In the process of coding the interview data, it became impossible to distinguish between moments of “detachment” and “externalizing,” which instead coalesced into one code: “negation.” I used the same term from Chapter 4 to inform the naming of this code.

However, I learned how the lack of emotionality itself also serves to protect the self from the painful experiences of guilt and shame, particularly the dysphoria associated with recognizing one’s own connection to and implication within systemic social problems and unfair privileges. Beyond externalizing blame and detaching, some of my participants expressed a total absence of feeling, which I call “inaffectivity.” Inaffectivity is a theoretical concept to describe, specifically, a performative void of affect created by distancing the subject from sites of relationality and feeling. Whereas detachment implies the implication of guilt or shame and is literally motivated by a desire to defer oncoming or already-present feelings of guilt and shame, in affective processes are quintessentially rooted in neoliberal ideology and are thereby already detached from the identity politics of everyday life. Inaffectivity makes negation unnecessary, because the (White) subject is removed *a priori* from the situation or scenario that might otherwise spark identity-based guilt and shame. I emphasize the performative qualities of in affectivity to suggest that these expressions may be a well-rehearsed social role. As Goffman (1959) found, roles are usually taken up now creatively; Butler (1993) further characterizes performativity as iterative and citational. Inaffectivity, accordingly, may be a learned and ritualized response to identity-based conflict. Inaffectivity is made possible by all of the processes



described above, but all of my respondents did not equally express inactivity. Though the concept is rooted in the study of White guilt and White shame, articulations of inactivity were made about each of the three scenarios and in regard to multiple dimensions of identity and difference. Several examples, however, will illustrate the meaning and salience of this concept.

Steve's foremost problem with Cooper's interview with Landrieu and coverage of Katrina was his use of emotion to explain and convey the severity of Katrina and the consequences of governmental inaction. As Steve explicated:

I mean looking for somebody to blame or looking for somebody to be angry about isn't necessarily the most constructive thing as opposed to looking for, you know...things went wrong, there's no doubt about that. Like, I mean, there's things that need to be changed so that that doesn't happen again. But being angry isn't going to do anything about it, like...doesn't really, I don't really, personally I don't think you should ever have a reason to be angry; I don't think it's a very constructive emotion. Your anger is the reason – you should address that, as opposed to thinking that being angry is really gonna do anything for you.

Perhaps the most obvious point that Steve makes above is about race. According to this statement, Cooper and the disproportionately Black victims of Katrina should be more concerned with their own anger than with the racist structures that predicated such pain, suffering and death. "I'm not like trying to surround myself in all this depressing stuff, you know what I mean?" said Steve about how little coverage of Katrina he watched. "Like that does not interest me at all. I don't want to see those images and stuff. I don't really have any sort of...whatever...desire to see that type of thing," he said. The privilege inherent in such a statement is palpable, but the total substance of Steve's assertion is elided if the emotional component is unrecognized. What Steve zeros in on – the point at which he targets his critique of Cooper – is the emotionality itself. Anger, as well as the depression and shame that may come with absorbing images of devastation from Katrina,

are uncontrollable and unpredictable feelings which violate the rationality that serves as a guide in these crisis moments. Feelings are the problem, not the culprits of inequality (i.e., in this case, the disastrous federal and state response to the storm).

When I asked Rachel how the word “faggot” made her feel, she said, “It just kind of stirs up inappropriateness. Uncalled for, you know. Unnecessary word that is often associated with hate.” As a straight woman, she could not recall ever being called a faggot or being the target of the word, so “inappropriate,” which is a word associated with etiquette and demeanor, is the descriptor she chose to use when discussing the feelings it induces. Similarly, she said that Imus’s “nappy-headed hos” slur might spur a brief conversation over the family dinner table, but that it was unlikely to affect White people’s behavior or influence decisions they make in everyday life. Once again, the privileged distance from racial conflict inoculates the White subject from unpleasant feeling.

For Jeff, news coverage of Katrina was his only connection to the storm, which allowed him to watch as an objective observer. As he explained, “I mean I will admit that I did not feel as emotional as I'm sure many people who were either were living there or had relatives living there or had any kind of connection. I mean there was nothing connecting me to the event other than my few friends who went to school down there who were fine, and what I saw on television.” Without a personal connection to the Gulf Coast region, his general cosmopolitan outlook was all that kept him involved in Katrina coverage:

I would say that I felt the same way about the [2005 Indonesian] tsunami as I did about Katrina. Similar things – there was nothing really connecting me to it other than it's, you know, bad things happening to other human beings. I generally feel a connection with people, cause you know we're all people. We should recognize

that we have a lot of things in common regardless of where we're from or anything like that so to that extent I do feel that connection of humanity. But, yeah, there was no deep-seeded emotional ties....

Even geographic proximity or shared national identity did not bridge the gap between Jeff and Katrina victims, and he continued to not-feel his way through the Imus incident:

“It didn't strike me...I don't want to say that it didn't strike me as racist, because it certainly did. It was brazen, but I didn't hit me emotionally, just because I felt like I was removed from it.” And finally, in regard to being called a faggot, he said, “So, when those words [like faggot] have been said to me, I didn't really think anything of it.”

Steve, who identifies as gay, also does not feel anything in connection to being called a faggot, as long as it is in the context of his friends:

I have majority straight friends, but yeah, gay friends, too. [Being called a faggot is] not something that's really, I mean, I don't know. Part of me being, uh, comfortable in social interactions...the way you interact with your friends in saying, you know...I certainly cuss a lot more with my friends than I do with, when I'm at Burger King or something like that. Like, you know, there's general public appropriate language and then there's like friends-appropriate language, which is pretty much: anything goes. Like my friends are not gonna get offended by what I say and I'm not get offended by what they say, because we both know you know that we love each other. So it's not like a big deal.

Steve's inaffectivity prevents him from empathizing with or sympathizing for Knight, who was allegedly called a faggot and was outed by Washington's slur.

Stephanie expressed irritation at racial and sexual slurs directed at Black people and gay people, but not the kind of outrage she felt about the “ho” component of “nappy-headed hos” or the class-based inequity she observed in Katrina. She saw herself implicated in shared victimhood in latter two offenses, whereas she felt no connection to the former two. She explained:

I don't think that [“faggot”] inspires any particular strong emotion. Possibly, if I were to identify as a homosexual of any type, I maybe would feel different? I'm not entirely sure, but I don't think it invokes any particular passion. I mean it is a

rude word. I don't think the N-word does, and I don't think...just a lot of horribly degrading words, I don't think that they invoke some horrible feeling – like that the word has any....It's just that when people say rude or, I guess, hateful things, that way, the situation invokes kind of just irritation. I'm irritated by the way people are and by the way that people have their views and they're so close-minded and they don't even....I mean [Washington] may not even know anybody who identifies that way or to know...I mean obviously he knows T.R....It's just...you can't just say things that you know are degrading towards other people. It just doesn't make sense. For me, it's irritating, but they also do have a right to say it, so I mean I can't tell somebody “No,” like “No you can't say that.” But it's irritating when people feel that way.

This subjective divorce from feelings has epistemological consequences for how my participants see their own and others' social worlds. Stephanie, for example, does not feel anything about “faggot,” so perceives the slur as absent from social life: “I've never seen any of my gay friends use that word. I have actually not heard that word probably since....it's been a long time! [laughs] I think that people are just over the word, and the word just sounds so nasty. It just sounds like...I think it's definitely equally as bad [as the N-word]...it's not said anymore.” Inaffectivity, therefore, not only characterizes how individuals view themselves; to the contrary, inaffectivity frames political perspectives on controversies and social realities.

Whereas ambivalence implies contradictory emotions, inaffectivity's close emotional cousin is apathy. But apathy has a negative connotation and connotes emotional lethargy and purposeful indifference; inaffective practices are more accurately characterized by a performative absence of feeling rooted in a fundamental cognitive distance from the situation of concern. In talking about their lack of feelings, my participants did not appear to express ill will toward victims or apathy about hate. Nonetheless, when inaffective, they could not conceptualize how certain ‘meaningless’ words, distant actions or faraway crises could possibly provoke an emotional response. In some cases, this resembled an inability to empathize; in others, a cognitively based re-

writing of history. Overall, these articulations pointed to an ability of the subject to profoundly distance oneself so as to cognitively remove any potential for connectivity and affectivity. In Ahmed's (2004b) framework, whereby affect refers to the practices of identity- and meaning-making, in affectivity inhibits the production of identification between subjects. In affectivity is the prototypical neoliberal (un)emotion, because it facilitates the sterilization and neutralization of power relations and helps to reestablish equilibrium in moments of discursive instability. Though rooted in identity, and the ability to dis-identify, in affectivity serves as the experiential basis for political assertions that discursive manifestations of oppression are ultimately merely semiotic and meaningless. The presence of such a process has myriad implications for a theory of White racial affect, especially the conditions under which White guilt and shame do and do *not* manifest, which I will discuss in greater depth in my conclusion and the final chapter.

### **Conclusions**

Though this chapter has outlined the racial epistemologies and conceptualizations of identity that emerged from my participants' responses, the diversity and variability of their reflections should not be understated. Though some epitomized what I have called "in affectivity," some respondents simply did not have much to say about certain crises and more about others. Situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) compels the researcher to be attuned to sites of discursive silence – the material places and psychic spaces in which things are not being said – but GT also conversely forces me not to produce or inflect meaning where little or none exists. For example, though Amy identified the effects of systemic racism in Hurricane Katrina, I do not have any evidence that this knowledge

impacts her on an emotional level. I only theorized from what my participants told me, and I tried to break silences when I encountered them during interviews. Negation and inactivity are the theoretical concepts that emerged from these data and reflect discrepancies between highly emotional and unemotional responses to the clips and controversies discussed during our interviews.

It is unfair and inaccurate to label a lack of discursivity as a general lack of emotionality. Whether they spoke at great lengths or relatively little, all my participants demonstrated a high degree of thoughtfulness. In each interview, they volunteered their opinions and feelings to what amounted to a stranger, and several of them spent more than two hours total explicating their thoughts on extremely complex and, sometimes, disturbing social issues. I perceived honesty in their responses, because much of what they said was not the socially desirable or “politically correct” response. I asked them to be frank, and they were. Finally, I perceived that my participants exerted intellectual energy and effort in our interviews, trying to think critically about their own life experiences and their personal theories of race, gender and sexuality. Even if they had never done so in such a way before, I saw them pushing toward sociological thinking. In the process of getting to know each of them and forming an ethnographic relationship with each participant, I came to care about them. They said things that made me sad, frustrated and even angry at times, but I ultimately developed strong feelings of connectivity to each of them. In the process of trying to embrace what Beverly Skeggs (1995) calls a feminist ethnographic standpoint, I had to balance my desire and purpose to critique their viewpoints with my impulse to protect and take care of them.

At the greatest points of difference and inconsistencies in the data, my participants articulated how their individual life experiences shaped their varied perspectives of identity-based oppressions and inequalities. From such a limited sample, it would be fruitless to argue that gender- or sexuality-based differences emerged as a pattern, but my participants did use gender and sexuality (i.e., their own and others') to make sense of social and political conflict. The intersections of differences in guilt and shame to which I refer in this chapter title denote the intersectionality of the three crises and the multiple dimensions of identity that shape my participants' feelings and thoughts about collective guilt and shame in these historicized moments and the interview situation itself. These differences cannot be reduced to variables of gender and sexual identity. The process of coding their interviews illuminated the numerous points of intersection at which race, gender, sexuality, geography, religion and age shaped their attitudes, their perception of others and the cognitive terrain on which racial guilt and shame are materialized – and quickly made to disappear.

GT analysis did not lead to a bucketing of responses into neatly defined codes that corresponded to the factors that emerged from the quantitative data in Chapter 3. To the contrary, there was meaningful overlap between certain codes, particularly when it came to beliefs about race, gender and sexuality and the emotions associated with these beliefs. These points of overlap are described in grounded theory method guides (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2008) as problematic and undesirable. For the purposes of this research, however, the overlapping of codes at dimensions of identity and oppression illustrated the most meaningful sites of discourse. These discursive crossroads could not be adequately captured by a single “master” code, such as “intersectionality.” Instead, these tangible

intersections became launching points for theorizing to capture the intracategorical complexity (McCall, 2005) of my participants' experience. This modified grounded theory approach, combined with situational analysis, thoroughly upset any universalizing or homogenizing perception of Whiteness and White subjectivity. Within the category of Whiteness, which does accurately capture their shared racial identity, my participants expressed similar and distinct perspectives on racism, sexism, heterosexism and other forms of oppression, such as classism and religious intolerance. Whiteness predictably inflected the ways in which they left their own racial identity unspoken, but it also troubled their perception of sexuality- and gender-based oppression in unexpected ways.

My participants resisted a simple psychologizing, because their affectivity and in affectivity remains rooted in interactions that they were mostly recalling and retrospectively describing during our interviews. Affect is produced in interactivity (Ahmed, 2004b), and situations outside these interviews and the controversies we discussed undoubtedly shape their perspectives and feelings about identity and responsibility. Future research with White participants should include long-term interview relationships and participant observation that eventually begins to explicitly address the specific concepts of White guilt and shame. Future research might allow the researcher to a) observe these actual feelings in action/interaction and b) ask participants to recall incidents in which they have felt White guilt and/or shame once they have decided on a shared understanding of the concept. An interdisciplinary research team model that includes licensed psychologists would aid such projects. Furthermore, future studies should continue to employ mixed-methods. In the interest of contrasting these data with others' experiences and drawing upon what Roediger (1998) identifies as the



phenomenological and epistemological expertise about Whiteness that Black people possess, a future should replicate the present investigation with Black participants.

If I had asked my participants to tell me about their White guilt, I suspect that we would have had very short conversations. Like the findings in Chapter 3 suggested, individual White people in my studies have not generally been plagued by White guilt or White shame. Nonetheless, by asking them to tell me about responsibility, blame and the roles of identity in producing the conditions under which people feel collective responsibility, my participants articulated important challenges to my own prior findings from chapters 2 and 3 and the work of researchers who have previously studied White guilt and shame. Most importantly, the concepts of negation and inactivity have elucidated that by directing primary critical attention at the degree to which White guilt is or is not present – does or does not matter – we may miss the centrality of practices to avoid, deny and defer and foreclose on White guilt that may be just as consequential as White guilt itself. The upsetting feelings that manifest when internalizing critiques of Whiteness and privilege are not just about guilt and shame or the lack thereof. Coming to affective terms with Whiteness means recognizing that racism does not vanish once White guilt has been materialized emotionally in the subject of an imagined White collectivity. To the contrary, racisms, which sit in a complex matrix of other identity-based oppressions (Collins, 2000), reconfigure and reconstitute in these moments. This process of emergence is the focus of the final chapter and my conclusion, which puts the data from this and the prior two chapters in critical dialectic conversation. In Chapter 5, after addressing the methodological and epistemological challenges of the dissertation as a whole, I posit the concept of “emergent racisms” with which to conceptualize, study

and disrupt White guilt and White shame. Along with White shame, inactivity and negation compel me to broaden my focus on White guilt to a model of White racial affect.

## CHAPTER 5:

### Emergent Racisms

*“Again I wondered why we were caught in this vicious circle, why all the attention to ‘guilt’ did not make it go away. Was it fear of action, a secret hope that the realities of racism would simply disappear?”*

-Bernice Fisher (1984), in “Guilt and Shame in the Women’s Movement: The Radical Ideal of Action and Its Meaning for Feminist Intellectuals” (p. 186).

#### **Introduction**

The task of developing an empirically grounded, culturally centered and historically contingent account of White guilt in the contemporary United States has been positioned herein as an interdisciplinary question. Representing the first steps toward developing a better sense of what White guilt is, how it functions and what its consequences are for social relationships and structures of inequity, this dissertation has approached this task from multiple analytic and empirical angles. The methodologies embraced and methods employed in this project, however, are neither apolitical nor transhistorical. To the contrary, quantitative and qualitative methods have generally been constructed through and as oppositional discourses – as if they were antithetical modes of knowing and doing. From this perspective, an interdisciplinary *question* is an interdisciplinary *problem*. This final chapter attempts to dissect and engage with this problem.

In the concluding pages of this dissertation, I will discuss the epistemological complexity and contradictions that materialized throughout this project with a focus on the execution of methods and interpretation of data sources. This is a crucial element of

any knowledge project, because conclusions cannot be divorced from the methods through which they were derived. I introduce the concept of “critical concurrency” to describe how these methods from multiple disciplinary origins were enacted simultaneously and reflexively. To illustrate the implications of critical concurrency, I discuss the specific and consequential ways in which the various studies performed in this dissertation co-constituted one another; this includes a topographic visualization of my knowledge production process. The next section engages the chapter title, “emergent racisms,” and explores the significance of this concept for the study of White guilt. First, I explicate the two-fold meanings denoted by the term “emergent,” especially my emphasis on non-extant knowledges and emotional processes to describe the lived experience of White guilt and shame. Second, I elucidate the implications of ending a project about White guilt with a focus on racism. The next section explains the working model of White racial affect that has coalesced during this project with specific attention paid to the four primary, interactional components of the framework: identity, attitudes, situation and affect. Finally, I discuss the major limitations of the project as a whole and point to opportunities for pragmatic interventions at the intersection of White guilt and various forms of oppression.

### **Critical Concurrency: Mixed-Methods and Feminist Reflexivity**

In the *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) use their own work, as well as the (mostly ethnographic) projects of other feminist researchers, to specify the various concept(s) and methods of “reflexivity.” They define reflexivity as:

...A self-critical action whereby the researcher finds that the world is mediated by the self – what can be known can only be known through oneself, one’s lived experiences, and one’s biography...reflexivity is also a communal process that requires attentiveness to how the structural, political, and cultural environments of the researcher, the participants, and the nature of the study affect the research process and product. (p. 496)

The authors resist settling a singular theory and praxis of reflectivity, instead troubling the concept genealogically and describing many variations on the process as it applies to critical, feminist research.<sup>17</sup> They do, however, contain their investigation to the qualitative realm. Outside of the synthesis of relevant literature, the major contribution of their work is their offering of “reflexive sampling” as a method by which feminist researchers can hold themselves accountable to their interpretive processes and experiences *throughout* the research process, as opposed to relegating self-reflexive analysis to memoing and auditing during the analysis and composition phases of a project.

While they rhetorically position “reflexive sampling” as unique, I liken it to the process of self-reflexive memoing mandated by Clarke (2005) in *Situational Analysis*, a postmodernized version of grounded theory (GT) that emphasizes power, difference, multilayered data and cartographic, analytic exercises.<sup>18</sup> Clarke views a multifaceted and consistent memoing process as central to critical ethnographic work because of the

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<sup>17</sup> Feminists are not the first or only political group/movement to embrace praxis and reflexivity in scholarship. Feminist theories and activism – particularly Black feminisms – have most meaningfully shaped my own work. That is why I choose to pick up the discourse on reflexivity with this particular perspective.

<sup>18</sup> Clarke has a distilled chapter about situational analysis in the Hesse-Biber (2007) *Handbook of Feminist Research*, too.

possibilities for insight and disruption that reflexivity can provoke in all stages of a research project or program. Regardless of whether or not Hesse-Biber and Piatelli's (2007) ideas are "new," both reflexive sampling and situational analysis encourage the actual use of these self-reflexive exercises in continual analysis and composition of the research report or manuscript. In both approaches, audio, visual, and otherwise textual memos should not be disregarded as only a means to an end (i.e., the manuscript). Self-reflexive exercises can be meaningful and insightful not only behind the scenes, so to speak, but in the presentation of a situation or perspective on a social world. "Experiences and practicing *reflexivity in the moment*...can uncover new angles of vision, reveal invisible barriers of power or ethical concerns, and lead to greater understandings, less hierarchical relationships, and more authentic research," they asserted (p. 496). Similarly, Clarke posits the methods of situational analysis as strategies by which researchers can make visible previously obscured oppressions that are situated in matrices of unequal power relations. She wrote that situational analyses "turn up the volume on lesser but still present discourses, lesser but still present participants, the quiet, the silent and the silenced" (p. 175). Furthermore, Clarke's reflexivity aims to uncover "sites of silence" in data: those glaring absences that have tangible, material and symbolic effects on interpretation and representation but might otherwise go unmarked, under-articulated or unproblematized. Like a cartographic map of a situation, or a statistical analysis that compares multiple forms of data, feminist reflexivity has noteworthy capacity for analytic revelations because of the tangible ways in which it helps researchers simultaneously deconstruct power relationships between themselves and participants; interrogate their

epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies and disciplinary investments during all stages of research practice; and illuminate obfuscated dimensions and particulars of experience.

Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) tease at the ways in which reflexivity can be diluted into self-indulgent narcissism, such as the reactionary “confessionals” of masculinist ethnographers, but they astutely position reflexivity as one of the many kinds of feminist methodologies maligned for their seemingly anti-scientific, overly constructionist manner of knowing and doing knowledge production. Reflexivity is *not* science, but it can and should be an integral part of scientific knowledge pursuits, namely because it helps science be *better*. For them, “The purpose of research is not to validate a Truth, but to enable different forms of knowledge to challenge power. Multiple truths and diverse knowledges become the actual product of research when the subjectivity, location and humanness of the knower are included” (p. 498). Strong reflexivity is *not*, however, akin to relativism and does not degrade into the kind of nihilistic postmodernism critiqued by Haraway (1988) and Collins (1998). Haraway, in particular, points to the dangers of relativist thinking, which conditions and disciplines knowledge practice and practitioners to abandon the commitment to more accurate, cooperative, democratic knowledge by embracing an epistemology that makes all things equal and nothing real. Reflexivity does not represent a naïve reaction to totalization, and is instead conceptualized as a powerful method for avoiding the “god-trick” of masculinist science, during which a knower claims to see (read: gaze) everything from nowhere (Haraway).<sup>19</sup> The panoptical horizon of the human sciences is reshaped by feminist reflexivities, which

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<sup>19</sup> Not all science is masculinist. Indeed, Haraway and Harding are both concerned with the production of more useful and objective forms of science, albeit from slightly different perspectives. See Haraway (1988).

recognize that while power imbalances between researchers and participants are unavoidable, we should all maintain a political and pragmatic investment in doing our best to “check” ourselves and our practices. Reflexivity, to Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, is synonymous with accountability. Accountability, to Haraway, is synonymous with responsibility.

It is important to note that Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) use the term reflexive primarily to signify *self*-reflexive exercises that help illuminate researchers’ positionalities and thereby produce “stronger science” around the individuals, groups and situations that constitute the objects of a feminist research project. Building on Hesse-Biber’s (2007) introduction to the volume that delineates the distinctions of epistemology, methods and methodologies, Hesse-Biber and Piatelli explicate the ways in which self-reflexivity is an epistemological commitment, a methodological *frame* and *practical* methods by which feminists can create better, democratic, emancipatory knowledge about social worlds. Drawing upon Bourdieu (1992) and Harding’s (see Haraway, 1988) theories of knowledge production (i.e., the theory of practice and strong objectivity, respectively), Hesse-Biber and Piatelli especially advocate for reflexivities that reverse the panoptical, masculinist gaze of human science back upon the researcher *and* the discipline within which a particular researcher is located. Foucault (1970) argued that such self-reflexivity is one of the perilous and yet fundamental conditions of the human sciences, which is to say that we are always able to conduct sociologies of sociology, psychologies of psychology, anthropologies of anthropology, etc. Whereas Foucault pointed to this condition as epistemologically dangerous, feminists have demonstrated that when conducted responsibly and critically, sociologies of sociology



(and so on) can create social justice via the production of alternative knowledges that more accurately represent unequal power relations and the lived experiences of marginalized people. Though it may appear somewhat obvious to an experienced feminist researcher or someone far outside academic research praxis, the practical implications of *learning about others by learning about oneself* are extraordinary. In this project, my self-investigations helped articulate my own feelings about race and my past and present relationships with White guilt. By unhinging the disciplinary restraints of traditional methodologies that over-invest in lies about objectivity, detachment and researchers' supposed ability to be invisible, feminist self-reflexivities foster necessitate interrogations of the self that highlight positionalities and power relations, which signify the always already hidden practices of everyday life that maintain multiple, intersecting oppressions. Of course, dominant positionalities and hegemonic power relations are essentially designed to remain invisible, unarticulated and thereby legitimated (Habermas, 1975), so self-reflexivity does the integral work of speaking the unspoken and situating the otherwise disembodied. According to Hesse-Biber and Piatelli:

Feminists argue that researchers can only come to understand themselves as subject/object, insider/outsider by reflexively examining the continuously shifting nature of one's role in the field. Power relations occur between the researcher and research participants, and exploitative processes bound forth. Hence, not only must the reflexive researcher examine his or her own biography, but also the unequal power relationship between the knower and the known. (p. 498)

Therefore, the reflexive action is directed not only at the historical or biographical self, but at the social, interactional self, as well. This characterization of reflexivity is

reminiscent of the root metaphors of symbolic interactionism (Clarke, 2005), in which every communicative act is endowed with the possibility of meaning-making; accordingly, all symbolic interactions must be ethnographically attended to in order to responsibly and accountably approximate the lived experiences of social *realities* (not *reality*, singular). Feminist reflexivity resists allowing or promoting the silence of researchers who perilously and violently pretend not to (have) matter. Akin to symbolic interactionism's accounts of social worlds, Hesse-Biber and Piatelli's self-reflexivity supports an ethnographic objectivity that is invested in "situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1988).

The trouble with feminist discourse about reflexivity in knowledge production is that these practices are typically foregrounded exclusively in the context of qualitative methods. There is little guidance for feminist researchers conducting quantitative or mixed-methods projects who wish to be reflexive with all data forms. When Stewart and Cole (2007) invoke the concept of reflexivity in their discussion of feminist mixed-methods research, they argue that researchers should be consistently cognizant of how different forms of collected/produced data are driving research practices, but they do not address reflexivity aimed at the researcher herself. In other words, once quantification enters the research terrain, reflexivity becomes about data exclusively and not about the researcher and her data. This is highly problematic from the standpoint of a researcher who employs both quantitative and qualitative methods and aspires to ethnographic and reflexive thinking in all stages of the research process. To only be reflexive about data itself precipitates objectification and reifies the subject/object split of masculinist, racist, colonizing science (Haraway, 1988, 1997). To abdicate the responsibility for *self-*

reflexivity to qualitative researchers alone is to abdicate responsibility for social justice to the realm of the qualitative.

However, the possibilities for social justice in quantitative research are fruitful and more readily apparent as cross- and inter-disciplinary models of feminist, anti-racist research proliferates. Miner-Rubino, Jayartne and Konik (2007) position quantitative survey research as a tool for social change consistent with feminist values that connect research with activist praxis. Dill, McLaughlin and Nieves (2007) argued that intersectionality, as a broad research program, warrants further innovation in quantitative methods. They centralize the relationship between antiracism and feminism that is rooted in Black feminist epistemology and advocate methodological innovation as a tool for social justice. Cole (2009) also recently argued that psychologists push themselves around the intersectional turn by developing a set of reflexive questions that investigators should ask as they design scientific research and interpret empirical data that represents multiple dimensions of identity and difference. In what has quickly become an authoritative text of intersectional research, McCall (2005) used her own largely quantitative research in political sociology to demonstrate the methods of intercategory analysis, i.e., intersectional analyses between groups along multiple axes of difference. In each of these models, the researcher is compelled to question her and her disciplines' ontological and epistemological assumptions about the constitution of categories. Reflexivity is particularly palpable in the research design stage, when variables are being specified and measurement instruments are being selected, and in the data analysis stage, when latent prejudices can manifest in the interpretation of statistical data. Feminists working with quantitative methods have shown that deeply reflexive, intersectional

research is possible, so it would seem that integrating quantitative and qualitative methods *and* feminist, reflexive approaches to both would be seamless.

To the contrary, major challenges present themselves when attempting to retain a multi-faceted feminist reflexivity in the context of mixed methods research that integrates quantitative and qualitative methods. First and foremost, the split between quantitative and qualitative methods describes academic, disciplinary discourse about esoteric and arbitrary means of producing knowledge. “Quant” and “qual” do not, to the contrary, accurately describe the complex, mixed and fragmented processes that are actually manifest in most research on human beings, much less research in any domain of the natural sciences and humanities. Even restricting our conversation to the domains of cultural studies, sociology and psychology illustrates that no quantitative process is wholly rooted in “numbers,” just as no qualitative method is only reliant upon “narrative,” to borrow the labels invoked by Stewart and Cole (2007). On what is perhaps the most obvious level, the representation of quantitative and qualitative research in written language always involves a mixture of qualitative interpretation and representation, as well as relational judgments of size, intensity and quantity that are rooted in numerical relationships. For example, in the design and execution of any ethnographic project, certain quantitative judgments are always implied. How many participants should I recruit? How long should each interview last? How long should I immerse myself in this community? How many questions should I ask? How much time should lapse between each field excursion? When will I exhaust my data sources? How frequently did this theme emerge in my data?

In quantitative survey research, such as the study executed in chapter 3, qualitative considerations are equally as delicate and critical as statistical calculations and judgments. The initial design of a survey instrument – including response format, item generation, item order and identification of the latent variable under investigation – is a qualitative endeavor. Perhaps the most important contribution of the Test of White Guilt and Shame (TOWGAS) is the fact that the instrument appears to tap feelings of White guilt and shame without using either term linguistically. Constructing the scenarios and items that constitute the psychological stimuli of the TOWGAS involved research into the historically specific, rhetorical construction of racial conflict and the development of written language to evoke these conflicts. When interpreting the results of my exploratory factor analysis, the language used in each item signified which findings were psychologically meaningful. The language of the TOWGAS is what effectively captures proneness to White guilt, shame and negation, not the Likert-based, 5-point scale that participants use to indicate their responses. Though this study is referred to as the quantitative portion of this dissertation, the actual quantitative analyses involved in producing knowledge about White guilt in that chapter constituted a small fraction of the overall instrument development process. The months of item construction and design were the foundation of the study and made the quantitative data collection and statistical analyses possible.

When actually investigating the analytic and empirical praxis involved in what we call “quantitative” and “qualitative” research, the distance between these domains shrinks. The terms themselves are no longer adequate signifiers for what they are supposed to signify. The arbitrary relationship of opposition between the two categories

appears more historical and subjective than immutable and essential. Quant/qual becomes as false, reductive and illusory a binary as man/woman, West/East and White/Black. As with any binary, it becomes apparent that the differences within a category on one side of the binary are greater than the differences between the two sides. We also see that their normative relationship is unequal: quantitative research is still the gold standard in the production of scientific, objective knowledge and is hegemonically positioned as better equipped to produce such knowledge than qualitative methods. Despite being illogical and inaccurate, however, the quant/qual binary, like other artificial and harmful dualisms, continues to exert influence of relations of power in the production of knowledge (Foucault, 1970, 1972).

Researchers try to challenge, subvert and implode this binary by conducting mixed- or “multiple” methods projects that combine, synthesize or integrate quantitative and qualitative methodologies and methods. Stewart and Cole (2007) review extant mixed-methods approaches of feminists in the social sciences, primarily, which fall into three broad categories: projects that start with quantitative methods and the move to qualitative methods (i.e., quantitative then qualitative); projects that begin with qualitative research and then move into quantitative research (i.e., qualitative then quantitative); or projects that use quantitative and qualitative methods in “parallel” to answer different research questions. To illustrate the first approach, we can consider how a psychometric instrument development study might begin with a qualitative ethnography to explore how people articulate their lived experiences of a latent variable (e.g., White guilt). GT analysis might identify, codify or coalesce meanings around one or more specific variables, and then participants’ own language may be used to generate items.

Then, statistical methods would be used to test the reliability and validity of the new instrument in a larger sample. The goal here is to generalize findings that initially resulted from a limited, qualitative investigation. Both projects, however, are designed to address the same question, problem or issue. In the other direction, which falls under the second category of approaches, qualitative research might be used post hoc to complicate findings from a quantitative project. One example of this is Spanierman and colleagues' research on the psychosocial consequences of racism to White people, in which the development of the PCRW (Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites) scale was followed by qualitative interviews and analysis using consensual qualitative research (CQR) to explore how White college students respond to racism (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; Spanierman et al., 2008). This qualitative study illustrated, informed and enhanced the quantitative findings that had previously identified major areas of "costs" of racism to White people, such as irrational fear of others and a distorted view of history (Spanierman & Heppner).

The final category of approaches is the "parallel" model, which Stewart and Cole (2007) claim is adopted when researchers use quantitative and qualitative approaches to address different research questions about the same topic, but "not to explore the same ones in different ways" (p. 335). In these approaches, different methods (and methodologies) are paired together and used in "parallel" process to answer fundamentally different research questions, i.e., questions that the other method/ology cannot answer. Though they only cite two examples of this approach, Stewart and Cole suggest that this strategy is used in such a way that qualitative methods describe the form and content of a phenomenon, while quantitative methods produce information about the

frequency and variance of the phenomenon. Furthermore, though they call these processes “parallel” because at least two methods or methodological approaches are used to draw final conclusions, data collection and analyses are still conducted sequentially.<sup>20</sup>

By grouping mixed-methods research that uses both quantitative and qualitative elements into these three broad categories, Stewart and Cole (2007) are expressing their interpretation of patterns in extant literature. Perhaps more importantly, however, they are revealing commonsense or tacit knowledge about research in the humanities and social sciences. First, the terms “mixed-methods” and “multiple methods” tend to connote a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research practices – not multiple methods from within the same domain of the methodological binary. For example, when applied to this dissertation, “mixed-methods” first signifies the differences between the methods used in Chapter 3 on one hand (i.e., quantitative) *and* chapters 2 and 4 on the other (i.e., qualitative). Despite the differences between data sources, collection and analyses in the two qualitative chapters, the greater apparent contrast in method – the difference that merits the term “mixed” – is between the quantitative and qualitative methods. Second, mixed-methods research of this kind is more common in the social sciences than the humanities, because of the perception that the disciplines of the humanities are always qualitative, while some domains of the otherwise-quantitative social sciences are rooted

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<sup>20</sup> Stewart and Cole (2007) also mention qualitative projects in the humanities and social sciences that “open up” what can be counted as data, and many of these projects represent work done at the intersection of social science and humanities disciplines, such as psychology and media studies or sociology and literature. These data sources include visual discourse and narrative discourse, such as those advocated by Clarke (2005) to be used in GT and situational analysis. However, these “multiple methods” projects represent multiple kinds of qualitative research (e.g., literary criticism and content analysis) being conducted on different data sets, which is standard practice in interdisciplinary fields, such as American studies.



in qualitative research (e.g., symbolic interactionism, cultural anthropology, etc.).

Implicit in such a stark division between the fields is the assumption that humanists will never quantify anything, while some social scientists will hesitantly dabble in the quantitative realm.

Finally, and most important to the present investigation, is that in grouping mixed-methods research into these three categories, Stewart and Cole (2007) are naming the most consequential root assumption of mixed-methods research: that no two methods can explore the same question at the same time. According to Stewart and Cole, mixed-methods projects are designed and executed in such a way that a qualitative or quantitative project comes first, and the meaning gleaned from this first project informs the execution and analysis of the second. In the most reflexive of cases, the knowledge produced in the second study is placed in critical conversation with the prior knowledge produced in the first study. Regardless of the degree of reflexivity, however, there is at least a first and second (and maybe third, fourth and so on). Indeed, in the proposal stage of this project, I conceptualized my discourse analysis of journalism sources as first; the psychometric work of developing the TOWGAS as second; and the qualitative research of my ethnographic interviews as third. In my review of existing relevant literature, I found only one study that analyzed survey data and interviews concurrently by cross-referencing survey responses during GT coding of interview transcripts. This work, by Bonilla-Silva and Embrick (2007), developed the concept of “White habitus” by examining attitudinal survey data with follow-up qualitative interviews. Bonilla-Silva and Embrick describe White habitus as “a racialized uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites’ racial taste, perceptions, feelings, emotions, and views on

racial matters” (pp. 324-325). Bonilla-Silva and Embrick found that this White habitus was the result of social and residential segregation by race that created a normative, unspoken connection between Whites. This implicit connectivity and identification with other Whites shaped their respondents’ negative perceptions of racial others and positive evaluation of other Whites. In their analyses, however, Bonilla-Silva and Embrick do not explicitly embrace an intersectional or otherwise feminist methodology or politics; furthermore, they pointedly privilege their qualitative interview data over statistical survey evidence in drawing their conclusions.

There are methodological problems with the formulation of sequential mixed-methods that the practice of critical concurrency aims to address. By ordering my projects sequentially in the proposal stage, I literally centralized the quantitative study, whereby all analytic and empirical roads led to and from the instrument development project. The qualitative work was imagined in dialectic conversation with the quantitative study, but never on its own. The value of the qualitative research was in its ability to improve the quantitative research by offering greater levels of depth, specificity and complexity. The discourse analysis would culturally ground the items, which would gather the data to produce the findings, which would be specified by the interviews. From either perspective, one approach (i.e., quantitative or qualitative) is undervalued: either the quantitative is misrepresented as fundamentally simplistic, or the qualitative is only important in so much as it might subjectively complement the more empirically rich quantitative work. Furthermore, such a sequential framework grates against the inductive aspirations of GT analysis by structuring multiple research projects as linear and cumulative (Fassinger, 2005). The risk here is that a presupposed list of codes and

explanations will guide interpretation of all qualitative data, and not the other way around. After embarking on this dissertation, it quickly became obvious how limiting my initial approach was. Furthermore, I realized that such discreteness between studies would not only be impossible, but would fail to advance or enhance the goal of producing a grounded account of White guilt from a diversity of analytic and empirical angles. So to borrow metaphors from two of my most influential foremothers, it was time to stop climbing upwards with arms stretched between two poles of quantitative and qualitative research. I needed to switch metaphors and build my own feminist architecture.<sup>21</sup>

What emerged from my research praxis – the *grounded method*, if you will – was a tertiary framework of three mutually influential empirical endeavors. A postmodern dialectic of triangulated simultaneity more accurately describes what it is that actually happened when I began to conduct what we typically call “mixed-methods” research. Over the period of two and one half years, three studies were conducted *concurrently*, not sequentially. Figure 7 is a visualization of this process, which I explicate below. In this model, the three empirical studies sit at the center. Heavy, double-sided arrows connect each of the studies to signify the multidirectional relationship between each study. The discourse analysis influenced both the interviews and the instrument development; the psychometrics influenced both the discourse analysis and the interviews; and GT analysis informed interpretation of qualitative discourse analysis and statistics. Though the studies are presented and explained sequentially in this document, the development of each

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<sup>21</sup> This language is borrowed from Haraway (1988), who described the two poles of radical constructivism/postmodern accounts of difference and successor science/critical feminist empiricism in the science wars, and Anzaldúa (1987), who famously calls for a new feminist architecture to accommodate the complexity of the *mestizaje* or “new *mestiza*.”

happened simultaneously and was organized around the same research questions. Items for the TOWGAS were generated while the literature review was built. The pilot quantitative study was run while I gathered news clips for discourse analysis. The second quantitative study was run while finalizing the discourse analysis source list and initially analyzing the journalism coverage. The first exploratory factor analysis was conducted as interviews began to be scheduled. Interviews were conducted alongside discourse analysis. Interview transcription and GT coding were completed while I conducted statistical analyses to identify significant variation in scores on the TOWGAS and demographic variables. The discourse analysis was written up first, followed by the quantitative study and the interviews, respectively.

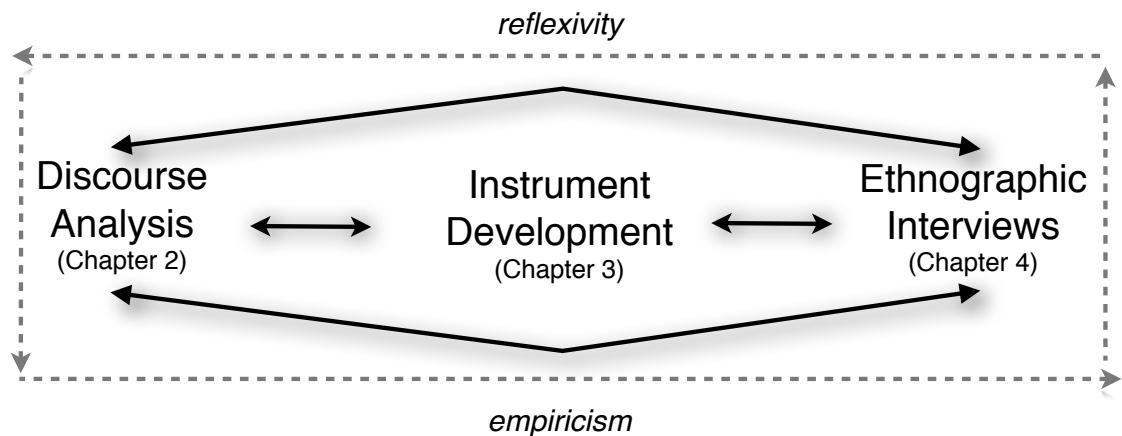


Figure 7. Critical Concurrency

A dashed line encompasses the perimeter of the model and signifies the temporal elements of the research, including the mutually influential processes of empirical data collection and feminist reflexivity. Reflexivity, in this case, describes several specific practices. Reflexive sampling (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007) directed the interpretation and interrogation of multiple data sources. The meaningful differences in each of these methods lie in the epistemological assumptions about what knowledge can be produced

from them; these differences are rooted in disciplinary histories and practices. When interrogating data sources, inconsistency was privileged over compatibility. Intriguing or surprising findings in one study affected the analyses in another (specific examples will be explicated below), and seemingly incompatible data (e.g., item factor loadings and GT code lists) were placed alongside each other. Additionally, autoethnographic reflections, presented as interludes between each study, took shape throughout the research process and reflect the form of the three “factors” that emerged from the instrument development study. These self-reflections helped to qualify the arguments forming around each study by making explicit my own lived experiences and the assumptions that undergirded my analyses. These “factors” reveal my feminist standpoint.

At the same time, the “empiricism” element on the underside of the model denotes the ‘progression’ of the project as further data were collected and analyses were performed. Reflexivity and empiricism, therefore, represent complementary directional impulses: reflexivity mandates the pauses during which we identify problems, coincidences, errors and surprises, while empiricism pushes forward through the process of systemically gathering data and producing knowledge.

I assert that this process of critical concurrency both addresses flaws in mixed-methods models organized around the sequential execution of studies and has consequences for what kinds of findings can emerge in the research praxis. There are at least two major ways in which my findings were transformed by this concurrent model, which are discussed below.

### **Journalists Versus Participants**

By conducting discourse analyses on journalistic news coverage of the events discussed by my interview participants while I actually coded these interview transcripts, I was able to destabilize taken-for-granted assumptions about the influence of the public sphere on individuals' attitudes and the relationship between "the popular" and "everyday life." I assumed that journalistic discourse about radio host Don Imus, actor Isaiah Washington and news anchor Anderson Cooper would be reflected in my participants' evaluation of these mass-mediated "crises" (Habermas, 1975). Implicit in this assumption is that journalists shape public opinion, especially the attitudes of media-saturated young people (Hall, 1997a; Hunt, 2006; Ford, 1997; Gergen, 2000). To the contrary, I found that my participants expressed uniform distrust of "mainstream" media and had developed fairly sophisticated critiques of the role of capitalism and corporate interests in broadcast journalism, especially. Most importantly, feelings of collective responsibility and White guilt were often stirred up by media coverage, according to my participants, some of whom identified "the media" as problematic, sensationalist and untrustworthy. Cooper and the media, to many of my respondents, incorrectly write blame and race into everything. This sat in stark contrast to the praise being directed at Cooper and other Katrina correspondents by their professional colleagues, the majority of whom celebrated Cooper's "emotional" coverage.

The differences in these perspectives surfaced while I was conducting my interviews, which motivated me to pay special attention to and ask further questions about why my participants sometimes felt so negatively about Cooper. This discrepancy in evaluations of Cooper might not have been so salient had I not been concurrently reviewing positive media coverage of his reporting. If the interviews had been executed

first or in isolation, I may have missed this variation in evaluation entirely and failed to probe for greater explanation from my participants. Ultimately, the consequences for uncovering this relationship between media and my participants impacted how I interpreted their reflections, journalists' writing and the operationalization of the constructs being codified in the instrument development study. Rather than coexisting harmoniously in the discourse of White guilt and shame, individual attitudes and media coverage appear to have a more complex relationship akin to Hall's (1973) formulation of active media consumers who oppositionally 'decode' mass-mediated rhetoric. For some participants, journalists are viewed as the agents of White guilt and shame who activate these feelings in their readers and viewers, who consequently distrust the media.

#### **Detachment/Externalization/Negation**

Similarly, without both the quantitative and qualitative elements of this project, I would not have likely realized the inextricability of "detachment" and "externalization" as cognitive-affective strategies to avoid White guilt and shame. The interpretation of both statistical evidence, journalistic discourse and participants' verbal responses to questions about how they feel about race and responsibility in the United States together helped to illuminate how detachment and externalization are most accurately described as intertwined and co-dependent processes, rather than independent and discrete emotional responses to guilt and shame. This finding sits in opposition to extant psychological research on generic guilt and shame, which distinguishes these strategies empirically and theoretically (Tangney & Dearing, 2002).

As discussed at length in Chapter 3, my exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of both the TOWGAS and the instrument on which it is based, the Test of Self of Self-Conscious

Affect-3 (TOSCA-3), showed that items designed to tap detachment and externalization collapsed onto the same factor. I hypothesized that my instrument would have a four-factor structure of White guilt-proneness, White shame-proneness, externalization and detachment. This reflected the TOSCA-3 short-form's four-factor structure of guilt-proneness, shame-proneness, externalization and detachment (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Items for my instrument were developed based on the format and content of items in the TOSCA-3, which is an extensively used and validated instrument (Tracey, Robins & Tangney, 2007). When my detachment and externalization of *White* guilt and shame items failed to load onto discrete factors despite extensive statistical analyses, I ran an EFA on the TOSCA-3 to examine its factor structure during my administration of the instrument. To my surprise, the TOSCA-3's factor structure mimicked the TOWGAS's three-factor structure: guilt, shame and *something else*. When I examined these items, I saw that Tangney and Dearing's generic externalization and detachment items had loaded onto the same factor, just as their analogues had in my proposed instrument. This made conceptual sense, but required a theoretical explanation.

It made conceptual sense that externalization and detachment items might not be as distinct as psychometric methods prefer and which moral emotions literature suggests. But the meaning and consequences of this inextricability was more elusive. In returning to journalistic discourse about Imus, Cooper and Washington, I saw that my interpretations of detachment and externalization at times seemed forced or arbitrary. There were occasions when authors seemed to be denying the significance of race or identity without naming other guilty parties, but the externalization of blame always seemed to coincide with an insistence that the conflict actually had been inflated or over-



stated. For example, some commentators blamed the Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson for provoking public outcry over Don Imus's "nappy-headed hos" slur. As with other examples of externalization, another guilty party was named while denying the importance of the issue; in the case of Jackson and Sharpton, they were wrong for bringing up race in the context of what was intended to be an innocuous, flippant joke. After re-visiting journalistic discourse, it was more obvious why items such as "I can't be held responsible for being born White," "Race doesn't matter as much as people say it does," "Those people chose to stay behind," and "That's not a race issue. That's a social class issue," would load onto the same factor. The psychological literature had caused me to over-predict the differences between externalization and detachment. Upon further investigation of the published psychometric properties of the TOSCA-3, I also found that Tangney and Dearing (2002) had not achieved optimal levels of internal consistency for the TOSCA-3's detachment and externalization subscales (Cronbach's  $\alpha < .70$ ), which lent further support to a logical explanation of why these items collapsed onto the same factor during my survey administration. Based on qualitative and quantitative evidence, I named this factor "Negation," to describe the related ways in which White people sometimes externalize blame and detach from situations of racial conflict. This factor and subscale, as I argued in Chapter 3, tapped the ways in which White people negate the experience of White guilt and/or shame.

These findings undoubtedly shaped my process of open and axial coding during the GT analysis conducted to create Chapter 4's interviews. Grounded theorists, such as Corbin and Strauss (2008), have argued since the inception of the method to 'ignore' extant literature when coding data so as to let the data speak for itself on its own terms.

Clarke (2005) and Fassinger (2005) also emphasize how grounded theorists should make every attempt to divorce their initial coding process and analytic lens from the assumptions and prior evidence that shapes extant theory. Fassinger, however, notes that this is quite difficult to realistically do, especially in well-researched domains. For better or worse, and especially at the beginning of a research project or program, prior empirical and theoretical work will inform attempts to design and execute studies that ground theory in everyday life and the material-semiotic experiences of research participants (Clarke; Haraway, 1997). Moreover, extant literature will become increasingly implicated and relied upon as the analyses reaches later stages of interpretation and theory-building. The influence of prior literature does not only apply to GT, of course. Psychometric instruments, for example, do not develop organically from the minds of survey respondents. Strong psychometric tests are based in rigorous empiricism *and* substantive familiarity with the latent variable of concern. In the context of GT (as a methodological approach), feminist, interactionist reflexivity can identify when theory and extant literature are over-determining the coding process and explanations of phenomena under investigation. Through extensive memoing, re-coding data and discussing the coding process with experts unconnected with my study, which is a kind of “auditing,” I opened up my interpretive process to critique (Fassinger). This kind of reflexivity helps to catch those moments when expectations, bias and assumptions are speaking louder than participants’ actual words.

The factor analysis process had disturbed my assumptions about what externalization and detachment would look like in my participants’ lives; these predictions had been dictated by the research of prominent emotion psychologists (e.g.,

Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracey, Robins and Tangney, 2007). The quantitative data suggested that I might not be able to observe consistent and meaningful independent manifestations of externalization and detachment in my participants' responses. Indeed, the process of coding interview transcripts further confirmed the inextricability of detachment and externalization. While we may be able to parse out these constructs on rhetorical or conceptual levels, the distinction between the concepts does not appear to be reflected in actual emotional processes as accessed by in-person interviews or self-report surveys. After self-consciously resisting using the code "negation" in my GT analysis, this code eventually emerged once it became clear that practices that psychologists call detachment and externalization looked remarkably bound up together in the self-concepts and articulations of my interview participants.

Negation, however, does not describe a complete, successful or finished process of denying White guilt and shame. The qualitative data suggested that participants only engaged in these strategies when they felt the specter of White guilt – the potential to feel implicated in racism. When my participants negated, they expressed anxiety over racial conflict while denying the salience of race and placing blame on others. This concept (literally, the code "negation") could not, however, account for those times when my respondents had little or no emotional response to these conflicts or failed to consider them meaningful. The specification of negation allowed another concept to emerge that better explained the lack of feeling that some participants articulated. Across multiple sites of discourse and multiple dimensions of difference, some participants expressed minimal or null emotional responses to identity-based conflict. The failure of these conflicts and oppressions to elicit emotional responses was qualified by a profound

subjective distance from the experience of identity-based oppression. The privilege of dominant-group identity status, as well as subjective and social distance from minoritized social groups – especially Black people – inoculated them from the dysphoria of collective guilt or shame. This absence of feeling, which I labeled “inaffectivity,” complemented the other emerging components of White affect and filled in the conceptual space that negation opened. Together, these related concepts – negation and in affectivity – helped to explain a variety of cognitive and affective ways people can avoid White guilt and shame. This conceptual framework, as I explain in the next section, describes what I refer to as “emergent racisms.”

### **White Guilt, Emergent Racisms**

Since the 1980s especially, scholarship on race and racism has worked to define the various elements of racialized, structural inequity that distinguishes racist discursive formations in our current historical moment from those dominant forms of explicit racial hatred and antagonism that defined racism in the Civil Rights movement and earlier. Much of this work has been oriented toward the establishment of certain cultural, historical, psychological or social criteria that make today’s racism different from past ontological configurations of racism. Distinctions between aversive, overt and “modern” racism have helped to describe the how individual social actors perpetuate discrimination in socially acceptable ways (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Conahay, 1986). Colorblind racism, similarly, describes the sociological processes by which individuals, usually White people, assert that race does not matter while organizing their lives around racial segregation and adhering to discriminatory patterns of behavior and expression (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007). Omi and Winant (1994) situated these

racisms within the rise of neoconservative politics and the coalescence of neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse that was consolidated throughout the latter portion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century (Duggan, 2003). Lipsitz (2006) demonstrated the ways in which cultural and economic conditions in the post-World War II era resulted in liberal social policies being framed as unfairly disadvantaging White people; meanwhile, institutional forms of discrimination continued to disproportionately and unfairly invest in White people and spaces. Collins (2005) and other Black feminists (Combahee River Collective, 1977) promoted a framework of thinking about racism that incorporated the ways in which oppressions intersect. Rooted in U.S. Black women's experiences of multiple forms of oppression, Collins argued that a "new racism" structures race relations in the U.S. and cannot be understood without consideration of how gender, race and sexuality co-constitute in discourses of White supremacy, sexism and heterosexism. Meanwhile, Black feminists, queers of color and White allies studied and theorized how resistance is possible amid such profound forces of structural inequity (e.g., Collins, 1990/2000, 1998; Ferguson, 2004; Romney, Tatum & Jones, 1992; Gallagher, 2008; Hill, 2004; Lipsitz).

These academic projects have served to consolidate critical race theories into a sophisticated and historically specific discourse about the contemporary conditions of racial inequality and intersecting forms of oppression. Each of them has particular strengths in explaining how and why racism is sustained so pervasively in the context of neoliberal hegemony and its discourse of multiculturalism (Melamed, 2006). But this interpretive and analytic strength is not cumulative, because these related concepts cannot simply be combined to describe micro- and macro-level racial inequalities. The

relationship between these theories of racism is *emergent* in the philosophical sense of the term: the aggregation of the elements of racism cannot explain the whole complexity of racism. Rather, the interactions between psychological, sociological, economic, historical and cultural forces manifest racism in elusive and contradictory ways. Furthermore, the emergent nature of these processes means that racism, as an ontological category, is more adequately descriptive of the empirical world (i.e., reality) when pluralized. I have liberally drawn upon these theories of racism, because they help us to see and critique *racisms*, in all their complicated and emergent diversity.

Racism, like any object of study, is not laid out before us, waiting to be naively dissected (Foucault, 1970). In academic inquiry, “racism” is created in co-constitution between subject and object, which themselves cannot be separated (Haraway, 1988). In this project, racism was made meaningful through an unquantifiable amount of discursive interactions between my participants, survey respondents, statistical data, journalists’ writing, etc., and me. Though I drew upon a diversity of theories of race and racism to conduct these investigations, I rejected many of the dualisms (e.g., past/present, agency/structure, individual/group, micro/macro and psyche/society) endemic to these perspectives, which reflect a multitude of disciplinary spaces. I drew on their strengths and the rigor of their respective disciplinary traditions, but I unsettled these approaches and attempted to form interdisciplinarity that moves toward a radical *transdisciplinarity* and away from bricolage that retains an investment in one particular mode of inquiry (e.g., Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Katz, 2001). For example, colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville et al., 2000) is an important intervention for understanding and interrupting U.S. White racism toward African Americans and other people of color, but the concept

rests primarily upon attitudes and White racial identity and does not sufficiently accommodate intersections of difference that shape these attitudes. Collins' (2005) "new racism" describes ideology and contemporary discourse, but is not based in empirically or systemically analyzed manifestations of racism in everyday life and individual psychologies. None of these theories satisfactorily accounts for the emotional experiences of the perpetrators of racism – the affective terrain in which racism materializes and comes to impact social relations.

Recognizing the emergent qualities of racism means recognizing the dynamic interplay between identities and oppressions that are not only attitudinal/cognitive; indeed, racism is also constituted by affect, situations (i.e., everyday life), identifications, individual differences and life histories. No disciplinary dichotomy of psyche and society, agency and structure or individual and group could possibly capture this complexity. In this sense, "emergent" means *not* extant, because existing accounts of racism must be uniquely applied in a given research situation to make sense of and to critique how racism is determining social phenomena. Emergent racism emphasizes the ontological instability of racism in neoliberalism and helps to challenge assumptions about how racism works.

The concept of emergent racism also denotes that racism is process, practice and performance; racism is not static, finished or isolated. Too often, scholarship on racist attitudes would have us prematurely settle upon a conceptualization of racism as a measurable attribute that is contained within individual psyches (Conaghy, 1986; Saucier & Miller, 2003). Even in qualitative research, racism comes to connote a "thing" or "attitude" that manifests especially in certain "racist" White people. This thinking would

imply that certain White people are not racist, as if White privilege is possibly, finally able to be disinvested by some and not others. This also frames racism as wholly agentic procedures executed by White people upon Black people and non-White Others, as if Whiteness and racism were not sustained by historical, structural inequalities and that the people who are targets of discrimination and hate are only ever acted *upon*. This logic denies agency to everyone who is not White or able to benefit from racism, which reproduces White privilege and further centers the White subject in the discourse on race. Though I acknowledge the advantage of being able to distinguish between levels of discriminatory attitudes and employed methods to make these distinctions throughout this dissertation, I reject an ontology of racism that places it “within” social actors and denies the ways in which power-knowledge relations are discursively, socially constructed and materialized (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1978; Butler, 1993).

Thinking about racisms as emergent compels me to consider how White guilt and shame are a) characterized by processes of modification, maintenance and negotiation, and b) always about racism. My first point is that racism, in this sense, is often aversive or covert, but is also a dynamic and highly sophisticated interplay of identities, affect, attitudes and contexts/situations. My research found that White guilt and shame are fundamentally connected to attitudinal perceptions of inequity or wrongdoing and that a particular injustice was *caused* by identity. For example, White guilt and shame were assigned to Don Imus when he was depicted as sexist and racist, and these attributes caused him to say “nappy-headed hos.” My participants felt White guilt when they identified with racial injustice and felt implicated in situations when other White people had been racist or were unfairly advantaged, such as Hurricane Katrina. On the other



hand, White guilt was denied when participants perceived the relationship between race and injustice as circumstantial or correlational. Furthermore, race was not the only salient dimension of identity in any given conflict. Indeed, the identities of at least four social actors were relevant: the participant; the perceived perpetrator(s) (e.g., Imus, FEMA, George W. Bush); the victim(s) (e.g., Gulf Coast residents, the Rutgers University women's basketball team); and those present for the participants' potential experience of White guilt. Identification alone was not a determining factor; rather, the perception of self and others' identity was influential. For example, based on survey responses to the TOWGAS, higher gender-identified men were less willing to endorse White guilt than higher gender-identified women. The relationship between these multiple identity categories made the experience of White guilt – including the ways in which it was denied – full of interpretation and meaning making. There was no evidence to suggest that the feeling of White guilt is permanent, stable or universal.

In neoliberalism, racism as a label has such a stigmatizing effect that White people take action to avoid being perceived as racist; as one of my participants asserted, the perception of racism is more important than whether or not one actually possesses racist attitudes (Goffman, 1959, 1963). White guilt needs racism to exist, but historical racism and past events can provoke negative, self-conscious racial affect in the present. Moreover, the individual's beliefs about race and racism are essential components of White guilt. If someone believes that race no longer influences social relationships and that his own Whiteness has nothing to do with past inequity, it is difficult to imagine how White guilt could happen. But all of my interview participants did think that race *and* history mattered, and none self-identified as racist or discriminatory. Their differential

beliefs about the salience and import of race and history in their own lives determined their relationship to White racial affect. The causes and effects of racism were invoked as their justification for the activation or negation of White guilt.

Emergent racisms and White guilt are not synonymous, but this conceptualization of racism as pluralized and emergent is the theoretical lens that has come to frame my thinking about White guilt. In arguing for an accounting of racism that addresses the institutional and economic practices that created what we have come to call White privilege, Lipsitz (2006) argued, “Studies of racial culture too far removed from studies of social structures have left us with inadequate explanations for understand and combating racism” (p. 2). I concur with his assertion, but also posit: studies of racism too far removed from studies of emotion and feeling have left us with inadequate tools with which to understand and combat racism.

This assertion is based in my findings from the three studies, which together constitute this dissertation. I discuss these findings, their limitations and the pragmatic opportunities they open, below.

### **White Racial Affect**

Formal hypotheses only guided one chapter of the dissertation, Chapter 3, and were specifically related to the analysis and interpretation of my quantitative survey data. However, many assumptions and ‘predictions’ undergirded the design of the project as a whole and the interpretation of data. I have outlined these assumptions throughout, and they represent my overarching presupposition that certain key “arenas” of meaning making influence the experience of White guilt and shame. These arenas were as follows: *culture*, including history and popular discourse; *identity*, including multiple dimensions

of difference beyond racial identity or the act of identifying as White; *affect*, which included White guilt, externalization of blame, detachment and the potential emotion of White shame; and *attitudes*, which included political attitudes and the cognitive elements of making sense of race and identity-based social relations. These arenas were privileged sites of meaning making in the design and execution of my research, which was designed to fill in the empirical substance of these arenas and point toward the relationships between them.

I found that my expectations were verified and challenged by my sites of inquiry (i.e., the journalism discourse, survey responses and ethnographic interviews). In trying to make sense of all the data collectively, I sketched and “tested” several conceptual models to see how well they “fit” my findings and how sufficiently they answered my research questions about White guilt. As data become increasingly multisited and complex, any model will be increasingly less capable of capturing this complexity. Nevertheless, successful findings should have sufficient explanatory power at least to promote new questions and guide future research. My findings pointed me toward four key concepts that together interacted in the constitution of White guilt and shame: *identity*, *attitudes*, *situation* and *affect*. *Culture*, meanwhile, grounds the other four within a particular social and historical context of shared meanings (Hall, 1997a). Figure 8 represents my visualization of the model.

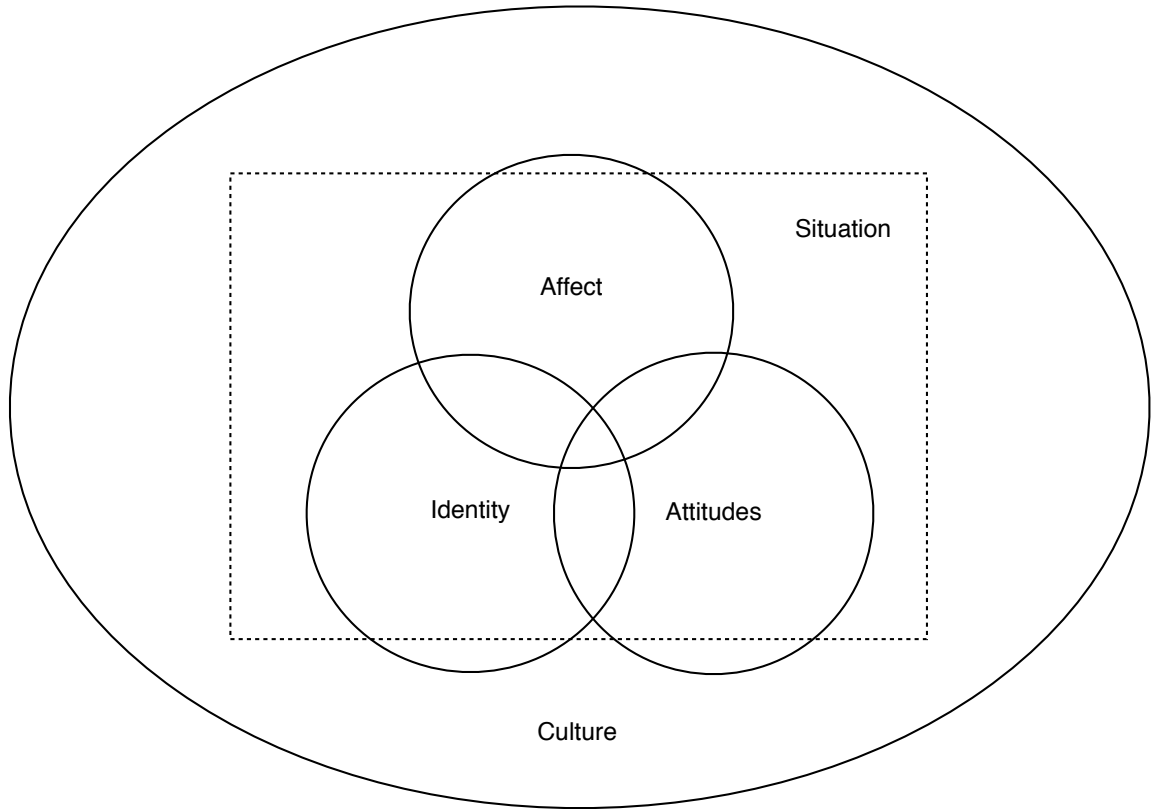


Figure 8. White Racial Affect

**The Framework**

**Culture.** I no longer consider culture to be a contributing factor in the experience of White guilt and White shame, because its role is actually much more significant than that. Culture is literally the discursive terrain that makes the emotional experience of race and guilt possible, so cannot adequately be accounted for as a contributing “variable” of affective experience. Culture refers to the historical and broad sociopolitical conditions under which White guilt happens and is a co-constitutive element of psychology (Markus, Kitayama & Heiman, 1996). An explicitly cultural framework helps ground the psychology of White guilt in structural elements of experience that cannot be quantified or completely captured by qualitative accounts of individual experience. Culture situates White guilt and shame within the contemporary United States and the conditions of

neoliberalism. As a hegemonic cultural formation, neoliberalism makes talking about the causes of racial inequality and consequences of racism difficult even as discourse about race and other dimensions of identity proliferates (Duggan, 2003; Melamed, 2006). As my participants struggled to articulate how and why identity did (not) matter in conflicts that were based on identity, they situated themselves within neoliberalism. Accordingly, their psychological experiences must be explicated within a 21<sup>st</sup> century, U.S. cultural context – and knowledge about their experiences should be necessarily limited to this cultural context (Gergen, 1973). White racial guilt and shame may indeed happen in different cultural contexts and for people who identify with and live in other countries with legacies of White supremacy, such as the United Kingdom, South Africa and Australia. Indeed, cultural studies of White guilt in these contexts should take sufficient care in accounting for the influence of unique cultural factors in these experiences in other countries.

While I affirm the primacy of culture and the importance of situating psychological experiences within specific historical contexts, my findings suggest that “history” plays an exceedingly complex role in my participants’ lives. History matters, but history is a highly interpretive practice of creating individual and subjective constructions of past events and historical narratives. These histories are then used to explain current phenomena or make sense of complex sociological relations. Academic accounts of U.S. social and political history (e.g., Ellison, 1996) inform the grounding of cultural psychology in specific temporal moments, but these renderings of history may have very little do with how people experience race and other relations of power and knowledge. Academic history and individuals’ constructions of history must be

considered in conversation and allowed to challenge one another. Social psychology, as Gergen (1973) asserted, *is* a historical practice; such a position necessitates allowing multiple histories to influence individual affective experiences.

**Identity.** In discourse about race and responsibility, people used multiple dimensions of identity to express their self-concepts and their sense of others, as well as to understand complex social conflicts. Journalists described how race, sexuality, class, nationality and gender shaped public reactions to conflicts and mediated the assignment of guilt and expression of shame. Interview participants articulated how multiple dimensions of identity influenced their everyday lives and how they viewed the historical events we discussed, as well as other comparable events and conflicts they volunteered. Whereas religion was not salient in journalists' coverage of Cooper, Imus and Washington, participants sometimes brought religion and religiosity into our conversations to elucidate their personal backgrounds. Individual personality differences, including perceptions of Imus, Washington, Knight and Cooper, as well as participants' own traits, influenced discourse about White guilt and shame because personality was tied to intentionality. Establishing whether harm was intended by actions/behavior was a critical test for determining whether or not people could be called racist, sexist or "homophobic."

Because multiple dimensions of identity overlapped and intersected throughout the discourse, it is impossible to reduce discourse about White guilt exclusively to discourse about race. Though not always made explicit, gender, class and sexuality appear to be the most salient dimensions of identity in this research, though this was not confirmed across all data sources and was certainly influenced by the events I chose to

explore. One of the most important findings regarding identity was the influence of gender identity salience on proneness to White guilt. An interaction effect between the strength of gender identity, as assessed by the Collective Self Esteem identity subscale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and White guilt-proneness suggests that men and women may be prone to White guilt in different ways. Future studies should target this relationship and determine if gender identity may mediate experiences of White guilt. Political identification also had effects on proneness to White guilt and negation. Republican-identified respondents were least likely to experience White guilt, and Democrats were least likely to experience negation behind both Republicans and Independents. I did not investigate what political identity means to participants (i.e., *attitudes*, see below), but future studies should probe deeper into the significance of political affiliation on White people's sense of collective guilt and shame.

The findings confirm the centrality of intersectionality in understanding relations of power that are perceived as rooted in any one dimension of experience – in this case, race (Collins, 1990/2000; Cole, 2009; Dill, McLaughlin & Nieves, 2007). But the intersectional complexity of this discourse should not be understated (McCall, 2005). The intersectional identities of at least four social actors or groups mattered in the expression of beliefs about identity and the experience of self-conscious racial affect: the subject (the person who is (not) feeling White guilt or shame); the perpetrator of the racist act, who sometimes is the same as the subject and can also be a group of individuals or an institution perceived as White, such as Congress; and the victim or victims, who may denied victimhood or the right to claim injustice if negation happens; and witnesses, such friends, coworkers or even me (in the context of our interviews), who may be perceived

as judging the subject. From a dramaturgical interactionist perspective (Goffman, 1959), White guilt and shame are performances, like all symbolic interaction. Accordingly, this fourth category of relevant social actors (i.e., “witnesses” to feeling) likely influences experiences of White guilt and shame. Future studies should investigate the determining role of witnesses to White guilt; for example, experimental research could test if proneness to White guilt and White shame is influenced by the presence or absence of racial Others during the test administration of the TOWGAS.

**Attitudes.** Cognitive elements cannot be divorced from any model of White guilt and shame. Beliefs about race, gender and sexuality were the most common themes expressed in my interviews, and may ultimately be the most powerful predictors of proneness to White guilt and shame after identifying as White. What people believe about race shapes how they make meaning of out interactions with racial Others, as well as other White people (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007). Attitudes are so central to the experience of Whiteness that is difficult to distinguish the phenomenology of Whiteness from simply what people cognitively perceive about Whiteness and other aspects of social identities, such as heterosexuality and masculinity. Racist attitudes, as measured by the Racial Argument Scale (Saucier & Miller, 2003), expressed significant correlations with each subscale of the TOWGAS, as well as two extant measures of White guilt (Swim & Miller, 1999; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). Future applications of the TOWGAS should examine its subscales’ relationships with other racism scales, such as colorblind racism (Neville et al., 2000) and modern racism (Conaghy, 1986), as well as domains other than racism. My research suggests that relevant attitudes are not limited to



the social and political domain, but that core beliefs about morals and expectations of one's own behavior especially inform logic about blame and responsibility.

**Situation.** In parsing out specific interactions from culture generally, we can allow the significance of micro- and meso-level interactions in the constitution of White guilt. Complete social isolation from people of color, which contributes to what Bonilla-Silva and Embrick (2007) call “White habitus,” may help White people to avoid the feelings of White guilt and shame. One of my participants suggested that racism could not happen in the absence of people of color or a material target for racist attitudes. My conversations with interview participants were organized around three primary situations that might provoke collective guilt and/or shame, which effectively served as stimuli. The TOWGAS itself is dependent upon participants' willingness to imagine how they would react in hypothetical scenarios. Prior literature and my own findings suggest that White people do not generally live their lives plagued by a sense of White guilt or shame, but that particular interactions can provoke these emotions. Increased interactions with people of color may not only provide opportunities for multicultural education and the debunking of stereotypes (Stangor & Shaller, 1996; Romney, Tatum & Jones, 1992), but may heighten feelings of negative self-conscious racial affect. Certain situations may motivate feelings of negation more than White guilt; similarly, certain situations may be more provoking of White shame than White guilt. Accordingly, just as situations may trigger White guilt, the discursive boundaries of a particular situation restrict what knowledge we can extrapolate from individual experiences of White guilt. Understanding what kinds of situations activate different forms of White guilt was central to the development of the TOWGAS and should continue to be a critical part of research on

White guilt and related affective experiences. Clarke's (2005) situational analysis is a particularly useful method for conducting such research, as her "situational maps" and "social worlds/arenas maps" compel researchers to make explicit the variety of actors, nonhuman actants and discursive elements of a given situation and facilitate cross-situational comparisons.

**Affect.** Affect is the conceptual core of my framework and the locus of analytic interest. Several findings emerged in this project that influence my understanding of the affective contours of White guilt and compel me to think about White guilt as one construct amid a range of White racial affective forms. These include: the distinction between White guilt and White shame; the substantive coalescence of externalization and detachment into negation; and the presence of "inaffectivity" in White people's lives. In the visualization of the model above, White racial affect – including guilt, shame, negation and in affectivity – materializes in the space created by the intersection of attitudes, identity and affect in a given situation and located within a cultural context.

Rhetorics of shame and guilt were articulated in different ways throughout the three crises I studied in my discourse analysis. The "I-Mess," for example, quickly shifted from rhetoric of guilt to rhetoric of shame once Imus's identity became the source of the social problem, as opposed to his specific behavior. White shame-proneness clearly emerged as a distinct factor in the TOWGAS and described a strong, negative regard for the White racial self. Finally, my interview participants used the terms "guilt" and "shame" in ways that failed to reflect psychological definitions of the constructs, further demonstrating the importance of studying the content of these forms – as opposed to the ways in which they are named or labeled (see Levs, 2007). My participants, however, did

articulate ideas that reflect the differences between forms of negative evaluation of Whites' behaviors (guilt) and White people generally (shame).

Negation, which represents one of the most important findings in this dissertation, illuminates how White people avoid or defer White guilt and White shame. Similarly, inactivity substantially contributes to this research, because it helps to illuminate the meaning in moments that might otherwise appear to be sites of discursive inactivity (as opposed to meaningful *silence*) (Clarke, 2005). Inactivity and negation appear to be central to the experience or absence of White guilt and shame. Combined with the emergence of White shame as a meaningful construct, the collective findings of this dissertation provoke a rhetorical and conceptual shift away from a solitary focus on White guilt (Swim & Miller, 1999; Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003) and toward a constellation of White racial affect. Among the forms within this constellation, inactivity raises especially complicated methodological questions. For example, how might inactivity be measured quantitatively? After more theoretical and conceptual work, future validation studies of the TOWGAS might incorporate potential items to tap inactivity and develop another subscale. Alternatively, a unique measure may be developed to isolate and assess this latent variable.

In exploring contemporary White guilt from a variety of disciplinary and methodological angles, I exposed the multidimensionality of what might colloquially be referred to as feeling “White guilt,” and which included actual negative evaluations of Whiteness in addition to complex cognitive-affective strategies to deny the salience of race in social interactions and the meaningfulness of racial conflict in producing inequalities. White racial affect denotes a suite of emotions that exist in neoliberalism and

which White people use to understand and make sense of racially complicated situations that implicate themselves and/or other White people. My findings unsettle arguments by those such as Steele (1990, 2006) that White guilt is an inevitable or fundamental component of liberal, White racial identity.

However, my findings do reflect the categorization of White guilt as a *potentially* productive emotion (Swim & Miller, 1999; Iyer, Leach & Crosby, 2003; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). Though it does not necessarily reflect a commitment to antiracism, White guilt was correlated with certain desirable antiracist qualities (e.g., lower levels of prejudice) and expression of sympathy for victims of racism. My respondents' articulations about White guilt, on the other hand, continue to highlight the self-focused properties of White guilt: namely, that the threat of being called racist is a more salient and predictable motivator of antiracism than genuine concern about social justice. While correlations between White guilt and lower levels of racial prejudice were significant, this does not necessarily mean that the experience of White guilt was strong or that prejudicial attitudes were *actually* minimal – only that they were significantly higher or lower than other respondents' scores.

### **Limitations & Opportunities**

My developing framework of White racial affect does not yet account for the directional or causal relationships between the various components of the model. However, the constitution of these four areas of experience, grounded in culture, capture the substance of my findings and reflect the most salient aspects of the discourses produced and analyzed within my dissertation. They reflect particular limitations of the project as a whole and open up areas of future inquiry.

Extant journalistic discourse about White guilt analyzed for this project was contained to three historical moments (e.g., Katrina, “I-Mess” and “Isaiahgate”) and print media. This decision therefore necessarily limited the amount and diversity of material considered. Furthermore, by structuring the ethnographic interviews around these three conflicts in popular culture, the format and content of our interviews was meaningfully controlled. Though the topic-based connection between the discourse analysis and the ethnographic interviews was an analytic strength of the project in terms of mixed-methods analysis, it also restricted the breadth of journalism materials and ethnographic exploration.

The human participants in my project were limited to undergraduate students at the University of Maryland, College Park, and thereby represent only a small slice of White people in the United States. My interview participants were all aged 22 or younger and were from the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, attending college outside the nation’s Capital; none identified in any way other than middle or upper-middle class. Though I aimed to explore how a sexually diverse sample might increase the diversity of experiences of White guilt, the relative homogeneity of sexual orientation in my sample hindered analysis of sexuality-based differences. The lack of lesbian participants and the overall minimal number of otherwise queer-identified participants did not, however, limit investigations of how (hetero)sexuality and heteronormativity generally inflected expressions of racial affect. Future studies should examine more diverse populations, though, to test the generalizability of these findings and to refine explanations of White racial affect among White people who differ along primary markers of identity, especially geography, age, occupation, social class and sexuality.

By surveying and interviewing only White people, I relied on the subjective experiences of White people to shape my findings. Bonilla-Silva and Embrick (2007), however, insist that White people are largely “oblivious” to the ways in which being White shapes their lives (p. 325). Though some of my participants were able to reflect in depth on their Whiteness, most demonstrated some amount of difficulty in coherently and consistently explaining how Whiteness, as well as other dominant identity-group memberships, informed their everyday lives (Knowles & Peng, 2005). A future comparative study should involve similar interviews with 10 Black college students at the same or comparable university. It would be productive to explore the similarities and differences in young adult U.S. African Americans’ account of White guilt and the ways in which it may or may not affect White peoples’ actions, as well as Black people’s experience of racism.

As I explained in Chapter 1, this research was restricted to White people’s guilt and shame over racism toward Black people in the United States. I did not explore how other racial minorities and their experiences of inequality may foster guilt and shame among White people. Furthermore, I did not distinguish between White people’s attitudes and feelings toward African American Black people versus people Black people who are immigrants to the United States or who do not identify with African Americans. Future research should explore the differences, if any, between how White people respond differently to ethnically and nationally diverse Black people.

My primary research questions targeted the cultural discourse about White guilt, the differences between White guilt and shame and the co-constitution of race, gender and sexuality in the phenomenology of White guilt. This project addressed these

questions, which could not provide causal explanations for the relationship between identity, White guilt and racism. However, racism remains the central concern of this research. Accordingly, this project opens up future questions that should be explored via a variety of empirical and analytic strategies discussed in the conclusions of previous chapters. Overall, this line of research should continue to refine the definitions of these constructs through empirical investigations. Additional methodologies should be incorporated to continue to challenge extant findings, as well as to produce new analytic interventions into White guilt and racism. Experimental psychological research and long-term, in-depth ethnography are two exemplars of methodological opportunities. Both of these modes of inquiry are better equipped to ask longitudinal questions about the consequences for White guilt on the development of sustainable, antiracist White allies.

### **Conclusion**

The challenge of emergent racisms is to continue to produce more comprehensive and useful knowledge about race and racism so that we are better equipped to intervene in racism. I was drawn to White guilt as an area of inquiry first because I saw it as an impediment to antiracism. From my observations, White guilt seemed to be associated with self-focused and counter-productive emotions. I soon realized, however, that I did not know what other people meant when they referenced White guilt, much less what I thought I was looking at when I saw my own students resist critical pedagogies or struggle to articulate how being White made them feel. I was also unsure what role White guilt played in my own life.

By asking what exactly White guilt is, I can say with some certainty that much of what we flippantly call “White guilt” may be more accurately described by specific

constructs that denote particular, culturally contingent forms of White racial affect. These forms of affect – what I have called White guilt, White shame, negation and ineffectivity – are only important to me because they are implicated in racism. The study of White racial affect is a careful balancing act of (re)centering the White subject in antiracist discourse only to the point at which we can more produce knowledge that more effectively displaces Whiteness in contemporary U.S. culture. The point of studying Whiteness is to do something about it.

Seidman (1997) called for a renewed pragmatism in critical social theory at the conclusion of his theoretical investigation of how queer theory has transformed sociological inquiry and can work with other social movements to fight connected systems of oppression and to address the challenges differences pose to the “comfort” of modernism. He wrote:

In a society such as the contemporary U.S., where differences have crystallized into sociocultural differences and where convictions of discourse – styles, logics, categories, epistemologies – are regularly contested, a pragmatic culture of reason that is respectful of difference, comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, and oriented toward inventiveness and temporary agreements would seem especially appropriate, encouraging civil, peaceful, democratic modes of daily managing collective life. (p. 264-265)

I humbly consider my project to be committed to the kind of new pragmatism to which Seidman encouraged us, as scholar-activists, to aspire. Neoliberal social policies and cultural formations present persistent challenges to a sustainable and powerful movement to combat racism in the everyday life of people in the United States (Duggan, 2003).



Furthermore, neoconservative and so-called “moderate” political movements that have flourished under neoliberalism have effectively obscured the relationships between forms of oppression and successfully inflated differences between social-political minority groups. Some groups, such as the mainstream gay rights movement, have at times been complicit in these efforts (Seidman; Gamson, 1996; Duggan). The politics and epistemology of Black feminism, on the other hand, continue to remind us that struggles for justice are fought through coalitions, not oppositions (Combahee River Collective, 1977/2007; Lorde, 1984; Dill, 1979; Collins, 1990/2000). These struggles are political in aims and highly emotional in form (Ahmed, 2004b; Fisher, 1984; Lorde).

This project was executed using a range of typically disparate methodologies – particularly in the context of American studies – for a range of politically salient reasons. First, diverse methodologies are better equipped to break silences, highlight invisibilities and disrupt the (White) noise of hegemonic discourse that averts our eyes from the ponderous materiality of oppression (Foucault, 1972). Second, diverse methodologies produce diverse, partial knowledges (Haraway, 1988), which are better equipped to form these coalitions, to communicate across categories of difference and to implement pragmatic moves toward justice. As Katz (2001) argued, to actualize interdisciplinarity, “would be to alter the grounds of knowledge and the troubled and troubling structures that hold them in place; to make good on the incomplete project of interdisciplinarity by using its logics to continue to disrupt the academy as a realm of power and knowledge” (p. 525). With further validation, the TOWGAS may prove to be a useful tool for pedagogical and psychotherapeutic interventions into racist attitudes. The TOWGAS, and the knowledge it produces, can be used for the kind of policy study and application that

Miner-Rubino, Jayaratne and Konik (2007) insist represents the potential for social change produced by quantitative survey research. By grounding the development of the TOWGAS in qualitatively rich lived experiences, we gain the utility of a social research tool without sacrificing the nuance of ethnographic complexity. Future mixed-methods studies in controlled environments or field research should continue to employ the TOWGAS with qualitative methods to tackle the very real ideological and material challenges of contemporary neoliberal racial formation (Omi & Winant, 1994).

I still wonder what happens after guilt, because I am concerned about the self-conscious inaction that can manifest in guilt. A quote from Bernice Fisher (1984) opens this concluding chapter, because I am struck by how different today's discourse on difference *feels* from the problems facing the feminist movement of the late 1970s. Fisher's thoughts on the complacency and inaction engendered by White women's guilt and shame reflect psychological concerns about the inability of White guilt to motivate substantive social change. And yet there were moments in this project when I felt myself longing for White guilt. Today's multiculturalism seems to have alleviated White guilt without alleviating the material effects of racism. Though I will not settle for White guilt as the path to deconstructing racism, and I am even more skeptical about the political potential of White shame, I am just as concerned about giving up on White guilt prematurely, negating its experience or denying the emotionality of race and intersecting dimensions of oppression. We should not foreclose on White guilt so long before there's nothing left to feel guilty about.

## EPILOGUE:

### On Intersectionality

As the bulk of the research and writing of this manuscript was coming to a close, academic discourse on intersectionality was proliferating. Several notable publications and major conferences exemplified how scholars in the social sciences, humanities and applied domains, such as law and critical legal studies, have been innovating theoretical and methodological approaches to the intersections of identity and oppression. Dill and Zambrana's (2009) edited anthology, *Emerging Intersections*, examined social scientific contributions to the study of race, class and gender in theory and policy; this research reflects a decade of working papers and ongoing projects at the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity at the University of Maryland, reportedly the world's first and only think-tank dedicated to the promotion of intersectional scholarship. Berger and Guidroz (2009) released a multidisciplinary anthology that explored the impact of intersectional approaches on the academy as a cultural institution and the disciplinary frameworks that constitute its epistemic scaffolding. *American Psychologist*, the flagship journal of the American Psychological Association that is distributed to all APA members, published a methods essay by Cole (2009) that posits a three-point framework for how to conduct intersectional research in psychology. Finally, UCLA Law's Critical Race Studies program announced a spring 2010 symposium on intersectionality to celebrate over 20 years of the movement and to consider the past and future directions of intersectional research, pedagogy and activism.

These discourses are linked by more than their focus on intersectional topics and politics. More notable than their shared emphasis on the study of race, class and gender

as intersecting foundations of lived experience and social structures is their collective meta-analytic concern regarding intersectionality as something more than just a methodological strategy or theoretical lens. These scholars' work exhibits relative degrees of preoccupation with the past and future of intersectionality the *paradigm* and *field*, representing research and praxis linked by more than method or discipline. The stakes of these diverse conversations about intersectionality have potentially transformative consequences.

The stakes are high for the next proverbial wave of intersectionality, as Zambrana and Dill (2009) highlight in their volume. Collins (2009) writes in her foreword to *Emerging Intersections* that, "Unlike the invisibility that plagued the field of intersectionality at its inception, it now faces an entirely new challenge of being hypervisible within equally novel conditions of global, commodity capitalism" (p. xiii). The history of the movement is such that late in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, "intersectionality" has political weight in mainstream academic circles and has come to signify particular kinds of research practices and theoretical assumptions that may be far removed from earlier articulations of Black feminism that sparked the movement and articulated the concept of "intersections" (e.g., Crenshaw, 1993; Collins, 1990/2000). Those who command influence over what counts as intersectionality (i.e., what constitutes intersectional research) will literally chart the future of the field.

As I completed my dissertation and watched these conversations unfold parallel to my own work, the contributions of my project to intersectional research became more apparent. The implications of this intersectional examination of White guilt are largely unpredictable, but my project does approach intersectionality in at least two ways that are

divergent from the Black feminist tradition that is the bedrock of the field. First, in privileging race, gender and sexuality as the primary axes of identity and oppression under investigation, my project engages with sexuality in ways that expand the scope of intersectional inquiry to include the consequences of heterosexism and sexual identity on the politics of race and racism for all people regardless of racial or sexual identity. Certainly, prior literature has dealt with heterosexuality and violence, especially as they affect Black women's lives (e.g., Crenshaw, 1993), while other research has forwarded a queer of color critique to highlight the inherent heterosexism of earlier Black feminist scholarship (e.g., Ferguson, 2004). Whereas these bodies of scholarship have focused on how sexuality functions as a tool of oppression in heterosexual relationships or how queer people negotiate the effects of racism and sexism in ways that are unique from their heterosexual counterparts, my work attempts to understand how sexuality and gender shape racial epistemology. This interpretive move corresponds with Dill, McLaughlin and Nieves' (2007) call for greater attention to those dimensions of oppression that have not been at the forefront of intersectional scholarship, such as disability, nationality and sexuality. By drawing on the insights of queer theories, which often take up heterosexuality as their analytic focus, I have examined how sexual discourses permeate *all* knowledge, logic and talk about race and racism even when sex, gender or sexuality are not apparently relevant (Sedgwick, 1990; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Foucault, 1978). Sexuality, including sexual identity and sexual politics, is one among many intersecting axes of identity and oppression through which White racial feelings are manifested and articulated. Whether making sense of Don Imus or determining culpability for Hurricane Katrina's wake, pervasive beliefs about sexuality frame and inflect the discourses I

studied herein. These findings are not unique to the extent that these processes were at work prior to my studies, but my dissertation has attempted to name and critique these processes where other scholarship has failed to do so. We cannot possibly examine every intersection of identity, and attempting to capture all identity categories in a single study would dilute and particularize findings beyond meaning and comprehension, but paying attention to ignored or understudied dimensions of experience facilitates the marking of invisible practices and illustrates the limits of extant knowledge (Haraway, 1988; Clarke, 2005).

My work is also different from prior research on intersectionality in its relationship to disciplines and methods. Extant intersectional approaches have primarily relied upon either quantitative or qualitative approaches, just as most social research generally takes an either/or approach to the quantitative/qualitative binary. Furthermore, qualitative research has been especially dominant in intersectionality a) because of its capacity to handle the interpretive nuances of intersectional identities, and b) arguably because, historically, qualitative methods have been better positioned in social research to treat identity categories as things other than variables, unlike statistical methods. While some leaders in intersectionality have signaled that mixed or hybrid methods are broadly well suited to intersectional analyses in much the same way that interdisciplinary scholarship is consonant with intersectionality (e.g., Stewart & Cole, 2007; Dill, McLaughlin & Nieves, 2007), actual mixed-methods scholarship remains rare. For example, in the two recent anthologies on intersectionality, only one study employed a mixed-methods design (Perry, 2009).

And while one might expect that interdisciplinary and mixed-methods approaches are inevitable in intersectionality's future, some recent publications have backed away from earlier and more radical arguments about the necessity of interdisciplinarity and methodological innovation. For example, Cole (2009) is careful to state that psychology does not need new methods to become intersectional, and Collins (2009) has asked whether or not intersectionality can operate fully and productively within disciplinary silos. According to Cole, "To translate the theoretical insights of intersectionality into psychological research does not require the adoption of a new set of methods; rather, it requires a reconceptualization of the meaning and consequences of social categories" (p. 176). Though Cole does not argue that psychologists should *not* develop new methods and Collins does not insist that intersectionality *should* function solely in traditional disciplines, entertaining these questions about the place of intersectionality in the traditional, epistemic 'centers' of academia is a kind of momentum that my project resists. This dissertation represents an alternative configuration of intersectional methodology that is executable, comprehensible and empirically rigorous. The model of critical concurrency piloted here does not require new methods *per se*, but does insist that research questions should drive the selection of methods – and not the other way around. Intersectional psychology, for example, should not use quantitative methods because psychologists typically use quantitative methods, but because the questions we develop may be well suited to a quantitative empirical strategy. Psychologists should not foreclose on qualitative methods because they lack the training to execute them, just as historians should not avoid quantitative methods because they may be uncomfortable with statistical analyses. Moreover, resisting disciplinarity is critical to resisting

oppression (Foucault, 1970; Katz, 2001), and I have argued throughout this dissertation that multiple methods and what Clarke (2005) calls “multisite” research are best prepared to illuminate intersections that are heretofore unseen or elided by systems of power and inequity. To me, mixed methodological approaches – though not always obligatory or preferred – are a quintessential form of feminist objectivity because they signify an explicit commitment to the partiality and situatedness of all knowledge claims (Haraway, 1988). Though a methodological revolution may not be necessary to chart the future of intersectionality, maybe we should start one anyway.



## APPENDIX A

### Journalism News Sources, Chapter 2

#### ***Don Imus and Rutgers Basketball Team***

Bacon, Jr. P. (2007, April 21). At Rutgers, Clinton ties flap to fight for equality; women and blacks are vital in primary. *The Washington Post*, p. A02.

Brown, D. L., & Fears, D. (2007, November 11). Reduced to the small screen; incident, reaction, forget repeat: Formulaic entertainment replaces serious discussion on race. *The Washington Post*, p. M01.

Carr, D. (2007, April 7). Networks condemn remarks by Imus. *The New York Times*, p. B7.

Carr, D. (2007, April 9). With Imus, they keep coming back. *The New York Times*, p. C1.

Carter, B. (2007, May 4). Lawyer says Imus to sue CBS, accusing it of breaking contract. *The New York Times*, p. 5.

Deggans, E. (2007, April 15). Enabling insults, injuries and Imus. *St. Petersburg Times* (Florida), p. 1P.

de Moraes, L. (2007, April 10). Don Imus is punished with two weeks of radio silence. *The Washington Post*, p. C01.

Dinan, S. (2007, April 21). Hillary applauds courage of those critical of Imus; Says disrespect, bigotry not funny. *The Washington Times* p. A02.

Editorial: Imus and sleaze [Editorial]. (2007, April 11). *The Washington Times*, p. A16.

Editorial: In the eye of a storm, beacons of composure; Rutgers, Duke students acquit themselves well [Editorial]. (2007, April 13). *The Washington Post*, p. C02.

Editorial: Shocked jock; Don Imus takes his lumps. He deserves every one of them

[Editorial]. (2007, April 10). *The Washington Post*, p. A16.

Editorial: The Rutgers winning team [Editorial]. (2007, April 11). *The New York Times*, p. 20.

Fenner, A., & Siemaszko, C. (2007, April 10). I-Mess! Don is booted for 2 wks. He faces off with Sharpton in tests exchange on race – then CBS and MSNBC pull plug on his radio show. *Daily News* (New York), p. 9.

Galupo, S. (2007, April 27). The redefinition of Al Sharpton?; After Imus, the target is gangsta rappers. *The Washington Times*, p. D01.

Giordano, R. (2007, April 11). Team accepts Imus's apology after long meeting with him. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. B01.

Giordano, R. (2007, April 14). Not standing for it. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. A01.

Griffin, J. (2007, April 12). Let Imus correct radio Blunder; others should stay mum. *USA Today*, p. 12A.

Hanretty, K. (2007, April 15). Imus's sin? Bad joke, wrong target. *The Washington Post*, Outlook.

Hebert, B. (2007, April 12). Paying the price. *The New York Times*, p. A21.

Hill, A. F. (2007, May 23). Our wallets can shock the jocks. *The Boston Globe*, p. A9.

Hinckley, D. (2007, April 16). How one remark sowed anger, frustration. *Daily News* (New York), p. 16.

Hutchinson, E. O. (2007, April 12). 'Apology' doesn't work. *USA Today*, p. 12A.

John-Hall, A. (2007, April 11). A show of grace: what we'll recall are poised young women. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. A01.

- Johnson, P. (2007, April 9). Critics demand Imus be fired for Rutgers remark; apology called 'too little, too late.' *USA Today*, p. 3D.
- King, C. (2007, April 14). Standing up to Imus. *The Washington Post*, p. A19.
- Knott, T. (2007, April 10). Undoing of a radio ham. *The Washington Times*, p. C01.
- Kurtz, H. (2007, October 6). Don Imus close to deal for return to airwaves Dec. 1. *The Washington Post*, p. C01.
- Levy, B. (2007, April 12). Double standard in the media? *USA Today*, p. 12A.
- Lieberman, D. (2007, April 12). Pressure grows on CBS as MSNBC drops Imus; broadcast lost half of top 10 sponsors. *USA Today*, p. 1A.
- Loverro, T. (2007, April 9). Imus's comments lead Ripken to back out. *The Washington Times*, p. C08.
- Magubane, Z. (2007, April 12). Why 'nappy' is offensive. *The Boston Globe*, p. A9.
- Maxwell, B. (2007, April 15). Black critics of Imus are hypocrites. *St. Petersburg Times* (Florida), p. 3P.
- Moore, T. (2007, April 20). In black & white, U.S. divided on Imus axing. *Daily News* (New York), p. 14.
- Neuharth, A. (2007, April 13). Does Imus's trash talk hurt First Amendment. *USA Today*, p. 11A.
- Olsen, L. (2007, April 10). Two weeks? He needs at least a summer vacation. *Daily News* (New York), p. 58.
- Page, S. (2007, April 11). Officials weigh in on Imus remarks. *USA Today*, p. 2A.
- Paumgarten, N. (2007, April 23). Imus Versus Imus. *The New Yorker*, *VV*, 25.

- Puente, M. (2007, April 13). Outrage over Imus shows societal shift; rap lingo spills into mainstream. *USA Today*, p. 3E.
- Raissman, B. (2007, April 13). Suits join shock jerk among guilty parties. *Daily News* (New York), p. 85.
- Roberts, S. (2007, April 11). A first-class response to a second-class put-down. *The New York Times*, p. D1.
- Robinson, E. (2007, April 10). Misogyny in the morning. *The Washington Post*, p. A17.
- Robinson, E. (2007, April 13). Why Imus had to go. *The Washington Post*, p. A17.
- Robinson, E. (2007, October 9). Which black America? *The Washington Post*, p. A17.
- Rush, G., & Rush Malloy, J. (2008, June 24). Yet another I-Mess over a racial remark. *Daily News* (New York), p. 22.
- Sheridan, P. (2007, April 7). When hate meets ignorance on the air. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. C01.
- Steinberg, J. (2007, September 12). Rutgers player withdraws suit against Imus. *The New York Times*, p. 3D.
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## APPENDIX B

### Broadcast Transcripts

**Transcript 1:** Imus in the Morning, Wednesday, April 4, 2007 (Media Matters, 2007)

IMUS: So, I watched the basketball game last night between -- a little bit of Rutgers and Tennessee, the women's final.

ROSENBERG: Yeah, Tennessee won last night -- seventh championship for [Tennessee coach] Pat Summitt, I-Man. They beat Rutgers by 13 points.

IMUS: That's some rough girls from Rutgers. Man, they got tattoos and --

McGUIRK: Some hard-core hos.

IMUS: That's some nappy-headed hos there. I'm gonna tell you that now, man, that's some -- woo. And the girls from Tennessee, they all look cute, you know, so, like -- kinda like -- I don't know.

McGUIRK: A Spike Lee thing.

IMUS: Yeah.

McGUIRK: The Jigaboos vs. the Wannabes -- that movie that he had.

IMUS: Yeah, it was a tough --

McCORD: *Do The Right Thing*.

McGUIRK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

IMUS: I don't know if I'd have wanted to beat Rutgers or not, but they did, right?

ROSENBERG: It was a tough watch. The more I look at Rutgers, they look exactly like the Toronto Raptors.

IMUS: Well, I guess, yeah.

RUFFINO: Only tougher.

McGUIRK: The [Memphis] Grizzlies would be more appropriate.

**Transcript 2:** Anderson Cooper interviews Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.), September 1, 2005, CNN.

COOPER: Does the federal government bear responsibility for what is happening now? Should they apologize for what is happening now?

LANDRIEU: Anderson, there will be plenty of time to discuss all of those issues, about why, and how, and what, and if. ... Let me just say a few things. Thank President Clinton and former President Bush for their strong statements of support and comfort today. ... I want to thank Senator Frist and Senator Reid for their extraordinary efforts. Anderson, tonight, I don't know if you've heard -- maybe you all have announced it -- but Congress is going to an unprecedented session to pass a \$10 billion supplemental bill tonight to keep FEMA and the Red Cross up and operating.

COOPER: ... I haven't heard that, because, for the last four days, I've been seeing dead bodies in the streets here in Mississippi. And to listen to politicians thanking each other and complimenting each other, you know, I got to tell you, there are a lot of people here who are very upset, and very angry, and very frustrated. And when they hear politicians slap -- you know, thanking one another, it just, you know, it kind of cuts them the wrong way right now. Because literally there was a body on the streets of this town yesterday being eaten by rats, because this woman had been laying in the street for 48 hours. And there's not enough facilities to take her up. Do you get the anger that is out here?

LANDRIEU: Anderson, I have the anger inside of me. Most of the homes in my family have been destroyed. Our homes have been destroyed. I understand what you're saying, and I know all of those details. And the president of the United States knows those details.

COOPER: Well, who are you angry at?

LANDRIEU: I'm not angry at anyone. I'm just expressing that it is so important for everyone in this nation to pull together, for all military assets and all assets to be brought to bear in this situation. And I have every confidence that this country is as great and as strong as we can be do to that. And that effort is under way.

COOPER: Well, I mean, there are a lot of people here who are kind of ashamed of what is happening in this country right now, what is -- ashamed of what is happening in your state, certainly. And that's not to blame the people who are there. It's a desperate situation. But I guess, you know, who can -- I mean, no one seems to be taking responsibility. I mean, I know you say there's a time and a place for, kind of, you know, looking back, but this seems to be the time and the place. I mean, there are people who want answers, and there are people who want someone to stand up and say, "You know what? We should have done more. Are all the assets being brought to bear?"

LANDRIEU: Anderson, Anderson...

COOPER: I mean, today, for the first time, I'm seeing National Guard troops in this town.

LANDRIEU: Anderson, I know. And I know where you are. And I know what you're seeing. Believe me, we know it. And we understand, and there will be a time to talk about all of that. Trust me. I know what the people are suffering. The

governor knows. The president knows. The military officials know. And they're trying to do the very best they can to stabilize the situation. Senator Vitter, our congressional delegation, all of us understand what is happening. We are doing our very, very best to get the situation under control. But I want to thank the president. He will be here tomorrow, we think. And the military is sending assets as we speak. So, please, I understand. You might say I'm a politician, but I grew up in New Orleans. My father was the mayor of that city. I've represented that city my whole life, and it's just not New Orleans. It's St. Bernard, and St. Tammany, and Plaquemines Parish that have been completely underwater. Our levee system has failed. We need a lot of help. And the Congress has been wonderful to help us, and we need more help. Nobody's perfect, Anderson. Everybody has to stand up here. And I know you understand. So thank you so much for everything you're doing.

COOPER: Well, I appreciate you joining us on the program tonight. I can only imagine how busy you are. Thank you very much, Senator Landrieu.

LANDRIEU: Thank you, Anderson. Thank you so much. Thank you.

COOPER: And good luck to you and all the people working to solve this problem.

Because, at this point, it is very hard to try to figure out how this problem is going to get solved.

## APPENDIX C

### Measures Used in Online Survey

Measures are listed here in the order in which they were presented in the survey. Reliability data is taken from instrument authors' publications, unless otherwise noted.

#### **Demographic Questionnaire** (Items are free response unless choices are listed)

Age

Year in College

First Year

Third Year

Fourth Year

Fifth Year +

Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) (if first semester in college, list high school GPA)

Religious Affiliation

Do you consider yourself to be religious?

Yes

Somewhat

No

Race

White

African American/Black

Asian American/Asian Pacific Islander/Asian

Latina/o or Hispanic

Native American

Other, please specify

Gender

Woman

Man

Transgender FTM

Transgender MTF

Other, please specify

Sexual Orientation

Political Affiliation



Democrat  
Republican  
Independent  
None  
Other, please specify

Citizenship Status  
U.S. Citizen  
Other, please specify

Are you a first-generation college student?  
Yes  
No

Please assume that the following scale is representative of the full range of social classes in the United States. At the far right of the scale are the people with the most money, the highest amount of schooling, and the most respected jobs. At the far left of the scale are the people with the least amount of money, the lowest levels and quality of schooling, and the least respected jobs. Please pick the point on this scale where you think you are.

Lower-class  
(10 dots on the scale to choose from)

Upper-class

Please indicate the percentage of your friends who are White.  
0-5%, 6-25%, 51-75%, 76-95%, 96-100%

### **Racial Argument Scale (Saucier & Miller, 2003)**

Reliability: .86

(1-5 Likert type scale, 1=not at all, 5=very much) Positive scenarios are reverse-coded.

*For the following items, please read each argument and then to rate **how well the argument supports the conclusion** offered on a 5-point scale, 1 being “not at all,” 5 being “very much.”*

Because the world is a diverse place with many different cultures and people, requiring college students to take courses such as African American studies is a benefit to them. These courses provide students with better understandings of other ethnic groups, cultures, and value systems. This educational experience can enrich students' lives through cultural awareness.

*Conclusion:* Courses like African American studies should be required in the education of all college students.

Articles written about athletes consistently describe White athletes as “intelligent,” “hard-working,” and “crafty” and describe African American athletes as “talented,” “flashy,” and “athletic.” These biased descriptions serve to promote the stereotype that African

American athletes are not as intelligent as White athletes and fail to credit African American athletes for their intelligence, discipline, and work ethics.

*Conclusion:* Biased descriptions of athletes should be avoided to stop perpetuating the stereotype that African American athletes are less intelligent than White athletes.

The U.S. government is built on a representative democracy that means that politicians are elected to represent their constituents in making the country's decisions. However, the political construction of power in the United States does not allow adequate representation of African Americans, as shown by the few African American politicians who have attained political positions in the highest levels of our government.

*Conclusion:* The political parties should allow and support the rise of African American politicians within the parties to guarantee fair representation of African Americans in the government of this country.

Sickle cell anemia is a disease that is inherited by many African American children. The disease is potentially fatal, but research to combat the disease has not been as well-funded as research concerning ailments that influence Whites as well. The differences in funding are inexcusable, especially since sickle cell anemia is a deadly disease, killing many African Americans every year.

*Conclusion:* Research to combat sickle cell anemia needs to be as well-funded as research for other diseases.

*Waiting to Exhale* and other major motion pictures starring primarily African American casts have been too infrequent in U.S. theaters. Too often, African American actors and actresses have been relegated to minor roles in Hollywood productions, or to roles as villains, and it is about time that more African Americans like Halle Berry and Denzel Washington can achieve starring roles.

*Conclusion:* African Americans should be represented in motion pictures in starring roles more frequently than they were in the past.

Recent educational studies have shown that African Americans who do poorly in school may do so because of language difficulties and cultural differences. It has been argued that the use of familiar language and relevant cultural examples in the education of African American children can help to improve the performances that African American children show in school.

*Conclusion:* School systems should incorporate material into their curricula that is sensitive to African American culture in order to better educate African Americans.

Experts have argued that SAT scores for African Americans may be lower than for Whites due to the poorer opportunities available to African Americans for education. However, the SAT is a valid predictor of college performance and no concessions should be made for African Americans. Lower scores mean poorer performance, and a sliding scale would only promote future failure for African Americans with low SAT scores regardless of why they get low SAT scores.

*Conclusion:* African Americans should not be given leniency for low SAT scores in the college admissions process.

Rodney King was the African American motorist who was beaten by police officers in Los Angeles in an incident captured on video. The incident was broadcast as an unmotivated racial assault on King by the police, but this may not be entirely accurate. King was beaten following a long car chase and resisted arrest upon his capture, and the physical response by the police may have been somewhat warranted.

*Conclusion:* Rodney King may have at least partially provoked the beating he received from the Los Angeles police officers.

It has been argued that welfare programs are too often exploited by African Americans in this country. Welfare offices in every state appear packed with African Americans applying for and collecting welfare benefits. These high numbers of African American welfare recipients are disproportionate for their numbers in the general population and other racial groups are suffering because they cannot receive benefits.

*Conclusion:* The numbers of African Americans receiving welfare should be limited to provide benefits for others.

President Bill Clinton issued an apology to African Americans for the institution of slavery that existed in this country more than 130 years ago. Clinton's apology was inappropriate because he and the present government have no connection with the long-abolished practice of slavery and the apology may instead incite current tension in race relations.

*Conclusion:* President Clinton should not have apologized to African Americans for slavery.

Christians celebrate Christmas, the Jewish celebrate Chanukah, and some African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa, a holiday originating from African culture, during the winter "holiday season." Many people had never heard about Kwanzaa until recently and suggest that since it appears to be a "new" holiday, it must be a second-tier holiday seeking to emulate Christmas without much inherent significance.

*Conclusion:* Kwanzaa is not a holiday on the same level of importance as Christmas.

It has been shown that White Americans score 15 points higher on IQ tests than African Americans. This difference in IQ scores has even been shown when other variables such as education levels and socioeconomic status are taken into account.

*Conclusion:* Whites are more intelligent than African Americans.

The United Negro College Fund helps to pay the tuition and expenses that allow African Americans to go to college. While no doubt benefiting African American students, this organization is unconstitutionally biased in that it does not offer financial assistance to White students as well. Meanwhile, thousands of White students continue to miss out on furthering their education due to financial limitations.

*Conclusion:* The United Negro College Fund should be forced, by law, to provide financial resources to both White and African American students.

**Collective Self-Esteem Scale, Identity Subscale, Race (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992)**  
(1-5 Lickert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Overall my race has very little to do with how I feel. (R)  
My race is an important reflection of who I am.  
My race is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. (R)  
In general, my race is an important part of my self-image.  
I sometimes worry that my performance in work or school may reflect badly on my racial group.

**Collective Self-Esteem Scale, Identity Subscale, Gender (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992)**  
(1-5 Lickert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Overall my gender has very little to do with how I feel. (R)  
My gender is an important reflection of who I am.  
My gender is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. (R)  
In general, my gender is an important part of my self-image.  
I sometimes worry that my performance in work or school may reflect badly on people of the same gender as me.

**Collective Self-Esteem Scale, Identity Subscale, Sexual Orientation/Identity (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992)**  
(1-5 Lickert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Overall my sexual orientation has very little to do with how I feel. (R)  
My sexual orientation is an important reflection of who I am.  
My sexual orientation is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. (R)  
In general, my sexual orientation is an important part of my self-image.  
I sometimes worry that my performance in work or school may reflect badly on people of the same sexual orientation as me.

**White Guilt (Swim & Miller, 1999)**

Reliability: Cronbach's  $\alpha=.90$   
(1-5 Lickert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Although I feel my behavior is typically nondiscriminatory toward Blacks, I still feel guilt due to my association with the White race.  
I feel guilty about the past and present social inequality of Black Americans (i.e., slavery, poverty).  
I do not feel guilty about social inequality between White and Black Americans. (R)  
When I learn about racism, I feel guilt due to my association with the White race.  
I feel guilty about the benefits and privileges that I receive as a White American.

**Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites Scale (by subscales/factors) (Spanierman & Hepperman, 2004)**

(1-5 Lickert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

*White Empathic Reactions Toward Racism* (Reliability: Cronbach's alpha=.78)

I am angry that racism exists.

I become sad when I think about racial injustice.

It disturbs me when people express racist views.

When I hear about acts of racial violence, I become angry or depressed.

Racism is dehumanizing to people of all races, including Whites.

I feel helpless about not being able to eliminate racism.

*White Guilt* (Reliability: Cronbach's alpha=.87)

Being White makes me feel personally responsible for racism.

I never feel ashamed about being White. (R)

Sometimes I feel guilty about being White.

I am afraid that I abuse my power and privilege as a White person.

I feel good about being White. (R)

*White Fear of Others* (Reliability: Cronbach's alpha=.88)

I often find myself fearful of people of other races.

I am distrustful of people of other races.

I have very few friends of other races.

I feel safe in most neighborhoods, regardless of the racial composition. (R)

I am fearful that racial minority populations are rapidly increasing in the U.S., and my group will no longer be the numerical majority.

**White Shame - Anger/Externalization (Grzanka, pretested 2006)**

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha=.83 (1-5 Likert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

I feel my behavior is typically nondiscriminatory toward Blacks, and I feel no guilt due to my association with the White race.

I do not feel guilty about the past and present social inequality of Black Americans (i.e., slavery, poverty).

I feel angry toward people who say that race is still an important issue in the United States.

Often I feel frustrated that racial minorities insist that they have fewer opportunities than White people.

I feel that racism is no longer a major problem in the United States.

When I learn about racism, it makes me happy to know that I am becoming a more socially conscious person. (R)

As a White person, I do not accept any responsibility for the problems facing racial minorities in the United States.

When other people talk about racism, I often feel people are "reading into things."

I do not personally discriminate against Black people, but I am tired of hearing about their oppression.

**Perception of Racism in Television (PR-TV) (Grzanka, pretested 2005, 2006)**

*Note: new version, no reliability data*

(1-5 Lickert type scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

The following items are related to contemporary American popular television, both news and entertainment. For these items, please read each statement and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling your answer on the 5-point scale. If you have no opinion, please circle 0 for No Opinion (N/O). These questions refer to your overall perception of American television, not specific television shows. **Please answer these questions honestly and based on your overall perception of American television.**

**Note:**

- **“People of color” refers to all non-White people, such as Black, Latina/o, Asian, multiracial people, etc. regardless of nationality.**

Local and national television news programs fairly and accurately depict all races and ethnicities. (R)

There are more White people than people of color on television.

I don't think about race or ethnicity when I watch television.

I generally prefer to watch television shows that depict characters that I can relate to in terms of race and ethnicity. (R)

Black people are most likely to be seen in sports, crime reports and sitcoms on television.

It does not matter to me if a television show is racially and/or ethnically diverse. (R)

White people typically occupy positions of power in television.

The television shows that I watch usually have racially and ethnically diverse casts.

Both news and entertainment television programs regularly feature stereotypical representations of ethnic and racial minorities.

Television series generally have racially and ethnically diverse casts. (R)

It is important for television series to have racially and ethnically diverse casts.

Television news is colorblind and racially unbiased. (R)

### **Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3 (TOSCA-3) (Tangney & Dearing, 2002)**

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha - Shame=.88; Guilt=.83; Externalization=.80;

Detachment=.77

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter in day-to-day life, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate *all responses* because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

*You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.*

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5  
not likely                      very likely



not likely                      very likely

3. *At work, you wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) You would feel incompetent.   | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day."               | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| c) You would feel: "I deserve to be reprimanded for mismanaged the project." | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| d) You would think: "What's done is done."                                   | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |

4. *You make a mistake at work and find out a coworker is blamed for the error.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) You think the company did not like the coworker.           | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|   | not likely                      very likely |
| b) You would think: "Life is not fair."                       | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|   | not likely                      very likely |
| c) You would keep quiet and avoid the coworker.               | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|   | not likely                      very likely |
| d) You would feel unhappy and eager to correct the situation. | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|   | not likely                      very likely |

5. *While playing around, you throw a ball and it hits your friend in the face.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) You would feel inadequate that you can't even throw a ball.             | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| b) You would think maybe your friend needs some more practice at catching. | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| c) You would think: "It was just an accident."                             | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| d) You would apologize and make sure your friend feels better.             | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5                   |
|  | not likely                      very likely |

6. *You are driving down the road, and you hit a small animal.*



- a) You would think the animal shouldn't have been on the road. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I'm terrible." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would feel: "Well, it was an accident." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would feel bad you hadn't been more alert driving down the road. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely

7. *You walk out of an exam thinking you did extremely well. Then you find out you did poorly.*

- a) You would think: "Well, it's just a test." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have studied harder." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would feel stupid. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely

8. *While out with a group of friends, you make fun of a friend who's not there.*

- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would feel small...like a rat. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would think that perhaps that friend should have been there to defend him/herself. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would feel unhappy and eager to correct the situation. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely

9. *You make a big mistake on an important project at work. People were depending on you, and your boss criticizes.*

- a) You think your boss should have been more clear 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5

- about what was expected of you. not likely very likely
- b) You would feel like you wanted to hide. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "I should have recognized the problem and done a better job." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
10. *You are taking care of your friend's dog while your friend is on vacation, and the dog runs away.*
- a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would think you friend must not take very good care of the dog or it wouldn't have run away. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would vow to be more careful next time. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would think your friend could just get a new dog. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
11. *You attend your coworker's housewarming party and you spill red wine on a new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.*
- a) You think your coworker should have expected some accidents at such a big party. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would stay late to help clean up the stain after the party. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would wish you were anywhere but at the party. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would wonder why your coworker chose to serve red wine with the new light carpet. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely

## APPENDIX D

### Sample Recruitment Emails

#### **Contemporary Racial Issues** (Part 2, Main Survey)

Subject Line: Take a brief survey and Win \$50 Target Gift Card

Dear University of Maryland Student,

I am writing to request that you participate in my dissertation research by taking a brief online survey. My project is an investigation of contemporary racial attitudes, and this brief online survey is designed to give people like you the opportunity to voice their opinions about race and racism in the United States. This online survey can be taken from any computer and requires a *maximum* of 25 minutes of your time. Follow this link to access the survey: Contemporary Racial Attitudes. Actual URL: (link here)

As a token of my appreciation for your participation, I am offering **\$50 gift cards to Target** that will be randomly awarded to **five** people who take the survey. A selected group of undergraduate students are being invited to take the survey and far fewer will actually participate, so your chances of winning \$50 are fairly high. And who doesn't love free cash?!

As a fellow student, I understand how valuable your time is and how busy things can be - especially during the middle of the semester. I ask, though, that you take just a few moments to assist me in my work. I believe this research is important, and your participation will help me develop better ways to learn and talk about contemporary racial attitudes and the psychology of race in the U.S. Of course, your responses will be completely confidential.

Thank you so much in advance for your time. I *\*really\** appreciate your help. Please let me know if you have any questions and feel free to contact me at [pgrzanka@umd.edu](mailto:pgrzanka@umd.edu)

Direct link to the survey: Contemporary Racial Attitudes

Sincerely,

Patrick R. Grzanka  
Assistant Director, Honors Humanities  
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of American Studies  
University of Maryland  
1103 Wicomico Hall  
College Park, MD 20742  
301.405.6992  
[www.honorshumanities.umd.edu](http://www.honorshumanities.umd.edu)

[www.amst.umd.edu](http://www.amst.umd.edu)

Note: Your email address was released to the University of Maryland's Department of American Studies for department-sponsored research. Your email address will not be used again nor for any other purposes.

### **Contemporary Racial Attitudes, Part 3 (Interviews)**

Dear [Student's First Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing because you indicated willingness to be contacted for an interview when you completed the Contemporary Racial Attitudes Survey earlier this summer. You have been selected as a potential participant for a follow-up study involving two one-on-one interviews with me, the co-principal investigator on this project.

If you choose to participate in this research, I will ask you to take part in two, one-on-one interviews with me. These interviews will last no longer than one hour, and will be conducted in my office in Wicomico Hall at the University of Maryland. Each interview will be digitally recorded, but your responses during the interview will remain completely confidential. In other words, though I may use the information you provide in publications and professional conference presentations, **your name and identity will not be revealed at any point**. During the interviews themselves, we will discuss your attitudes and opinions about some contemporary social issues, such as the controversy surrounding the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. You will watch some video clips of news coverage and I will ask for your opinions and reactions. There will be no surveys or tests; these interviews will be conversations between you and me.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of my request. Unfortunately, I cannot offer you any compensation for participating in this research. If you are willing to participate, please contact me via email by replying to this message. In your reply, please tell me the best way to contact you in the future (email, cell phone, room/home phone) so that we may set up your first interview.

Thanks in advance for your continued participation in this dissertation research and for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Patrick R. Grzanka  
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of American Studies

## APPENDIX E

### Informed Consent Forms

#### **Contemporary Racial Attitudes (Part 2 – Main Online Survey)**

##### ***Welcome & Introduction to Contemporary Racial Attitudes Survey***

##### **Why is this research being done?**

This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Sheri Parks and Patrick Grzanka at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a White student at the University of Maryland. The purpose of this research project is to gather information on contemporary racial attitudes of people like yourself so that we can improve existing tools of assessing racial attitudes. Part of this research involves examining the relationships between racial attitudes and gender and sexuality.

##### **What will I be asked to do?**

The procedures involve taking this online survey, which should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. The questions in this survey involve a brief demographic questionnaire and several different kinds of items that ask for your opinions about race and race relations in the United States. Some items will ask you to indicate how you might feel when dealing with racial issues and racial inequalities in the United States. If at any time you indicate that you do not identify as a White person, you will be directed to exit the survey, as many of these questions are specific to White people's experiences.

By participating in this survey and offering your email address below, you will be automatically entered in a random giveaway with a chance of winning one of five \$50 Target gift certificates. You do not have to give your email address to participate in the survey, but you do need to submit your email address in the optional field below in order to be entered in the giveaway. Your email address will not be made public, will not be connected to your survey responses and will only be used to contact you in the event that you are selected as a winner of one of the five \$50 gift certificates.

We are also asking you to indicate at the bottom of the this page if you are willing to be contacted regarding a follow-up interview after completing this survey. Indicating that you are willing to be contacted regarding participation in a follow-up interview does not necessarily mean that you will be contacted nor that you will be required to participate any further in this or any other studies.

##### **What about confidentiality?**

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your name and email address will be stored separately from your responses to the survey items and will not be released at any time nor connected to your survey responses. In other words, no one besides the investigators will know that you

participated in this survey, and your responses will not be connected to your name by the investigators. If you are selected as the winner of one of the gift certificates offered for participation in this research or if you choose to indicate your willingness to be contacted regarding a follow-up interview, you will be contacted via email by the investigators, who will have no knowledge of your particular responses (only that you participated in the research). If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

**What are the risks of this research?**

There may be some risks from participating in this research study, including emotional discomfort and/or anxiety resulting from the subject matter of the items.

**What are the benefits of this research?**

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigators learn more about feeling and attitudes about race in the United States. Furthermore, your information may assist the investigators in their efforts to develop improved methods of assessing racial attitudes. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the psychology of race and race relations in the United States.

**Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

**What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by Dr. Sheri Parks in the Department of American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr. Parks at: 1102 Holzapfel Hall, College Park, MD 20742; (email) slp@umd.edu; (telephone) 301.405.6255. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678.

*This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*

**Statement of Age of Subject and Consent:**

Your electronic signature indicates that: you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.

**\*Signature and Date**

Electronic Signature (please type your name)

Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

**I am willing to be contacted regarding participation in follow-up interview to this survey. (If you are willing to be contacted, please select "yes" below.) *By indicating "yes," I understand that I may not necessarily be contacted and I am not obligated to participate in any further research studies.***

Yes No

**OPTIONAL:** Email address (for giveaway)

*If the participant was not willing to be interviewed, they were forwarded to this page:*

### ***Proceed to Survey***

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Please follow the link below to proceed to the survey. Remember that all of your responses are confidential. Please answer all items in the survey as it is very important that we have a complete set of responses from each participant. However, remember that you may stop at any time, without penalty, by closing your browser.

**Click "PROCEED TO SURVEY" to begin answering questions.** Please do not click "DONE" below, as this will quit the survey.

**\*\*Please don't forget to close your internet browser window after completing the entire survey.\*\***

### **PROCEED TO SURVEY**

*If the participant was willing to be interviewed, they were forwarded to this page before they received the link to the survey:*

### ***Follow-Up Interview Information***

Thank you for being willing to be contacted regarding a follow-up interview. You should provide your email address if you are willing to participate in a follow-up interview, though providing your address does not necessarily mean that you will be contacted nor that you will be required to participate any further in this or any other studies. Though it is not required, we ask that you please provide the following information regarding your gender and sexual orientation, which will help us select participants for follow-up interviews. The optional information below will not be connected to your responses on the actual survey. Once you are finished, click "next" to proceed to the actual survey.

**Email address (so that we can contact you)**

**Please indicate your gender.**

Man    Woman    Transgender    Other (please specify)

**What is your sexual orientation?**

Contemporary Racial Attitudes (Part 2 – Interviews; Chapter 4)

**CONSENT FORM**

Project Title	Contemporary Racial Issues, Part 3
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	<i>This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Sheri Parks and Patrick Grzanka at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you participated in our prior study, Contemporary Racial Issues, Part 2. The purpose of this research project is to learn more about White people’s attitudes about contemporary racial issues and to explore how gender and sexuality inform these attitudes.</i>
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	<i>The procedures involve __. [Describe the procedure(s) chronologically using lay language and short sentences. State the location where the study will be conducted. Explain medical and other technical terminology using simple language. State the overall duration for the subject’s participation and, if appropriate, how long each procedure will take. If the research involves surveys or interviews, include a detailed description of the questions. Identify experimental procedures. Describe alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any that might be advantageous to the subject.]</i>
<b>What about confidentiality?</b>	<p><i>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, _____ [Include a description of the procedures to maintain the confidentiality of the data, e.g. having locked filing cabinets and storage areas, using identification codes only on data forms, and using password-protected computer files. For anonymous surveys, state that “the surveys are anonymous and will not contain information that may personally identify you”. For coded identifiable information, state the following, if applicable (1) your name will not be included on the surveys and other collected data; (2) a code will be placed on the survey and other collected data; (3) through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your survey to your identity; and (4) only the researcher will have access to the identification key.] If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i></p> <p><i>[If there is a possibility that you will collect information on child abuse or neglect, abuse or neglect of the developmentally disabled or other vulnerable adults, danger to the subject or others, or similar types of information that may need to be disclosed to comply with legal requirements, professional standards, etc., the possibility of such</i></p>



	<i>disclosure must be included in the consent form. See the following example, and modify it to include all applicable types of information. If there is a possibility that you will collect such information, but you do not intend to disclose it, you must provide an explanation and any justification for non-disclosure in your IRB Application. If you have a Certificate of Confidentiality, refer to the Appendix.] In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.</i>
<b>What are the risks of this research?</b>	<i>There may be some risks from participating in this research study [Describe any known risks including physical, psychological, social, emotional, legal and financial risks that may result from participating in the research. Some studies include risks that may be better described as things that could make the subject feel uncomfortable such as fear, embarrassment or fatigue. These are also examples of risks that should be included. Do not describe risks as minimal and do not state that there are no risks beyond everyday life. If applicable include a statement that the research (or a particular procedure) may involve risks to the subject (or to the embryo or fetus if the subject is or may become pregnant) that are currently unforeseeable. OR if applicable, state the following: There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.</i>

<b>Project Title</b>	<i>[This title should be the same as the project title used in the IRB application.]</i>
<b>What are the benefits of this research?</b>	<i>The benefits to you include [only list the direct and reasonably expected benefits to the subject. Monetary compensation and extra credit for courses are not benefits and should be described in the procedures section] _____ or This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about _____. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of _____. Describe the anticipated benefits to science or society expected from the research, if any.</i>
<b>Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?</b>	<i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. [If applicable, include an explanation of any circumstances under which a subject's participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to the subject's consent. If applicable, include an explanation of the consequences of a subject's decision to withdraw from the research and any procedures for orderly termination of a subject's participation.]</i>
<b>Is any medical</b>	<i>[Include this section for research involving more than minimal</i>

<p><b>treatment available if I am injured?</b></p>	<p><b>risk</b> <i>If included, please do not modify the wording displayed at right unless different for a particular study.]</i>  <i>The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.</i></p>
<p><b>What if I have questions?</b></p>	<p><i>This research is being conducted by [principal investigator's name and department] at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact _____ [principal investigator's name] at: _____ [Address, telephone number, and (if appropriate) e-mail address of principal investigator.]</i>  <i>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</i>  <i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>

<p><b>Project Title</b></p>	<p><i>[This title should be the same as the project title used in the IRB application.]</i></p>	
<p><b>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</b>  <b>[Please note: Parental consent always needed for minors.]</b></p>	<p><i>Your signature indicates that:</i>  <i>you are at least 18 years of age;</i>  <i>the research has been explained to you;</i>  <i>your questions have been fully answered; and</i>  <i>you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.</i></p>	
<p><b>Signature and Date</b>  <b>[Please add name, signature, and date lines to the final page of your consent form]</b></p>	<p><b>NAME OF SUBJECT</b></p>	
	<p><b>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT</b></p>	
	<p><b>DATE</b></p>	

**\*\*\*\*Please note: When the consent form requires more than one page, please include a space for the subject to initial and date at the top right-hand corner of each page. The corner should appear as:    Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Also, each page must display a page range such as: Page 1 of 2, then Page 2 of 2. This additional information would confirm that the subject agreed to the entire contents of the consent form. \*\*\*\***

APPENDIX F

Test of White Guilt and Shame (TOWGAS)

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter in day-to-day life, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. We ask you to rate *all responses* because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times.

For example:

*You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news. | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5                       |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.  | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5                       |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.    | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5                       |
|  | not likely                      very likely |
| d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.        | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5                       |
|  | not likely                      very likely |

In the above example, I've rated *all* of the answers by circling a number. I circled a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning – so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I circled a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't – it would depend on what I had planned. And I circled a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

**Please do not skip any items – rate all responses.**

1. *In a class, you are corrected for your usage of the term, "Blacks."*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) You would think: "I'm ignorant."               | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5                       |
|   | not likely                      very likely |
| b) You would think: "Labels don't really matter." | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5                       |
|   | not likely                      very likely |

- c) You would apologize and ask your instructor for the correct/appropriate usage of the term. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "It's not my fault – I can't keep up with all this political correctness." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
2. *You read a news story about White students at large private university dressing in "Blackface" for a theme party.*
- a) You would think: "That's so awful. I hope they have to face consequences for their behavior." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would wish you weren't White. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "People make way too big a deal over stuff like this." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "I'm sure the students didn't mean any harm." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
3. *In a diversity workshop at school/work you have a conversation with a Black peer/colleague about White privilege.*
- a) You would feel miserable because of all your privileges. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would think: "I can't be held responsible for being born White." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would wish there was a way to make up for all your unfair advantages. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- d) You would think: "Race doesn't matter as much as people say it does." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
4. *One of your White friends uses the N-word in a joke and you laugh.*
- a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless." 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- b) You would feel small and think about it for days. 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5  
not likely very likely
- c) You would think: "If Black people can use the 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5

- |  |   |             |
|--|---|-------------|
| N-word, why can't White people?"   | not likely                              | very likely |
| d) You would stop laughing and tell the friend that you don't think racist language is OK, even when joking. | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
5. *You read a news article about a hurricane in recent history in which wealthy White people were able to evacuate and the poorer Black majority was left behind; many people died.*
- |   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
| a) You would think: "That's not a race issue. That's a social class issue."   | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| b) You would think: "Those people chose to stay behind."                      | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| c) You would feel sad and send whatever money you could to the relief effort. | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| d) You would hate yourself for being White.                                   | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
6. *You realize that all characters on your favorite television show are White.*
- |   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
| a) You would feel bad for not noticing earlier but probably be more critical of the show.             | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| b) You would feel bad for not noticing sooner and never watch the show again.                         | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| c) You would think: "It wouldn't be realistic if there were lots of minorities on the show."          | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| d) You would think: "I don't care what the characters look like as long as the show is entertaining." | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
7. *A Black person on the street asks you for money and you ignore him or her.*
- |  |   |             |
|--|---|-------------|
| a) You would think: I would be broke if I gave money to every person who asks me for change. | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| b) You would feel horrible for ignoring the person and think about it all day.               | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5<br>not likely | very likely |
| c) You would feel bad about ignoring the person, and   | 1 - - 2 - - 3 - - 4 - - 5               |             |

- |  |                       |                             |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| likely give some change to the next person who asks. | not likely            | very likely                 |
| d) You would go about your day as usual.             | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 | not likely      very likely |

8. *You read a Civil War novel about American slavery that describes violent abuse of Black slaves by White slave-owners.*

- |  |                       |                             |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) You would feel depressed and sad about the history of racism in the United States.                                | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 | not likely      very likely |
| b) You would think: “I wish there was something I could do to make up for all the harm slavery caused Black people.” | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 | not likely      very likely |
| c) You would think: “Slavery was awful, but people need to get over it and move on.”                                 | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 | not likely      very likely |
| d) You would wonder why slavery is still discussed because it happened so long ago.                                  | 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 | not likely      very likely |

Mean scores for each subscale should be calculated independently using the item-scoring guide below. *Note: (R) indicates that item must be reverse-coded.*

**White Guilt** (11 items)

8a, 8b, 2a, 3c, 1c, 2c (R), 4d, 4b, 6a, 1a, 5c

**White Shame** (8 items)

5d, 6b, 2b, 3a, 7b, 7d (R), 6d, 7c

**Negation** (13 items)

7a, 4c, 8c, 3d, 1b, 3b, 5a, 6c, 1d, 4a, 8d, 2d, 5b

## APPENDIX G

### Question List for Semi-Structured Interviews

#### Interview #1 - Introductory Questions

Why did you agree to participate in this research?

- Do you have any personal interest in race and race relations in the United States?
- Was your decision to participate more a matter of curiosity?

What are some of the qualities that best describe your personality?

What are the best ways for a stranger or new person in your life to get to know you?

Is there anything you hope to learn or achieve during this process?

Do you have any questions for me before you watch the first clip?

#### Clip #1 - Hurricane Katrina (Anderson Cooper & Senator Landrieu)

Had you ever seen this interview before or heard about it?

How would you describe the interview? What is your initial reaction?

Who do you think Senator Landrieu was representing? Who do you think Anderson Cooper was representing?

Remember back to the Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath...can you describe how you felt during and after the storm?

Anderson Cooper asks Senator Landrieu who she's angry at...he seems to believe that there is blame in the situation...do you agree or disagree with him?

- Was someone or some group of people responsible for the aftermath of the storm, and if so, who?
- Why do you think that Cooper, among others, felt that blame was due?

Do you think Anderson Cooper was out of line or broke journalistic ethics by chastising Senator Landrieu? Why or why not?

- What do you imagine was his motivation for expressing such anger on camera during an interview?
- Does this interview damage his credibility as a journalist in your eyes?

Many people argued that Hurricane Katrina was a natural disaster that revealed the persistence of racial inequality in the United States...how do you feel about this idea?

- Do you think that the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is indicative or reflective of racial inequality and race relations in the U.S.?
- Would you classify this event as a racial issue? Why or why not?
- Is there any other event in American history, past or present, that you think compares to Katrina? Was it a unique situation, and if so, why?

## Interview #2

### Clip #2 - Don Imus

Do you remember hearing about this scandal last year?  
 -If so, what were your initial reactions to it?

What in your mind was wrong or not wrong about what Don Imus said?

How do you feel about the public and media's reaction to the event? Did he deserve to be fired?

- Was it "important" for the public and CBS to react to his comments?
- Do you think the public, the media and CBS were sending a message in condemning Imus? If so, what is the message?
- He was recently given a radio show again...is this OK?

Do you think that Don Imus represents an extreme position? Do you think that other Americans would make similar comments about women basketball players? Black women basketball players, in particular?

What do you think was more important to the public about Don Imus's comments: that the players were women or that they were Black? Or was it some combination of the two?

- Do you think that either part of his comment carried more negative weight, i.e. "nappy-headed" or "hos"?

Recently, Mel Gibson was chastised for his anti-Semitic comments during a drunken rant to a police officer and Michael Richards was similarly condemned for his racist statements during a stand-up comedy routine.

- Would you group the Don Imus incident with these other two? Why or why not?
- What, if anything, distinguishes Imus from Gibson or Richards?
- Would you compare the Imus incident to another incident I haven't mentioned?

Do you think that Imus's identity as a White person influenced people's reaction to his comments? What about his identity as a man? Might people's reaction been different if he was a woman or a person of color? Does identity matter in a situation like this?

Do you think that Imus's comments reflect anything about White Americans generally? Do White people generally have any responsibility for racist comments like Imus's?



Do you think that some White people feel any responsibility when other White people do or say things like Don Imus did? Are these feelings warranted? Why or why not?

### Clip #3 - Isaiah Washington and the “Faggot” Scandal

Do you remember hearing about this scandal last year?

-If so, what were your initial reactions to it?

-If not, do you have any questions for me?

What in your mind was wrong or not wrong about what Washington said or did?

How does the word “faggot” make you feel?

Do you think that faggot is as powerful or negative a word as the N-word? Why or why not?

Would the reaction have been the same if Washington had allegedly said “fairy” or even “pussy”? Was the use of the particular word “faggot” significant in your perspective?

How do you feel about the public and media’s reaction to the scandal? Did Washington deserve to be fired?

-Was it “important” for the public and ABC to react to his comments?

-Do you think the public, the media and ABC were sending a message in condemning Washington? If so, what is the message?

-After the scandal broke and he denied calling TR Knight a “faggot” (twice), do you think that there is anything Washington could have done to avoid being fired?

Do you think that media and ABC’s treatment of Washington was fair? Why or why not? Is calling someone a “faggot” an offense worth being fired for?

There is a growing perception in the American public that African Americans are generally more homophobic and discriminatory toward gay and lesbian people than the rest of the population (i.e., White people). Do you believe this to be true? Do you think incidents such as this one contribute to that idea?

-Accordingly, was Washington’s punishment and the reaction related to his identity as a Black man?

-Do you think that Knight’s identity as a White man had any effect on the situation?

Incidents such as this one tend to bring us conversations that pit race and sexuality against one another -- e.g. race v. sexuality, which is a bigger issue? What do you think is more relevant in the U.S. today -- debates around racial equality and racism or sexuality and homophobia/heterosexism? Are they equally important? Do you view these issues as connected?

Do you think that Washington's comments reflect anything about Black people or straight people generally? Do straight people generally have any responsibility for gay slurs such as Washington's?

Do you think that some straight people feel responsible or accountable when other straight people do or say things like Washington did? Are these feelings warranted? Why or why not? What about Black people? Can you imagine Black Americans feeling some responsibility for Washington's behavior?

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