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The Quest for White, Privilege-Cognizant, Antiracist Character: An Autoethnographic Inquiry

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THE QUEST FOR WHITE, PRIVILEGE-COGNIZANT,
ANTIRACIST CHARACTER:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

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

Daniel Mark Welliver

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2011

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ABSTRACT

Title: The Quest for White, Privilege-Cognizant, Antiracist Character: An Autoethnographic Inquiry

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This is an autoethnographic inquiry into the quest to nurture and sustain a character that embodies White, privilege-cognizant antiracism (Bailey, 1998). Situated in a constructivist paradigm of inquiry and using a variety of qualitative methods for data collection, this research examined the researcher's own life pursuit of an antiracist identity. Data collected from guided interviews, archival documents, and daily journaling and field notes were subjected to multiple iterations of inductive analysis to reveal salient themes.

Two essential findings emerged, each of which was supported by a number of subthemes. The first finding is that there may be particularly virulent and insidious impediments to realizing White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character for people who are conferred with multiple dimensions of privilege. Impediments include socialization into privilege; difficulties in nurturing relationships; a constantly evolving image-building enterprise; and addiction to control. The second essential finding is that the quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character takes meaningful form only as a part

of a larger, holistic, spiritual or humanistic quest for tangible expressions of transformational love, social justice, and human liberation.

This research seems to affirm some existing scholarly literature, while also suggesting new areas for inquiry. Recipients of this dissertation are invited to engage in continuing dialogue.

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I am deeply appreciative of the many people who provided patience, support, love, encouragement and assistance throughout my dissertation journey. Foremost in my mind and heart are my wife, Roxanne, and my god-daughter, Destiny.

Nineteen people offered their time, memories, stories and selves to this project in interviews that were rich in meaning. I cherish these encounters. I look forward to continuing our discussions and deepening our relationships. Two of these people are my mother, Ruth, and my father, Allyn. Not only do I appreciate their participation in this project, but I am thankful beyond measure for their unconditional love and for the spiritual seeds they planted in my life.

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My sister-in-law, Myrna Greene, transcribed over 28 hours of audio interview recordings into nearly 900 double-spaced pages of text. Her dedication and perseverance gave me a sense of progress in my work that came at a crucial time.

Finally, I am deeply humbled to have received so much from so many over the years as I have stumbled along a pathway to reclaiming my humanity. People of family, church, school, workplace and community have loved me

enough to forgive my transgressions, challenge my ignorance, and struggle with me for liberation. Three of these people have died during the course of my dissertation journey. My sister, Lisa Waller; my friend, Eddie Davis; and my mentor and teacher, Maria del Carmen Perez were some of the brightest beacons of transformational love in my life. My dissertation is dedicated to Lisa, Eddie and Maria. Love never ends.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to my doctoral dissertation and to an account of a recent episode in my ongoing quest for self understanding and for embodiment of what Bailey (1998) has conceptualized and called White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. People and experiences I have encountered in my most recent 20 years of life, in conjunction with what I now see on my life's horizon, have convinced me that this understanding and embodiment are vital for me and for others.

This episode of my ongoing quest called dissertation has been a rigorous, moving and instructive passage. As with all dissertation research, my intention is to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to a specific research question: How is White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character nurtured and sustained? The methodological genre that I have chosen for my dissertation is autoethnography, “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). In essence, I am the subject of a form of case study for which I am both the researcher and the researched.

In some respects you may find my dissertation research quite conventional and in other respects decidedly unconventional. I am compelled to abandon convention, at some times and in some ways, in order to maintain congruence with the epistemological and theoretical terrain within which I situate my research, and with the methodological rubric that I have constructed for research performance.

I present my dissertation to you in six chapters. In this initial chapter, I begin with a brief exposé, “Voice, Venue and Vantage,” in order to introduce you to some of what is unique about my voice for dissertation and the social location whence my voice emerges. Next, I introduce you to what most social science scholars refer to in dissertation research as a “problem statement.” I call it “The Source of My Disquiet,” wording I borrow from Bray, Lee, Smith and Yorks (2000). I then formally present my research question and, finally, convey the multiple purposes for conducting my dissertation research.

In the second chapter, I describe the epistemological and theoretical terrain within which I locate my research. In doing so, I connect a progression of theoretical contributions that I believe collectively form the foundation for the kind of knowledge construction I hope my dissertation will contribute to.

In the third chapter, I provide a review of the body of scholarly literature that I find relevant to my research. This includes literature relating to my research question, to the key conceptual constructs I have chosen to rely on, and to the autoethnographic methodology I employ. I also review research that is similar to mine and identify what I believe to be the currently vacant niche that my research now inhabits.

Chapter 4 is a detailed description of my research design and method. I predicate that description on an explanation of my embrace of the constructivist paradigm of inquiry and my rationale for employing qualitative methodology.

Chapter 5 is the presentation of the results of my research. I have chosen to represent my research results in more than one way. The main body of text for

Chapter 5 presents, in a rather conventional way for qualitative research, an account of the themes and subthemes that emerged from inductive analysis of collected data. In several appendixes that are referenced in the chapter, I present creative writing pieces that also represent some of the same research results, but in a different way. This creative writing is rather unconventional for a dissertation in the social sciences, but not unusual within the research genre of autoethnography. My bimodal expression of research results is intended to evoke your response and engagement, in the hope that your voice will accompany mine in ongoing discourse concerning White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

In the final chapter, I present discussion of my results, connecting the results to the existing body of literature reviewed in Chapter 3 and to literature that I sought out after research results emerged. I address the strengths and limitations of my dissertation research, and I share my suggestions for pathways of inquiry that I intend to follow with others as a result of this research.

Voice, Venue and Vantage

In his introduction to *Walden*, Thoreau (1997) wrote:

In most books, the I, or first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were any body else whom I knew so well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience. Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such

account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me. Perhaps these pages are more particularly addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits. (pp. 1-2)

No doubt you have already noticed my use of first person voicing, as well as the second person pronoun in order to make direct references to you, the reader of this dissertation. This is very deliberate and intentional. I reject or, in the least, I make selective use of the convention of third person voicing that is most common to scholarly presentation throughout most of this dissertation. I concur with Thoreau that “it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking” (pp.1-2), and I believe that the most rigorous, truth-seeking endeavor must involve the use of every tool available in order to make all assumptions and subjectivities starkly apparent.

I also resonate with Thoreau’s requirement of a simple and sincere account of the life of a writer, and particularly for written work such as the autoethnography that I will be writing. Without such an account, a reader is unapprised of the epistemological, ideological and experiential topography from which the writer views and interprets her or his world for a reader.

Finally, Thoreau pronounced that sincerely lived lives are lived in distant lands, removed from the homes of others. My choice of autoethnography as a mode of inquiry and means of expression for my dissertation research is made, in part,

because of my longing to live life sincerely and to present that life to others, evoking their response and their engagement.

My purpose now is to explain my departure from the conventions of third person voicing, along with its accompanying and obfuscated positionality, by exposing for you my strongly held personal beliefs concerning how things are known. In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I will more fully address the formal, epistemological foundations for the framing of my dissertation research. My purpose here is to expose for you a more personalized account of my beliefs.

I believe that endeavors to describe what is, to construct what is to be known, or to reveal truth must be predicated on complete transparency with respect to not only my honest purposes but also my unique positionality. I believe that those who adopt the seemingly detached and authoritative third person voice and who decline to reveal their own positionality merely mask “the I” to the detriment of espoused truth-telling or authentic, collective knowledge construction. I believe that the use of third person voicing in scholarly work is an acting-as-if, illusory device, deceiving oneself and others into believing in an unquestionable, authoritative process for knowledge construction that resides somewhere outside of the seeker, the reporter, the scientist. I believe that the use of the third person voice obfuscates the inseparable nature of the observer and the observed, the measurer and the measured, the interpreter and the interpreted, the revelator and the revelation. I believe that the third person device is used to legitimate purported truths or constructions of knowledge by objectifying necessarily subjective realities and by distancing the narrator from both the reality described and from those others to whom it is being described. I believe that the third

person presentational form is one of many canonical manifestations of a Cartesian priesthood of knowledge generation that reinforces the power of priests and seeks to discredit and discount the knowing of others. These beliefs and my open acknowledgement of them are grounded in an identifiable body of epistemology and theory that I will present in the next chapter of this dissertation titled “Epistemological and Theoretical Terrain.”

My autoethnographic dissertation includes a sufficient account of my honest purposes, my positionality with respect to epistemological and theoretical terrain and my unique autobiographical location. Later in this chapter I identify the purposes of my dissertation research. As for my unique autobiographical location, for now I will offer a very simple account of my life such as Thoreau would require. The intention here is not to present a complete autobiography, but rather enough of an account to elucidate the venue and vantage from which I will perform my research.

Autobiographical Narrative

I am a 53-year-old, White, European American man with German, English and Scandinavian ethnic and cultural roots. In 1957, I was born into what I experienced as a loving family with two parents. Both of my parents were college educated, as were their parents. My immediate, nuclear family eventually grew to include a total of seven children. We lived together in a number of small towns in rural, Central Pennsylvania in the United States, moving to a new small town every six years.

I am a “P.K.” (i.e., a “Preacher’s Kid”), the child of a Protestant clergyperson, my father. My mother worked full-time managing the family household,

orchestrating child development, and performing many of the mundane but essential labors of cleaning, cooking and child care. My early life was rooted firmly within Christian, Protestant faith traditions of the United Methodist Church and, to a lesser degree, the Church of the Brethren. Theologies of both denominations emphasize the centrality of social justice as a manifestation of faith. Throughout my early life, I witnessed my father and mother speaking and acting in what I came to believe were relatively altruistic, caring, loving and courageous ways.

Early occupational experiences included newspaper delivery, grocery store stocking, and two summers in my teenage years working at a small community center in the city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. These summers marked my first significant encounters in an urban setting, among People of Color, and geographically removed from my family. I was most impressed by the work of professional community organizers working in Harrisburg at that time. These community organizers had been trained at Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation. They applied a systematic strategy and deliberately polarizing tactics in order to unite people into strong organizations. I was awed by the enthusiasm and collective action that could be generated by "victories" won in orchestrated "actions." These experiences influenced my decision to major in Sociology and Social Change when I attended Juniata College, a small, private, liberal arts college historically rooted in the Church of the Brethren and located in a small town in rural Central Pennsylvania. I supplemented my undergraduate experience with a community organizing internship in the city of Philadelphia. During these college years, I began my enduring relationship with my

wife, Roxanne, a European American woman from a working class family from Altoona, Pennsylvania.

For the next twenty years of my life, I worked in a variety of social service agency settings in Pennsylvania in direct service, middle management and executive leadership roles. I worked briefly as a field organizer for the Pennsylvania Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze, and for ten years I directed the same urban community center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania that had been the locus of teenage experiences that so strongly influenced my post-secondary academic and early vocational pursuits. The community center was six blocks from my home in a very racially, culturally, ethnically, economically and religiously diverse neighborhood. During this time, I earned a Master's Degree in Community Psychology at the Pennsylvania State University – Harrisburg campus, and I began my involvement with a Harrisburg-based group of about a dozen people called People Against Racism.

After 10 years as director of the community center, I began an eight-year tenure as Director of the Division of Education and Community Services for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC), headquartered in Harrisburg. PHRC is Pennsylvania's civil rights law enforcement agency, wielding the police powers of the state to enforce two anti-discrimination statutes. These statutes make it unlawful to discriminate against people because of such characteristics as race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, disability or familial status in areas of employment, housing, education and public services. The division that I directed performed the education, training and outreach functions for the agency; was

especially involved in equal educational opportunity and discrimination in schools, colleges and universities; and coordinated a multiple-agency task force whose purpose was to prevent and respond to bias-related incidents throughout the state, including bias crimes, organized hate group activity, unlawful discrimination, and other public expressions of bias. During this time, I also entered the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Administration and Leadership, Non-Profit and Public Sectors Ph.D. program, of which this dissertation is a part.

My involvement in the People Against Racism (PAR) group for over 15 years has had a profound impact on me, providing me with intermittent and salient cognizance of my own racialized identity and its implications for me and for others. Through the people and the reflective processes of PAR, I was periodically reminded of my embodiment and use of White privilege and of my inadvertent and perpetual complicity with institutionalized manifestations of racism.

Over this same 15-year period, my wife, Roxanne, and I developed close social and fictive kin relationships with African Americans. Some of these relationships were with members of our local church, a United Methodist church in the Uptown Harrisburg neighborhood where we lived. A young African American man from our neighborhood, Victor, joined our household in 1994 at the age of 13. We were granted shared legal and primary physical custody for Victor in 1995, and we now consider him to be our son. It was also at this time that we deepened our relationship with our now 14-year-old goddaughter, Destiny, and her mother, Lisa, whom we consider to be our fictive daughter and sister respectively. The circles of

colleagues and friendships I developed through my workplace and social networks include people of many racial, ethnic, religious and sexual identities.

In 2006, I resigned from my position with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to join the faculty at Juniata College, my undergraduate alma mater. My home is now in the small town of Huntingdon in rural Central Pennsylvania, where Juniata College is located. Over 96% of the nearly 7,000 residents of Huntingdon are White (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). When I moved to Huntingdon, I became geographically and vocationally removed from some of the people and situations in my life that have made concerns relating to racialized identities and relationships so central for me. The circumstantial horizon of my life changed significantly at this time and included the geographic dispersal of the members of the People Against Racism group; new relationships forming at Juniata College and in the town of Huntingdon; and the February, 2007 cancer death of my African American, fictive sister, Lisa, who entrusted her the 10-year-old African American daughter, Destiny, to the care and love of my wife Roxanne and me.

These are the circumstantial coordinates of the location from which I performed dissertation research. In Chapter 5 of my dissertation, I provide deeper and more richly developed descriptions of relationships and moments from my past and my present. Both my past and the circumstantial changes of my life in recent years served as “data collection” venues for my dissertation research.

Vantage, Standpoint and Traitorous Location

My location with respect to enacting research is more than a biographical location. It is location within social structures of power and privilege. In fact, the

autobiographical narrative that I provided above was offered, in part, as a means to elucidate my personal location within social structures of power and privilege. As a 53-year-old, White, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian, Protestant with United States citizenship, I am firmly positioned within systems of conferred dominance and privilege in the United States. This is not only a vantage point in terms of the place from which my perspective is determined; it is literally a point of vantage; i.e., a position of superiority that provides advantage.

As a part of my presentation of the epistemological and theoretical terrain for my dissertation that appears in Chapter 2, I will review the work of feminist theoretician S. Harding (1991) and others who contend that knowledge is “socially situated.” By this they mean that the social situation of men, White people, and others to whom society confers dominance, has resulted in legitimated processes of conventional research that produce incomplete and distorted understandings of nature and social relations. In what has come to be called feminist epistemology or feminist standpoint theory, S. Harding (1991) has argued that women bring distinctive resources and viewpoints from their positions within a gender-stratified society that enable them to produce “empirically more accurate descriptions and theoretically richer explanations than does conventional research” (p. 119). Feminist standpoint theory focuses particularly on “differences between women’s and men’s situations which give a scientific advantage to those who can make use of the differences” (S. Harding, 1991, p. 120).

Collins (1986) has identified and examined a distinct standpoint that she refers to as the “outsider within.” Collins asserts that women of color within venues

dominated by White people and men are outsiders within who can most readily, and sometimes exclusively, perceive and describe certain racialized social dynamics in these venues, due to their unique standpoint.

The central principle of feminist standpoint epistemology is that the quality, legitimacy and validity of empirical inquiry and the knowledge that it constructs are determined in large measure by the standpoint of the researcher. Disembodied spectators, outsiders, insiders, and outsiders within each offer unique contributions to a rich description and deep understanding of social phenomena.

Both S. Harding (1991, 2004) and Bailey (1998) have identified and discussed another standpoint that they call the “traitor” standpoint. The traitor is a social insider who acts with intention from her/his insider location to destabilize the center of social interactions. I am a European American man who desires to understand and to nurture what Bailey (1998) referred to as a privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. As such, S. Harding or Bailey would identify my standpoint as that of traitor. The character that I seek to understand and to nurture is traitorous in that, as Bailey (1998) indicated, it involves “privileged subjects who animate privilege-cognizant white scripts” (p. 33). As I engaged in the autoethnographic inquiry of my dissertation, therefore, I did so from a position of relative power and privilege, but with a cognizance of that power and privilege that opened possibilities for contributions to knowledge based on understandings that may be distinctively accessible from my traitorous standpoint.

My Source of Disquiet

A conventional research dissertation would be likely to present a problem statement from which a particular research question emanates. I am offering this section subtitled “My Source of Disquiet” as an alternative to a problem statement. My decision to do so was inspired by this passage by Bray et al. (2000):

Unlike conventional research, where questions are largely theory driven, or traditional action research, where problems are held by a client, the inspiration for conducting a collaborative inquiry often comes from some disquiet rooted in one’s own experience. This disquiet may stem from some dilemma of professional practice or a sense of curiosity about how to improve or initiate change in an aspect of one’s life. Or it may be inwardly centered on a not fully formulated need for exploration into one’s private sense of being. The disquiet can be around an intellectual question or rooted in the problems of life. (p. 52).

Like the collaborative inquiry to which Bray et al. refer in the preceding passage, my autoethnographic dissertation research is a definite departure from conventional research or traditional action research, and it has its genesis in a disquiet rooted in my own, personal experience and in a longing for transformational change in myself and others.

Over the past twenty years of my life I have lived with a persistent, albeit intermittent, modicum of cognizance of my own racialized identity; participation in what I consider to be White supremacist systems of oppression; unearned privileges accrued because I am considered White; and the position of dominance conferred to me because of my Whiteness. I have come to believe that a toll continues to be

exacted from me because of this identity, participation, privilege and position. I can only now describe the toll as a sense of disquiet and, at times, of dread, and a belief that I am forfeiting my spiritual essence, the depth and richness of relationships, my desired sense of belonging and community, and some of the essence of my humanity as I envisage it.

As I indicated above, my identification and elucidation of my disquiet here is analogous to the presentation of a “problem statement” in a conventional social science research dissertation. In such a dissertation, a problem statement may be accompanied by a brief descriptive discussion of the historical and research context for the problem insofar as it has emerged from or received attention in scholarly literature. In order to convey to you the nature of my disquietedness, however, I depart now from such conventions and, in a foreshadowing of the possibilities for autoethnographic representation and expression, I offer two brief stories that I believe have the potential to evoke the essence of the nature of my disquiet. In order to protect the identities of persons involved in these stories, I have used fictitious names and incorporated some fictitious circumstances. The essences of the stories, in terms of the purposes for sharing them, remain consistent with my perceptions and remembrances.

A Story of Narcissistic Gratification, Shame and Self-Loathing

A Woman of Color introduced herself to me at a dinner event. When she heard my name, she brightened up immediately. “Oh, you’re Dan Welliver!” “We share a close, mutual friend. Charlotte Johnson?”

Charlotte Johnson is an African American woman whom I do, indeed, consider to be a good friend. After some mutual expressions of fondness and admiration for Charlotte and some non-descript chit-chat, my new dinner acquaintance said, abruptly, “I’ve gotta tell you something.”

I felt a compliment coming on.

“Charlotte described you to me in one sentence. She said you’re a ‘White guy who really gets it.’ Coming from Charlotte, that’s a pretty strong endorsement. You must be an amazing person. I feel like I can be myself around you from the git-go.”

I enacted my modesty routine, which felt exceptionally awkward and kind of sleazy. She seemed to be totally at ease with me. My growing self-consciousness made me verbally clumsy. But why? I had actual confirmation. I *KNEW* that I was getting over, dare I use the word “passing?” I was passing as the rare, loveable, trustworthy White man who really, I mean *REALLY*, “gets it.”

My narcissism and image-building obsession was now in full gear. I felt self-congratulatory and sleazy at the same time, which *REALLY* felt sleazy!

A Story of Self-Righteous Anger and the Privilege of Walking Away

Years ago I received an email that induced more emotion and agitation from me than anything I could remember in recent years. I was angry, indignant and hurt.

The email was from a small group of people that comprised the “European American Caucus” of a slightly larger group called People Against Racism (PAR). PAR was a group of people who espoused to work to eliminate racism. I had a rollercoaster experience with the people of PAR for over 12 years. At times, my involvement with PAR had made me feel as though we were doing vital work

together and that I was growing in leaps and bounds in my understanding of myself as a “White,” European American man deepening my commitment to eliminating both internal and external manifestations of racism. At other times, I had disengaged from PAR, deceiving myself and others that this disengagement was primarily out of frustration and disillusionment when, actually, there were often intensely selfish motives for my retreat. I did not want to commit myself, my time, my energy and my spirit for what felt like diminishing returns, as though anti-racism work was a personal investment with an unacceptable profit margin, and my work with PAR was paying me far too little in personal dividends or capital gains.

The disturbing email came at a time when I had been away from the people of PAR for many months. The email appeared to be an invitation to rejoin PAR, to reconnect and participate once again. But I interpreted and received the invitation as extremely arrogant, presumptuous and accusatory. Almost every line of the email elicited an emotional response from me. Reading the email was like engaging in an argument with the three people that comprised PAR’s European American caucus. Here is a depiction of that virtual argument:

Email: “Once we know [about our White privilege] we cannot go back.”

My Reaction: “No kidding! Are you accusing me of trying to deny my White privilege and my complicity in racism? How simpleminded do you think I am?”

Email: “We ask you to think about the following question: How are you using your invisible knapsack of White privilege?”

My Reaction: “This is strange and arrogant. Are you asking me to consider this question when you haven’t interacted with me at all for months? You have no idea how often I have explored my use of White privilege or how often I have posed this exact question to myself and even to others! I question myself on White privilege almost daily! I’m ready for more questions and different questions, and I doubt that any of you are capable of asking them!”

Email: “We raise these issues because we are concerned about the effects and consequences for the local community when we act alone.”

My Reaction: (Yelling) “This is really pissing me off! I guess you’re afraid that because I am not acting with *you* that I am acting ‘alone!’ Well let me tell you something! I’m concerned about *you three* acting alone . . . together!”

Email: “. . . just because you don’t claim us, doesn’t necessarily mean that we don’t claim you.”

My Reaction: “The word ‘cult’ comes to mind! You believe you have a ‘claim’ on me? That’s it! I’m done with you people!”

For me, the email’s tone was not so much one of concern as it was one of accusation. In addition to the bursts of anger and resentment that I felt in reaction to this email, I was disturbed that it had been copied to a host of people in the PAR connection; members past and present. I felt that the email had broadcasted a very negative, unfounded image of me as a person in denial of my White privilege; disconnected from my community; and unaware or unconcerned about the likely harm I was doing by “acting alone.” The email writers did not acknowledge that we

had not been in touch for many months, and they made no references to the circumstances that had, months ago, led to my decision to disengage from the group.

For about an hour after reading the email I fumed, and for another hour I ruminated on my fuming. Clearly some measure of my angry reaction, I realized, could be attributed to my “righteous indignation” mask that I often wear to cover the hurt of being called to account, judged or pre-judged. Of course, detrimental judgment and pre-judgment are daily realities for People of Color. I considered my White privilege, knowing I cannot fully escape from the ways in which I continually benefit from it. I realized that one way I exert my White privilege was by defending my self-built image as a White person who works to dismantle racism. This is why the copying of the email to others had made me so angry. It threatened to expose my continual self-made image-making project which, I have come to learn, is among the most cherished delusional activities of many White men, including myself.

So I could not discount privilege-based grounds for my reactions, but I also could not excuse the three signatories to the email for indulging in their own dose of self-righteousness as the proud PAR European American Caucus survivors calling a lost sheep back to the fold. This was no way to act for a self-proclaimed “community” that supposedly loved a brother and wanted to invite him to reconnect.

These stories represent only two of many episodes of disquiet in my life that have their origins in musings, issues and dilemmas relating to racism and to my own personal, racialized identity as a White man. I can recount and, in the course of the research I have conducted, I have recounted memories of many such moments and episodes from the earliest days of my childhood to my current daily experiences.

These are moments of meaning relating to race and to my longing to find a meaningful way to alleviate or eliminate the harm racism inflicts on others and on me. These are the sources of the disquiet that brought me to my dissertation research.

My Question for the Quest

The specific dissertation research question that emerged from this source of disquiet is this: How is White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character nurtured and sustained?

My Purposes

Although the primary focus of my dissertation research is to construct knowledge that is responsive to my specific research question, my purposes for the dissertation quest are multiple and much more expansive than the research question alone.

I provided the “Autobiographical Narrative” and “My Source of Disquiet” sections above to both indicate whence my research question originated but also to begin to provide rationale for autoethnographic self-examination as a useful methodological genre for addressing my specific research question. The choice of autoethnography did, however, serve another purpose. It helped me to learn something about the extent to which I, myself, have or have not nurtured and sustained White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

Another secondary purpose for my dissertation research is to begin to explore the degree to which autoethnographic inquiry and presentation itself may serve as a stimulus for the nurture and sustenance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist

character. Furthermore, since the body of autoethnographic research continues to be relatively limited in comparison to other qualitative methodological genres, another tangential purpose of my research is to contribute to the building of that body of autoethnographic research literature.

I believe that my dissertation may also have the potential to make a contribution related to the way in which a number of threads of social theory can be woven together to more fully legitimate research that is embedded in a constructivist paradigm of inquiry and knowledge construction.

A final purpose for my research is for it to be an invitation and inspiration for White people to aspire to nurture and sustain White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

CHAPTER 2

EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL TERRAIN

Introduction: The Need for a Theoretical Panorama

My dissertation research is unconventional in a number of respects. Perhaps most profoundly, it is unconventional because it is rooted in a constructivist epistemology, rather than the dominant, post-positivist epistemology that currently legitimates most dissertation research in the social sciences. I alluded to my inclination for this epistemological perspective in the “Voice, Venue and Vantage” section of the previous chapter. My choice of autoethnography as the methodological genre and mode for expressing research results is also a relatively unusual choice among social science dissertation researchers. I will directly address my unconventional choices to embrace constructivist epistemology and to adopt autoethnographic methodology as a part of my presentation of research design and methodology in Chapter 4.

Although the centrality of constructs of race and racism in dissertation research in the social sciences is not unconventional per se, an exploration of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character formation through rigorous and systematic self-examination by a White, male researcher apparently is. In Chapter 3, I will review the very limited body of scholarly literature that I have been able to find that approximates my own research.

These departures from convention beg explanation and rationale. Due to my epistemological stance and my methodological choices, I believe that I can reasonably anticipate challenges to the fundamental legitimacy of my inquiry and

questions as to whether or not it constitutes an acceptable form of dissertation research. Any purported contribution to knowledge construction that I assert will rely, in part, on the adequacy of my response to these anticipated challenges.

I will support my claim to epistemological and methodological legitimacy by referencing an array of substantive social theory that will form what I call the epistemological and theoretical terrain for my research. Rather than presenting only one or two theoretical frameworks within which my research is situated, I will present a more panoramic theoretical terrain in order to adequately address all of the departures from convention indicated above while also assembling the theoretical structure upon which my research design is constructed.

**A Neo-Grancian Perspective: Race and Racism as
Elements of Exploitive Social Structures, Cultural Domain and
Localized Enactments of Identity**

I will begin mapping the theoretical terrain by addressing the way in which I conceptualize race and racism, and the foundation of social theory upon which this conceptualization rests.

I conceptualize race as a socially constructed idea that enables systematic exploitation through a social structure of racism legitimated by an ideology of White supremacy. Although exploitation through racism is embedded in economic structures and relationships, my conceptualization of race and racism also situates them within the cultural domain in which they also carry independent meaning as a component of ideological hegemony. Within the cultural domain are certain “localized” mechanisms that promote and contest the enactment of race and racism in

the everyday lives of people, including the ways in which self-images and self-identities are shaped (West, 1999, p. 263). This particular conceptualization of race and racism is significant to my proposed research because my research presupposes that there is an identity that White people can develop, claim and enact in the cultural realm of everyday life that exposes and challenges hegemonic ideologies of White supremacy and thereby undermines social structures of racism and the exploitation that it perpetuates.

My conceptualization of race and racism emerge from social theory developed by Marx, Gramsci (1971) and West (1988, 1993, 1999). I will now turn to a brief synopsis of the theoretical contributions of each of these social theorists that support my conceptualization of race and racism.

Marx

Marx developed a body of theory and analysis seeking to explain the genesis of industrial capitalism and to describe the circumstances of its predicted demise. His thought and theory were strongly influenced by philosopher G. W. F. Hegel's proposition that human history would progress to a full realization of reason and freedom through a process of "dialectic contradictions" driven, primarily, by spiritual forces. Marx accepted the Hegelian dialectic to some degree but, rather than philosophic or spiritual dimensions, he stressed the primacy of economic, material forces leading to Marx's theory that has come to be called "historical materialism" (Manson, 2000a, pp. 18-19).

Marx's theory coupled social alienation with the wage labor dynamics of capitalism; presented social organization in terms of productive forces, relations of

production and modes of production; associated productive forces with economic class conflict; and recast political, legal, moral and intellectual systems as elements of a social “superstructure” that both legitimated and reproduced the economic exploitation of workers (Manson, 2000a, pp. 18-19).

From a Marxist theoretical perspective, the idea of race and the social organization of racism in the United States are historical developments germinated by intrinsic imperatives of capitalistic economic forces. Classic Marxist analysis would portray contemporary manifestations of race and racism in the United States as having their origins in the genocide of American Indians and the overt exploitation of African slave laborers for the appropriation and generation of capital for bourgeois capitalists. This exploitation was accompanied by the construction of superstructural ideological systems of rationale and legitimation, such as scientific, legalistic and religious philosophies of White supremacy.

Thus, Marx’s theoretical contribution to the framing of my research is the way in which he supports my conceptualization of race, racism and White supremacy as elements of a socially constructed ideological superstructure to legitimate exploitive systems of oppression.

Gramsci

Gramsci’s theoretical contributions to my dissertation research relate to his insistence that hegemonic (i.e., dominant, ubiquitous and essentially unchallenged) ideologies are firmly embedded within the cultural domain of societies, and that it is through direct confrontation within the cultural domain that these ideologies can best be contested and destabilized. Gramscian theory, therefore, not only supports my

conceptualization of race and racism as I described it above, but it also offers a prescription for praxis within the cultural domain; the kind of praxis that my dissertation research is intended to inspire and enable.

Gramsci's reformulated conceptualization of "hegemony" is among his best-known and most often cited contributions to Marxism. The term had previously referred to political supremacy, whereas Gramsci adopted it as an ideological concept to denote the dominant, ubiquitous and unquestioned body of superstructural ideology that enables capitalists and the capitalist state to hold power and to accumulate and control capital without resorting to the most overt forms of coercion and violence (Månson, 2000b, pp. 130-131). This is precisely my conceptualization of race and racism; i.e., that they comprise a hegemonic social structure that enables and stabilizes systems of exploitation.

According to Hall (1986), "Gramsci did not write about race, ethnicity or racism in their contemporary meanings or manifestations" (p. 27). Nonetheless, I agree with Hall's pronouncement that Gramsci (1986):

. . . proves, on closer inspection, and despite his apparently 'Eurocentric' position, to be one of the most theoretically fruitful, as well as one of the least known and least understood, sources of new ideas, paradigms and perspectives in the contemporary studies of racially structured social phenomena. (p. 27)

Gramsci's departure from classical Marxist inclinations to reduce all social analysis to economic determinants and Gramsci's specific attentiveness to cultural

reinforcements for ideological hegemony can enrich the analysis of race and racism in the United States. In making this same point Hall (1986) wrote:

Schooling, cultural organizations, family and sexual life, the patterns and modes of civil associations, churches and religions, and many other such sites play an absolutely vital role in giving, sustaining and reproducing different societies in a racially structured form. In any Gramscian-inflected analysis, they would cease to be relegated to a superficial place in the analysis. (p. 26)

My autoethnographic research will explore my own racialized identity construction and attempts to reconstruct that identity within the context of these exact cultural locales.

A recurring theme that appears in much of the literature on the nature of Whiteness and White racial identity, which I will review in the third chapter of this dissertation, concerns the degree to which White people in the United States are oblivious to the nature, meaning and consequences of their own Whiteness; to the unearned privileges, resources and power that their Whiteness confers upon them; and to their own complicity in racist systems, structures and modes of behavior (McIntosh, 1990; Jensen, 2005; Kendall, 2006). Gramsci would likely argue that this oblivion both indicates and insulates the strength of the hegemonic ideology of White supremacy that enables the continuing economic and cultural exploitation of People of Color without resorting to institutional structures of slavery per se or to other overt uses of violence.

Although Gramsci did not totally reject the Marxist focus on economic relations and historical analysis, he insisted on the centrality of the cultural arena in

the operational dynamics of hegemony. Furthermore, Gramsci's analysis recognized a complex interplay between the individual and collective consciousness that enables ideological hegemony to regulate social interactions. He also recognized the "plurality" of selves or identities of which the so-called "subject" of thought and ideas is composed. He argued that this multi-faceted nature of consciousness is not an individual but a collective phenomenon, a consequence of the relationship between "the self" and the ideological discourses which compose the cultural terrain of a society. This proposition has a direct relationship to what Habermas (1984) called "communicative action," which is a theoretical contribution to the framing of my research which I will present later in this chapter.

As founder of the communist party in Italy, Gramsci was of the direct theoretical lineage of Marx. As a political activist, however, Gramsci was less interested than Marx in developing or critiquing grand systems of social theory and more interested in formulating effective tactics to contest existing social structures. Gramsci cast Marxism as a "philosophy of practice." Although the emphasis he gave to subjective dynamics and to the role of ideology and politics earned him the moniker of the "superstructural theoretician" of Marxism (Manson, 2000b; Hall, 1986), Gramsci's theoretical analysis was offered primarily in the service of prescribing effective, anti-hegemonic tactics.

Gramsci's prescription for anti-hegemonic praxis champions what he called the "organic," creative capacities of ordinary people in exposing and challenging the hegemonic ideologies that enable others to exploit and oppress them. He portrayed this agenda as analogous to tactical, positional warfare requiring patience, creativity,

and continual reorganization and redeployment. Hall cited Gramsci's "Prison Notebook" writings to make this point. Hall (1986) wrote:

"...the superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare." A different type of political strategy is appropriate to this novel terrain. "The war of manoeuvre [is] reduced to more of a tactical than a strategic function" and one passes over from "frontal attack" to a "war of position" which requires "unprecedented concentration of hegemony" and is "concentrated, difficult and requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness" because, once won, it is "decisive definitively" (PN, pp. 238-9). (p. 18)

Gramsci's prescription for this kind of tactical, anti-hegemonic "warfare" within the cultural realm supports the framing of my research by affirming the notion that the construction of an antiracist identity that can be enacted by White people holds promise for destabilizing the hegemony of White supremacy through creative, tactical challenges within the cultural realm.

Another contribution that Gramsci made to the conceptualization of my research is in situating my role as a researcher and intellectual. I am, through my dissertation research, seeking to challenge and reconstruct existing superstructural ideologies. With respect to intellectuals, who both inhabit and construct the social superstructure, Gramsci made a clear distinction between "traditional" and "organic" intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals are members of formal groups separated from the rest of society: e.g., writers, artists, philosophers and priests. Organic intellectuals are strongly linked to the working class, whose collective consciousness

they express. All intellectuals belong to the superstructure where, Gramsci argues, their most important role is to challenge bourgeois ideology and facilitate the emergence of a working class hegemony (Mänson, 2000b, pp. 130-131). As a doctoral student engaged in dissertation research, I might be best categorized as a traditional intellectual. Yet, insofar as my research is intended to expose and/or alter my own privileged social location in the quest for nurturing White, antiracist character, I view my dissertation as an effort to embody Gramsci's ideal of the organic intellectual.

In addition to supporting my conceptualization of race and racism and identifying the nature of my status as an intellectual, Gramsci's theoretical work also affirms my departure from positivist epistemology. Although later in this chapter I will present more contemporary, theory-based criticisms of positivism in the works of West, Habermas and S. Harding, Gramsci's criticism is perhaps most impressive because it emerged in an era in which enthusiasm for positivist knowledge construction was extremely high. Marx's theory of dialectical materialism was itself firmly rooted in the positivist paradigm and, ironically, one of Gramsci's criticisms of positivism came in the context of a critique of Marxism. Hall (1986) wrote:

In "Critical Notes on An Attempt at Popular Sociology," which forms the second part of his essay "Problems of Marxism," Gramsci offers a sustained assault on the epistemologies of economism, pastivism and the spurious search for scientific guarantees. They were founded, he argues, on the falsely positivistic model that the laws of society and human historical development can be modeled directly on what social scientists conceived (falsely, as we

now know) as the ‘objectivity’ of the laws governing the natural scientific world. (p. 22)

From a Gramscian perspective, positivistic research concerning the nature of racism and possible strategies for its elimination is highly problematic. Research involves control and manipulation of resources to the end of constructing and legitimating knowledge that will either reinforce or challenge hegemonic ideologies. Research can therefore play a significant role in the maintenance and enforcement of hegemonic cultural, social and economic ideologies and structures. To the extent that racism is a part of the structural fabric of existing hegemonic structures that include academic and, particularly, positivist and post-positivist research, such research concerning racism must be acknowledged to carry a potential for contributing more to the reinforcement of racism than to its elimination. Such an analysis supports my own departure from a positivist paradigm for my dissertation inquiry.

In summary, Gramsci’s theoretical work makes several contributions to the framing of my research. First, it supports my conceptualization of race and racism. Secondly, its prescription for tactical, anti-hegemonic praxis within the cultural realm supports my choice of autoethnography and the quest for nurturing a White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. Thirdly, Gramsci’s distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals helps to situate my role as researcher. Finally, Gramsci supports the constructivist epistemology that I embrace through his rejection of positivistic inquiry in favor of subjective, anti-hegemonic expressions rooted within cultural realities.

West's Neo-Gramscian Structure for Analysis of Race and Racism

West echoed Gramscian perspectives in the way that he distinguishes his own view from Marxist inclinations to give extreme emphasis to both economic determinism and positivistic epistemology. West (1999) believed that many social phenomena, including racism, “are best understood and explained not only or primarily by locating them within the modes of production, but also by situating them within the cultural traditions of civilizations” (p. 262). Like Gramsci, West criticized Marx’s heavy reliance on positivism as paradoxically symptomatic of the oppressive, culture-laden modes of thought, inquiry and knowledge construction that are an integral part of the social system that Marxist analysis seeks to challenge. West (1999) wrote:

... the Marxist obsession with the economic sphere as the major explanatory factor is itself a reflection of the emergence of Marxist discourse in the midst of an industrial capitalism preoccupied with economic production; and, more important, this Marxist obsession is itself a symptom of a particular Western version of the will to truth and style of rationality that valorizes control, mastery and domination of nature and history. I neither fully reject this will to truth nor downplay the crucial role of the economic sphere.... But one is constrained to acknowledge the methodological point about the degree to which Marxist theory remains inscribed within the very problematic of the unfreedom and domination it attempts to overcome. (pp. 262-263)

Thus West offered additional support for both my conceptualization of race and racism and my departure from positivist epistemology.

Additionally, West (1988) offered what he calls a neo-Gramscian analytical structure for a contemporary examination of racism and the oppression of African Americans in the United States. As a precursor and rationale for this offering, West identified four existing and distinct Marxist conceptualizations of African American oppression. For each of these conceptualizations, West presented certain aspects that he believes are indispensable, yet he portrays the conceptualizations as collectively inadequate. The primary inadequacy that he sees in all four of these prevalent views is their exclusive concern with macrostructural analysis, examining racism only within and among institutions of production and government (West, 1988).

Reflecting Gramsci's attentiveness to the complex nature of individual and collective consciousness and the importance of the cultural realm, West (1988) argued that macrostructural analysis is essential, but that it needs to be accompanied by "a broad genealogical investigation and a detailed microinstitutional (or localized) analysis (p. 21).

West (1999) proposed an alternative, which he describes as a neo-Gramscian, "genealogical materialist analysis of racism" [which] consists of three methodological moments that serve as guides for detailed historical and social analysis:

1. A genealogical inquiry into the discursive and extradiscursive conditions for the possibility of racist practices, that is, a radically historical investigation into the emergence, development and sustenance of White-supremacist logics operative in various epochs in the modern Western (Eastern or African) civilization.

2. A microinstitutional (or localized) analysis of the mechanisms that promote and contest these logics in the everyday lives of people, including the ways in which self-images and self-identities are shaped and the impact of alien, degrading cultural styles, aesthetic ideals, psychosexual sensibilities and linguistic gestures upon people of color.
3. A macrostructural approach that accents modes of overdetermined class exploitation, state repression and bureaucratic domination, including resistance against these modes, in the lives of people of color. (p. 263)

My research relates most directly to the second of these three methodological moments, i.e., to the examination of the ways in which my own self-image and self-identity has been shaped and might be reshaped for a micro-institutional impact on the hegemonic ideology of White supremacy.

For an even stronger epistemological grounding and for more support for my choice of autoethnography as a methodological genre for research, I turn now to the theoretical work of Habermas.

Habermas: Subjective Rationality, Communicative Action and the Value of Aesthetic Expression

As I have indicated above, the theoretical work of Gramsci and West makes a contribution to the critique of the positivist paradigm of knowledge construction, thereby aiding me in legitimating my embrace of the constructivist paradigm for dissertation research. A critique of positivism is also articulated by Habermas, who offers what he called “subjective rationality” as a different, but no less valid, epistemology from positivistic “objective rationality.” Furthermore, Habermas’

conceptualization of “communicative action” supports the autoethnographic mode for expression of my research results, insofar as such expression holds promise for evoking dialogue from those who read and/or experience the autoethnographic expression of my research results (Sitton, 2003).

Habermas is considered a direct heir to Marxist critical theorists of the so-called “Frankfurt School,” particularly Adorno and Horkheimer (Anderson, 2000, p. 327). Central to Habermas’ theoretical work is his contention that modern society’s most critical dilemma is that relevant ideas and viewpoints remain “encapsulated in expert cultures” (Sitton, 2003, p. xii). Habermas articulated a theory of “communicative action” that postulates that certain processes of rational dialogue, discourse and argumentation can liberate ideas into the wider, public sphere for the purposes of constructing social knowledge as well as for informing and stimulating collective action.

Habermas concurred with the Weberian viewpoint that processes of rationalization, especially in religious and cultural arenas of modern life, have led not only to pervasive feelings of confusion and oppression, but to suspicions of rationality itself (Sitton, 2003, p. 41). But rather than signifying the end of reason, as some have argued, Habermas proposed that these cultural developments signify the emergence of alternative rational attitudes toward the world.

According to Sitton (2003), Habermas identified three distinct forms of rationality. They are “cognitive—instrumental rationality” for analysis of facts and objects, the hallmark of the positivist paradigm; “moral—practical rationality” for the justification of rules for social life; and “aesthetic—expressive rationality” for

exploring the possibilities of subjective experience. Each of these three realms of rational discourse and action is supported by its own unique internal logic and its own unique claims to validity. Each is a manifestation of distinct ontological and epistemological scaffolding (Sitton, 2003).

Habermas (1998) argued that human history is constructed in dialogue, but that this dialogue has been imperfect and distorted due to oppression and power relations that allowed the positivistic, cognitive-instrumental form of rationality to emerge as the dominant ideology. Through processes that granted the highest levels of value and legitimacy to instrumental ways of thinking and technical-rational control disguised as scientific neutrality, a “bifurcated rationalism” emerged (Anderson, 2000). This bifurcated rationalism relegated all inquiry concerning collective goals, morality and aesthetic expression to the realm of the purely subjective and irrational, and thus deemed such inquiry inappropriate for rational debate. Of Habermas’ notion of bifurcated rationality, Anderson (2000) wrote, “Thus, science and technical expert knowledge have been given the highest authority, leaving public debate as a forum for the collective formation of will to become impoverished and fragmented” (p. 329).

It is within the social sphere of moral-practical rationality and the subjective sphere of aesthetic-expressive rationality that my dissertation is situated. The socially constructed idea of race and the practical, oppressive consequences of that idea are reified within systems of social rules and structures. In choosing the subjective reflection and aesthetic presentational modalities of autoethnography as my means to challenge the idea of race and evoke dialogical participation in my quest to nurture

White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character, I am insisting that there is a legitimate rationality of discourse and action within the subjective sphere that adheres to its own systems of internal logic and validity.

Sitton (2003) summarized Habermas' description of the subjective realm and the nature of its validity claim so clearly and succinctly that I offer this extensive quote from Sitton:

Finally, there is a subjective world, the existence of which is revealed to an audience by the expression of desires, needs and evaluations. The existence of this world is "attributed" to an actor by an audience. This is the realm of "dramaturgical action" or self-expression. The subject has "privileged access" to these experiences which she or he discloses to an audience in the first person. "Subjective experiences" are the referent. Norms and subjective experiences are not subject to "truth," as are facts. However these expressions do present validity claims that are "analogous to truth." (Habermas, 1992, p. 75). The claims are, respectively, normative rightness and truthfulness, or sincerity of expression. (Sitton, 2003, pp. 46-47).

Thus criteria for establishing validity in the realm of subjective, aesthetic-expressive rationality are analogous to but distinctly different from criteria for cognitive-instrumental rationality. In the realm of the subjective, only the subject has direct access to her/his own feelings, desires and beliefs, so validation must be inferred or granted by an audience to the subject in accordance with the subject's credibility and perceived truthfulness, based on the alignment of the subject's expressions with the subject's actions.

Mistakenly equating expressions of subjectivity with “facts” or “things” as understood in terms of cognitive-instrumental rationality leads to a de facto rejection of the validity of subjective self-expression, because such expression cannot be examined as an object. Thus, Habermas contends, subjective self-expression must be validated based on a criterion of truthfulness rather than truth (Sitton, 2003, p. 47).

Habermas thus provided a strong theoretical foundation for both the epistemological and methodological bases for my research. In Chapter 4, I will provide the bridge between these theoretical propositions and my specific research design and methodology and I will outline the criteria I use to assess the rigor and quality of my research, which is situated within the realm of what Habermas would call subjective, aesthetic-expressive rationality.

Another contribution that Habermas’ (1984) theoretical work makes for the framing of my dissertation research relates to his assertion that speech itself is a form of social action. Habermas insisted that for speech as social action to be rational, its validity must be substantiated with argumentation. Habermas distinguished between four types of “linguistically mediated interaction” (p. 329). They are “strategic action,” “conversation,” “normatively regulated action,” and “dramaturgical action” (p. 329). Each one is associated with one of the three distinct realms of rationality alluded to above, and each is characterized by a particular form of speech action. Each has a particular action orientation, is subject to the validity criteria associated with its sphere of rationality, and has a particular orientation to the world.

Of these four types, the type that Habermas called dramaturgical action best characterizes my research. Dramaturgical action, for Habermas, embodies aesthetic, practical knowledge; utilizes therapeutic and aesthetic critique as its form of argumentation; and transmits knowledge through works of art. Dramaturgical action involves acts of expressive speech relating to what one feels, wishes or experiences for the purpose of self-representation. The action orientation of dramaturgical action is to reach understanding through authentic expression; validity claims are based on the criterion of “truthfulness;” and one’s orientation is to a “subjective world” (Habermas, 1984, p. 329).

Not only is the methodology that I will employ in my dissertation research situated within this dramaturgical form of speech and action, but that portion of my dissertation which conventional, post-positivist researchers would refer to as the “presentation of findings” will be situated there as well, as it will be a truthful, autoethnographic, subjective expression intended to evoke dialogue and action from and with its audience.

Habermas also argued that language is the medium through which reflection and critique is facilitated. Critical social science, according to Habermas, uses language in dialogue, argumentation and expression. The central task of critical social science is to determine whether consensus about ideas, beliefs, and normative reality is justified rationally and is congruent with universal interests, or if it is an expression of overt or covert coercion, deceit, or manipulation, and thus the result of illegitimate power relations. Concerning this, Anderson (2000) wrote:

The idea is that some forms of power can be functional, a means for effective organizing in the pursuit of common goals, whereas others can be oppressive and expressions of class interests or other particular goals. The regulative principle behind such critical social-science research is the idea of the domination-free dialogue, a discourse where consensus builds exclusively on mutual recognition of the strength of arguments, and where knowledge-constitutive interest is emancipatory. Consequently, critical theory is given the leading role as a medium for collective self-reflection and emancipation. (p. 330)

In sum, the theoretical work of Habermas made a substantial contribution to the epistemological and theoretical terrain for my research. In terms that Habermas would employ, my autoethnographic dissertation is envisioned as dramaturgical action, based on aesthetic-expressive rationality, employing a subjective, expressive form of speech. The rational validity of my endeavor should therefore be evaluated with the criterion of truthfulness, a judgment made by the dissertation's audience. The dissertation is offered as a stimulus for and a contribution to a domination-free discourse intended to constitute knowledge concerning the nurturance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character in the interest of collective action for the emancipation of myself and others.

Standpoint Theory

The final element of my panoramic theoretical overview will be an introduction to standpoint theory. Various versions of standpoint theory have been

offered by feminist theorists Dorothy Smith, Nancy Harstock, Hilary Rose, Jane Flax and S. Harding (1986, 2004).

According to S. Harding (1991), the essence of feminist epistemology and standpoint theory is the assertion that what a society calls knowledge is “socially situated” (p. 119). Feminist standpoint theory focuses particularly on “differences between women’s and men’s situations which give a scientific advantage to those who can make use of the differences” (S. Harding, 1991, p.120). Feminist standpoint theorists claim that the dominant social situation of men has resulted in systems of inquiry that produce incomplete and distorted understandings of nature and social relations. This claim resonates with the proposition of Habermas that I presented above; i.e., that the human dialogue that constructs knowledge has been imperfect and distorted due to oppression and power relations, allowing the cognitive-instrumental form of rationality to emerge as a dominant epistemological ideology that discredits, devalues and fragments other forms of rationality.

In substantiating her claim, S. Harding (1991) enumerated a series of gender-based differences that have significant implications for research and the construction of knowledge. Here are five examples of these differences that seem most relevant to my research:

1. “Women’s different lives have been erroneously devalued and neglected as starting points for scientific research and as the generators of evidence for or against knowledge claims” (p. 121).

2. “Women are valuable ‘strangers’ to the social order . . . [bringing to] research just the combination of nearness and remoteness, concern and indifference, that are central to maximizing objectivity” (p. 124).
3. “Women’s oppression gives them fewer interests in ignorance. . . . about the social order and fewer reasons to invest in maintaining or justifying the status quo than do dominant groups” (pp. 125-126).
4. “Women’s perspective comes from mediating ideological dualisms: nature versus culture. . . . and such manifestations of this polarity as intellectual work, on the one hand, and manual or emotional work, on the other hand” (p. 130).
5. “Women, and especially women researchers, are ‘outsiders within’” and have access to insights from this unique positioning (p. 131).

As an illustration of the “valuable stranger” or “outsider within” gender-based differences that women can utilize, S. Harding referred to sociologist Collins’ (1986) examination of the “outsider within” standpoint of African American women.

According to Collins, whether they are domestic workers or social scientists, African American women are positioned to observe and interpret social interactions in ways that neither men nor White women would be likely to detect, discern or objectively evaluate. African American women have long been privy to some of the most intimate secrets of White society. Collins (1986) wrote:

Countless numbers of Black women have ridden buses to their white “families,” where they not only cooked, cleaned, and executed other domestic duties, but where they also nurtured their “other” children, shrewdly offered

guidance to their employers, and, frequently, became honorary members of their white “families.” These women have seen white elites, both actual and aspiring, from perspectives largely obscured from their Black spouses and from these groups themselves (p. 14).

This “outsider within” status has provided a special standpoint on self, family, and society for Afro-American women (Collins, 1986, p. 14).

Thus the epistemological logic for feminist standpoint theory applies not only to gender-based differences but also to differences based on race, class, sexuality or other dimensions of social inequality and oppression.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, S. Harding also discussed a standpoint that she refers to as a “traitorous” identity. A man who thinks and acts in ways that are informed by feminist epistemology; heterosexuals “who have learned to ‘read across the grain’ [of] their otherwise spontaneously heterosexist experience;” and White people who “as whites can provide ‘traitorous’ readings of the racial assumptions in texts – literature, history, science – written by whites” are all illustrations of such traitorous identities (S. Harding, 1991, pp. 288-289).

S. Harding has argued that such traitorous social locations not only hold the potential for generating new insights through research and scholarship, but they encourage people who occupy them to actively use their privileges and resources in traitorous ways. This relates precisely to my dissertation inquiry; i.e., an inquiry to discover what insights my own traitorous standpoint may yield concerning the nurturing of identity and character that encourages White people to use privileges and

resources in traitorous ways in the service of liberation from hegemonic racist structures.

S. Harding has acknowledged that developing such traitorous identities and agendas is difficult. S. Harding (1991) wrote:

I hope it is clear that my intention is to make it both harder and easier to become a male feminist, a white antiracist, and so forth. For example, I must undertake difficult tasks in order to generate effective antiracist insights. As I said, I cannot just repeat what people of color have said. I have to educate myself about people of color, their struggles and their cultures. I have to study my own ignorance as well – the culturally rewarded white ignorance discussed by philosopher Marilyn Frye. I have to study white exploitation, domination, oppression, and privilege.... This is to be a competency-based antiracism, a competency-based male feminism. If these processes are not painful, I am probably not doing them right. After all, it cannot be entirely a pleasure to discover the unintentionally racist assumptions that have guided so many of my thoughts and practices—especially at those moments when I was exactly trying to enact a piece of antiracist business. So achieving a traitorous identity or social location requires the performance of difficult and painful tasks.

Some people enjoy the challenge of such tasks. Articulating the requirements for achieving traitorous identities provides them with real agendas. Some people would rather learn difficult truths about themselves and their world than suspect that they are thinking and behaving disreputably.

Another good reason for developing traitorous social locations is that if I cannot learn to think critically out of traitorous identities, my ways of seeing race and class will tend to focus on the oppression of others rather than on my own situation and the perspective available from within it. It is persons of my kind of race and class, after all, who perpetuate racism and class exploitation. (pp. 292-293)

This quote from S. Harding is among the most eloquent and succinct summaries of the intentions and motivations for my dissertation research that I have encountered in the scholarly literature.

One way that S. Harding (1991) has characterized people with traitorous identities is as people who “choose to *become* ‘marginalized’” (p. 295). There are numerous narrative accounts from White men concerning the stigma associated with their traitorous identities, particularly as recognized and enforced by other White men (Thompson, Schaefer, & Brod, 2003; Wise, 2005).

Bailey (1998), however, critiqued S. Harding’s notion that White, antiracist traitors become “marginalized” in the sense that the word is used within feminist standpoint theory. Describing traitors as marginalized, Bailey (1998) argued, “encourages a blurring or conflating of the location of the outsiders within and the location of traitors” (p. 32). Such a description, she contends, seems to indicate that traitors have a foot in each world, which obscures the prominence of white privilege. Bailey suggested that the language of standpoint theory would more accurately describe traitors as subjects who occupy the center, but whose ways of seeing are “off-center.” For Bailey (1998), traitors challenge and resist the normative

assumptions held by most White people, such as “the belief that white privilege is earned, inevitable or natural,” and thereby destabilize the center and their own status in it (p. 32). Bailey (1998) wrote:

Descriptions of traitors as decentering, subverting, or destabilizing the center arguably work better than “becoming marginal” because they do not encourage this conflation of the outsider within and the traitor. Decentering the center makes it clear that traitors and outsiders within have a common political interest in challenging white privilege, but that they do so from different social locations. (p. 32)

This distinction is important, because one of the foundational tenants of standpoint theory is that each standpoint is discrete and unique, and that each offers unique value and insight to knowledge construction.

Both S. Harding’s characterization of the dynamics of achieving a traitorous identity and Bailey’s description of “decentering” dynamics resonate with Gramsci’s (1971) depiction of an anti-hegemonic “war of position” that is “concentrated, difficult and requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness.” (pp. 238-9).

In sum, the contributions of standpoint theory to my research are twofold. The first is in establishing an even stronger legitimacy for adopting a constructivist rather than a positivist epistemology by acknowledging that knowledge is “socially situated.” The second contribution is the strong rationale provided for my choice of autoethnographic inquiry through acknowledging that the unique standpoint of a White, male researcher engaged in systematic self-examination holds some promise

for a unique contribution to the understanding of the nurturing of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of scholarly literature that is germane to my research and to identify the niche within that body of literature that my dissertation is intended to occupy.

The review begins with a very brief examination of the history of sociological attention to race and racism in the United States, highlighting both the seminal contribution of a preeminent African American sociologist, W.E.B. Du Bois, and some of the first sociological, antiracist, writing by a European American sociologist in the United States, Lester Ward.

Critical sociological theory in regard to race and racism has converged around a conceptualization of race as a socially constructed idea and racism as a social-structural system of oppression predicated on the idea of race. I will present a sample of the body of historical and sociological literature that documents the social construction of race. Writings by Hall (1986) and West (1988, 1993, 1999) cited in the Chapter 2 of this dissertation are indicative of critical theory discourse concerning racism as systemic and structural in nature. My literature review will present some additional, contemporary illustrations of this discourse and related theoretical work.

In support of my decision to locate my dissertation within what Habermas (1984) called the sphere of subjective, aesthetic-expression, my review will make reference to the significant body of literature that has presented understandings of race and racism through literary expression, primarily through the literary voices of African American writers.

I will next turn to the primary conceptual constructs that are implicit in my inquiry into privilege-cognizant, White, antiracist character, beginning with a summary of scholarly attention given to the nature of “Whiteness.” After a review of some of the literature concerning conceptualizations of both White racialized identity and White, antiracist identity, I will credit and recapitulate Bailey’s (1998) characterization of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character, which is the central conceptual construct for my dissertation research.

I will then present some of the scholarly literature within the methodological genre of autoethnography as a way of characterizing the growing position that autoethnography occupies within scholarly research.

Finally, I will provide a survey of literature on narratives of racial identity and transformation, ending with those contributions that most closely approximate my own dissertation research. Doing so, I will identify the distinct void within the literature that my research is intended to inhabit.

The History of Sociological Attention to Race and Racism in the United States:

Two Early Sociologists – One African American, One European American

African American sociologist and social reformer Du Bois had a lifetime interest in race relations, particularly relations between European Americans and African Americans in the United States. Each year between the years 1896 and 1914 Du Bois published a book on the subject (Henslin, 2006, p. 8). In his seminal work first published in 1903, *The Souls of Black Folks*, Du Bois (2003) provided not only statistical and other empirical descriptors, but also anecdotal accounts to document the economic, educational and social condition of African Americans in the United

States following the Civil War. Du Bois offered these data and accounts in an effort to demonstrate that race was the most significant influence on all human relations in the United States. Through his metaphorical references to what he called “the Veil of Race,” he articulated both the double consciousness that is an integral part of African American identity, and the real, yet seldom acknowledged barrier of race that obfuscates and influences all social interactions (Du Bois, 2003). For many, Du Bois’ work represents some of the earliest and most significant sociological attention to race and racism in the United States.

European American scholar Ward, a contemporary of Du Bois, was the first president of what is now the American Sociological Association. Ward is referred to by some as the “father of American Sociology.” Ward (1906, 1968) was among the very first of American scholars to publish work within the emerging discipline of sociology and some of his work directly addressed issues relating to race. Ward (1906) rejected the White supremacist ideology that was dominant at the time that he was writing, and he presented an antithetical proposition of “intellectual egalitarianism” (p. 95).

Ward’s work is particularly notable because it was written in the midst of fervor for eugenics. Spencer’s social evolution theory was being widely appropriated to support eugenics, an economic and political ideology that asserted that superior and inferior races exist, and that the demise of supposed inferior people serves to strengthen societies through evolutionary processes of adaptation and natural selection. Although Spencer had inspired this ideological movement, he did not

subscribe to it. He attempted to distance himself from it and emphasized his belief that there should be equal rights and opportunities for all (Anderson, 2000, p. 42).

The ubiquitous embrace of eugenics at the time that Lester Ward presented his proposition of “intellectual egalitarianism” makes Ward’s assertions all the more remarkable and worthy of emphasis in a literature review for research on White, antiracist character, which Ward exemplified.

To illustrate the remarkable clarity and depth of Ward’s (1906) theorizing about race, I will quote him extensively here:

...the general fact remains that in the world at large a few dominate society and make it, if not an “aristocracy of brains,” at least an oligarchy of intelligence. (p. 94)

The proposition that the lower classes of society are the intellectual equals of the upper classes will probably shock most minds. ...the difference in intelligence is not due to any difference in intellect.... It is due entirely to difference in knowledge, if we include in knowledge a familiarity with the tools of the mind and an acquired ability to utilize the products of human achievement.... (p. 95)

But society has never and nowhere been so organized as to transmit the products of achievement to more than a small fraction of its members. (p. 96)

It is not therefore proved that intellectual equality, which can be safely predicated of all classes in the white race, in the yellow race, or in the black race, each taken by itself, cannot also be predicated of all races taken together,

and it is still more clear that there is no race and no class of human beings who are incapable of assimilating the social achievement of mankind and of profitably employing the social heritage.” (pp. 109-110).

Chugerman (1965), in his review of Ward’s life and writings, expounded on Ward’s egalitarian views:

It is often asked how equality of opportunity is possible when human beings are so different in sex, race, color, creed, class, and physical and mental equipment. Ward’s answer is that there are no inborn inequalities of any kind which can prevent the equalization of opportunity. (p. 431)

It must always be remembered that Ward looks upon the mind and human achievement as only means toward the supreme aim of happiness. He recognizes the intellect as the most effective of all social agencies, but notes the surprising fact is that all intellects are potentially the same. Humanity, in other words, is one family with the same amount of latent ability, talent, and genius. . . . Regardless of race, class, color, or nationality, human beings are seeds sown in time and place. Some take root and others do not, and their degree of development depends upon the surrounding conditions and circumstances. (Chugerman, 1965, pp. 431-432).

Given the social and historical context in which Ward was thinking and writing (i.e., in the early 1900s in the United States), Ward’s views are remarkable and represent a challenge to the ideological hegemony of the era.

A thorough accounting of the historical development of social theory and analysis of race and racism in the United States is beyond the scope of this literature

review, but the contributions of both Du Bois and Ward are worthy of notice as some of the earliest, systematic social thought and writing from the perspectives of an African American and European American scholar respectively.

The Social Construction of Race and Systemic Racism as a Social-Structural System of Oppression

Theoretical discourse within sociology has generally coalesced around the assertion that the idea of race is a social construction grounded in fabricated, spurious rubrics based on human anatomical and biological variability. Literature on the social construction of race includes detailed historical analysis of the emergence of race as an idea. Higginbotham (1978) and López (1996) provided two excellent illustrations of this body of literature, offering historical analyses of the emergence of race within the realm of American law. Higginbotham (1978) has documented and examined the initial appearance and growth of the significance of race within law during the colonial period. López (1996) chronicled the legal construction of race in the United States throughout the twentieth century and enumerates the specific benefits of being White that have been created by legal statutes and court decisions relating to immigration policy.

Critical race theory, such as that reviewed in the second chapter of this dissertation, asserts that the idea of race is foundational for ideologies of White supremacy that legitimated genocide of American Indians and economic systems of slavery and exploitation of Africans in America and, later, in the United States. Critical theorists document the utilitarian value of race for the capitalist class and the power elite. A part of this analysis is that race provides one of the means by which

the capitalist class has divided the labor market to drive labor costs down. In *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, Roediger (1991) offered one such examination of the role that race has played in the formation and exploitation of the working class in America, demonstrating how processes of racialization have served the upper class by ensuring the replication of social stratification and structural systems of inequality.

A part of Roediger's work is an examination of White racial identity construction among Irish American workers. Ignatiev's (1995) *How the Irish Became White* extends Roediger's analysis. Ignatiev chronicled the way in which Irish immigrants who, in many ways were as despised, rejected and exploited as African Americans in the antebellum United States, abandoned their early inclinations to be in solidarity with African Americans. Irish immigrants soon determined that it was in their best interest to dissociate from African Americans and to "become White." This and other literature on the social construction of race and racialized identities map the emergence of "White" as a racial category (Allen, 1994) and provide analysis of the psychosocial, coercive and economic processes through which people have incorporated Whiteness as the central and essential component of individual and collective identity (Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991,2002).

Omi and Winant (1994) have proffered a "racial formation theory" that gives emphasis to the ideological, political and governmental processes that have reified racial categories, most often through what they term "racial projects," which link racial symbols to unequal distribution of resources (Feagin, 2006; Omi and Winant, 1994). Feagin (2006) has used Omi and Winant's theoretical work as a foundation

for his own analysis of contemporary manifestations of what he calls “systemic racism,” around which he has developed a “theory of oppression” (Feagin, 2006; Feagin and Vera, 1995).

Understanding race and racism as being socially constructed for the purposes of systemic oppression is not the only perspective adopted by social theorists. Feagin (2006) identifies and critiques what he calls the “mainstream” approach to race. This approach, he argued:

... ignores or downplays the centrality and injustice of white wealth, power, and privilege and instead accents the buzzing complexity of U. S. racial-ethnic groups and their socioeconomic demographics, geography, recent history, attitudes, or patterns of sociocultural adaptation and assimilation. (p. 4)

Other elements of Feagin’s characterization of the mainstream approach are that racial-ethnic groups are presented as distinctive and as vying for resources in a reasonably democratic U. S. society; that although racial-ethnic inequalities exist, they are not fundamental, but rather “an unfortunate socioeconomic condition tacked onto an otherwise healthy society”; that Whites are seen as no more than one of many contending racial-ethnic groups, and not as “the central propagators and agents in a persisting system of racial discrimination and other racial oppression”; that racial-ethnic group differences in regard to variables such as income, occupation, health and residence are presented, but “rarely if ever conceptualized in terms of a deep-lying system of racial oppression”; a cursory analysis of contemporary racial discrimination; and emphasis on the need to promote inter-group harmony, without accounting for the “power and wealth hierarchy favoring Whites, nor the centuries-

old social reproduction processes of unjust enrichment and impoverishment that lie just beneath the surface of the recognized disharmonies” (Feagin, 2006, pp. 4-5).

Feagin (2006) is obviously critical of what he has characterized as the “mainstream” approach to race and racism within sociology, as such perspectives are clearly antithetical to his theoretical stance. There are, however, a few scholarly voices that reject the framing of race and racism that Feagin and others champion, i.e., race and racism as social construction and as systemic oppression. Hocutt (2002), for example, seeks to discount the critical theory constructionist view of race by recasting that view as a simple argument that race does not exist and by emphasizing the discord with respect to definitions of race. Hocutt’s argument, however, seems to minimize and misrepresent racial formation theory, reducing it to an argumentative “straw man” that he can then easily dissemble. Hocutt (2002) appeared to do this in order to discredit the notion that race can or should be a consideration in the redistribution of resources or opportunities.

Racial formation theory as constructed by Omi and Winant (1994) and as extended by Feagin (2006) is closely aligned with the conceptualization of race and racism that I articulated in the second chapter of this dissertation. It is also closely aligned with the theoretical terrain within which my research is situated. Because I chose to enact my dissertation research in what Habermas calls the realm of subjective, aesthetic-expression (Sitton, 2003), I now turn to a cursory review of the body of literature that has presented understandings of race and racism through literary expression, particularly by African American writers.

African American Literary Expression of Race and Racism

In addition to scholarly writings within the discipline of sociology, historians like Franklin (1992) and Bennett (1984) have richly recounted the history of African American struggle for liberation in America and, in so doing, made clear the profound influence of race and racism within American society. Another historian, V. Harding (1992), bridged the traditions of historical research with literary storytelling, using a genre of historical fiction to record currents within the historical “river” of African American resistance to oppression and struggles for freedom.

Some of the most poignant observations and descriptions of race and racism in America have found voice in genres of literary expression rather than empirical or historical accounts. Roediger (1998) chronicled the long tradition of thought and discourse by African Americans on the nature of White people and their Whiteness by assembling a collection called *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White*. Roediger’s collection presents the folktales, slave narratives, contemporary essays, poetry and fiction of over fifty historically marginalized voices, including James Baldwin, Derrick Bell, Ralph Ellison, W. E. B. Du Bois, bell hooks, David Walker, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Langston Hughes. Roediger refers to the bold mid-twentieth century assertion of J. Johnson (1960) that “colored people of this country know and understand the white people better than the white people know and understand them” (Roediger, 1998, p. 5). Roediger exposed what he refers to as “a white illusion at once durable, powerful and fragile” by coupling Johnson’s assertion with what bell hooks describes as the amazing ability of Whites to imagine “that black people cannot see them” and James Baldwin’s argument that “a vast amount of

the energy that goes into what we call the Negro problem is produced by the white man's desire not to be judged by those who are not white" (Roediger, 1998, p. 5).

Other African Americans making significant literary contributions to the understanding of race and racism in America include Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and Zora Neal Hurston. Noteworthy in light of the methodological genre I have chosen for my dissertation research, Deck (1990) has examined Hurston's work as an illustration of autoethnography.

European American authors have commented on race and racism through fictional literature as well. In a work of literary criticism titled *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Morrison (1992) identifies the "Africanist presence" in the fiction of Faulkner, Poe, Hemingway, Cather, Melville and others, supporting her thesis that Whiteness themes such as individualism and freedom depended on the contrasting presence of the oppressed "Africanist other" that embodied both the fears and desires of Whites

Proliferation of Research and Scholarship of "Whiteness"

Fine, Weis, Powell and Wong (1997), in an introduction to their edited volume, *Off White: Readings on Race, Power, and Society*, asserted that scholars of multiculturalism and critical gender and race theory had focused considerable attention on a quest to give voice to those who have been historically excluded and marginalized. Yet, they indicated, with respect to the nature of Whiteness as race, privilege and/or social construction, there had been a relative void within critical debate and scholarship. "White standpoints, privileged standpoints," they wrote,

“are still generally taken as the benign norm or, in some cases, the oppressive standard – either way escaping serious scrutiny” (Fine et al., 1997, p. viii).

Thirteen years have now passed since Fine et al. (1997) published their assertion. Yet despite persuasive arguments by numerous theorists that an examination of “privileged standpoints” is crucial to informing efforts to dismantle racism, very few researchers have taken up this challenge.

Fine et al. (1997) provided evidence that Whiteness has actually been a long-standing object of careful study, but seldom from the privileged standpoint. They acknowledged that People of Color have long been careful observers and commentators on the essence of Whiteness, as I indicated earlier in this chapter. Their anthology opens with a 75-year-old quote from Du Bois in which Du Bois eloquently describes his own unique vantage into the “Souls of White Folks” (Fine et al., 1997, p. vii).

Given the strong evidence for the “White illusion” that Roediger (1998) unveils through the writings of the most keen, perceptive and consistent observers of Whiteness in his *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White*, the emergent attention to Whiteness by White scholars, such as that summarized by the collection edited by Fine et al. (1997), may have represented a significant development. Contributors to the Fine et al. volume analyze White racialization processes from numerous perspectives, including critical race theory, feminism, cultural studies, queer theory and post-colonialism.

An early and seminal contribution of research on Whiteness is a study by Frankenberg (1993) on the social construction of Whiteness for White women.

Frankenberg conducted a qualitative narrative analysis of interviews with 30 White women living in California. In a discussion of Frankenberg's work, Bonnett (1996) credited her with providing:

. . . insights into the slippery, incomplete, and diverse nature of “white racial” identity. . . [and describing] a complex portrait of the, “articulations of whiteness, seeking to specify how each is marked by the interlocking effects of geographical origin, generation, ethnicity, political orientation, gender and present-day geographical location” (1993: 18). (p. 105)

Bonnett's (1996) interest in Frankenberg's work related to his appreciation for her “discussion of the multiple and shifting boundaries of ‘whiteness’” and the “hybrid nature of ‘racial’ subjectivities” (p. 105).

Hurtado and Stewart (1997) provided an overview of subsequent research that sought to contribute to an understanding of whiteness, and they organized their review under two major thematic headings, “Denaturalizing Whiteness” and “Documentation of the Dynamics of Power.”

Denaturalization of whiteness concerns the propensity of White research respondents to fail to “consider their whiteness as an identity or a marker of group membership per se” (Hurtado & Stewart, 1997, p. 299). White respondents presented whiteness as a “natural,” normative identity of little consequence, despite realizations that race remains central to the social organization of American society. Hurtado and Stewart referenced the finding from Frankenberg's (1993) study in which almost all respondents referred to having been socialized “not to see” People of Color, and they also cited observations by Morrison (1992) as to how this “not seeing” is enforced as

a standard of politeness among White people. Hurtado and Stewart also observed that the naturalization of Whiteness is evidenced by the accounts of “painful discovery” of Whiteness by students in multicultural college classrooms by several researchers, including Tatum (1997).

Hurtado and Stewart (1997) presented the balance of their research literature review under a heading of “Documentation of the Dynamics of Power,” referring to the power that Whiteness confers upon those who are White. Research themes are identified that address topics of distancing, denial, superiority, belongingness and solidarity.

A dominant theme within research that centers on the dynamics of power and superiority concerns the concept of White privilege. McIntosh (1990) helped to articulate and expose the nature of White privilege in an accessible way. She did this in a brief, first-person narrative essay in which she transposed lessons she had previously learned about male privilege and men's tendency to deny their own privilege to an examination of White privilege. McIntosh conducted a personal inventory by metaphorically “unpacking” her “invisible knapsack” of White privileges and thus provided insight into the seldom conscious expectations of acceptance and superiority that most White people carry in almost all social contexts.

Sociology’s critical theorists extend these understandings of the nature of Whiteness to macro level analyses. Lipsitz (1995), for example, detailed what he calls the possessive investment in Whiteness and the way in which this investment racializes democratic structures. Whiteness, according to Lipsitz, embodies what is to be normative, and thus forms the basis for entitlement to political and economic

opportunities and resources. Hegemonic ideologies and discourse concerning equality of personhood, opportunity, and democratic governance within the United States are challenged by exposés like that offered by Lipsitz. McLaren (1997) made this argument poignantly when arguing that current attention given to inclusiveness and multiculturalism are less beneficial than examinations of Whiteness and the construction of White supremacy.

Theory building, critical analysis and research activities concerning Whiteness continue to proliferate, as evidenced by numerous edited anthologies (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Frankenberg, 1997; Roediger, 2002). Paralleling this proliferation has been the growing attention given to two additional constructs that are central to my research, those of White racial identity and White, antiracist identity.

White Racial Identity

Research concerning White racial identity has germinated from within the traditions of clinical and developmental psychology. A seminal work on racial identity is Helms' (1990) collection of essays, *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research and Practice*. Helms (1990) gathered much of the relevant literature in social and behavioral science that existed as of 1990 in order to demonstrate that race could be studied from a psychological as well as a social perspective and in order to:

inspire others not only to begin to examine the utility of racial identity models for understanding the behavior of Blacks and Whites, but also to begin to consider the usefulness of racially/culturally explicit models for guiding research and practice. (p. xvii)

Helms (1990) reviewed key racial identity terminology and offered a definition of racial identity that includes three distinct yet interrelated components – personal identity, reference group orientation and ascribed identity. She presented an overview of racial identity theory, practice and research in three parts, “Theory and Measurement of Racial Identity,” “Psychological Correlates of Racial Identity,” and “Practical Applications of Racial Identity Theory.”

Helms offered a theoretical model of White racial identity development based on six developmental stages associated with increasing levels of “cognitive maturity.”

Helms (1993) summarized the six stages as follows:

- (a) Contact – ignorance or obliviousness to the sociopolitical implications of race as it is defined in this country;
- (b) Disintegration – consciousness of race-related moral dilemmas and correlated personal disorientation;
- (c) Reintegration – conscious and unconscious idealization of Whites and White culture and denigration of that which is perceived to be not White;
- (d) Pseudo-Independence – intellectualization about racial issues based on a guiding philosophy that others should be helped to be more like Whites;
- (e) Immersion/Emersion – attempts to redefine one’s own Whiteness from a non-racist perspective and to reeducate other Whites in a similar vein;
- (f) Autonomy – internalization of a non-racist White perspective coupled with a willingness to eschew the benefits of racism as well as to avoid assuming that the sociopolitical experiences of Whites in this country necessarily apply to all other racial groups. (pp. 241-242)

Although most contributions to research and theory concerning White racial identity extend from either the sociological examination of Whiteness or the psychological, developmental framework articulated by Helms, there are exceptions. One such exception is the work of geographers Dwyer and Jones (2000), who described related constructions of geographic space and identity that serve to crystallize what they posit as an essential tenet of Whiteness: i.e., that space and identity can exist independent of "an Other." Dwyer and Jones asserted that such constructions reify an understanding of both space and identity in terms of "categories, boundaries and discrete, unrelated parcels." The valuing of non-relational space and identity by White people, they argue, has significant implications for phenomena such as residential segregation and inequitable spatial mobility.

White, Antiracist Identity

In her developmental model of White racial identity, Helms (1990, 1995) identified the culmination of the developmental process as a state she calls "autonomy." Helms has characterized autonomy as "an internalization of a non-racist White perspective," and "a willingness to eschew the benefits of racism." Applebaum (2000) argued that there can and needs to be something called a White, antiracist identity, and that it must be grounded in "privilege-cognizant white scripts," a concept first formulated by Frankenberg (1993). Applebaum argued that such scripts can be written and enacted.

By no means, however, is there scholarly consensus with respect to the potential for, the nature of, or the process of development associated with White, antiracist identity. Indeed, there is significant concern with respect to formalized

acknowledgment of such concepts as Whiteness or White, antiracist identity. The concern is, essentially, that definition may constitute reification. In their introduction to *Off White: Readings on Race, Power and Society*, editors Fine, Weis, Powell and Wong (1997) expressed the concern in this way:

We worry that in our desire to create spaces to speak, intellectually and empirically, about whiteness, we may have reified whiteness as a fixed category of experience and identity; that we have allowed it to be treated as a monolith, in the singular, as an “essential something.” (p. xi)

Bonnett (1996) argued that antiracist discourse typically presents Whiteness as a fixed entity that cannot be easily changed or challenged, and contends that this results from a failure to understand the construction of Whiteness as temporal, fluid and/or "spatially contingent." Bonnett's mission is to promote what he characterizes as a more complex, multifaceted and useful conceptualization of Whiteness. This attempt to recast Whiteness relates directly to my research. Such a fluid, complex and multifaceted conceptualization of Whiteness would seem to be the prerequisite to any contention that a White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character can, indeed, be nurtured and sustained through changing social contexts. Bonnett (1996) argued that antiracist strategies are least effective when based on a construct of Whiteness that is simplistic, static and immutable, and he concludes that antiracists need to not only recognize and resist Whiteness, but also to enable its “hybrid mutation and supersession” (p. 108).

Members of the “New Abolitionists Movement” vehemently reject the legitimacy of Whiteness and White identity, and view the notion of any White,

antiracist identity as oxymoronic (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996). This community of academics and activists promotes the “abolition of the White race by any means necessary” and advocates tactics that serve to deliberately confound hegemonic notions of what race is and what Whiteness is. Paradoxically, by stating this mission and by prescribing specific tactics, the new abolitionists are revealing an underlying assumption that there is, indeed, an authentic form of White antiracism. To the extent that people who are now understood to be White are asked to participate in the abolitionists’ tactical agenda, the abolitionists have provided a de facto description of what is for them the only authentic manifestation of a White, antiracist identity. Many of the most cogent attempts to describe White, antiracist identity have been in reaction to or in an attempt to incorporate the new abolitionists’ ideology (Alcoff, 1998; Applebaum, 2000; Bailey, 1998; Giroux, 1997).

White, Privilege-Cognizant, Antiracist Character

The conceptual construct of a White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character is at the heart of the purpose for my dissertation research and it is the central construct in the research question that I presented in the first chapter of this dissertation. This construct was, in part, formulated and discussed by Bailey (1998) in an article in which she sought to refine the notion of a “traitorous identity” as it had been initially identified and described by S. Harding (1991, 2004) within the context of feminist standpoint theory

Bailey (1998) argued that those who inhabit traitorous locations with respect to race challenge and resist the normative assumptions held by most White people, such as “the belief that white privilege is earned, inevitable or natural,” and thereby

“destabilize the center” and their own status in it (p. 32). Bailey further proposed that traitors be described in terms originally coined by Frankenberg (1993, pp. 137-191); i.e., “as privileged subjects who animate privilege-cognizant white scripts” as opposed to “privilege evasive white scripts” (Bailey, 1998, p. 33). Bailey (1998) wrote:

The existence of sexism and racism as systems requires everyone’s daily collaboration.

To understand the nature of this collaboration, it is helpful to think of the attitudes and behaviors expected of one’s particular racial group as performances that follow historically preestablished scripts. Scripts differ with a subject’s location within systems of domination. . . . what it means to be Black, White, Comanche, Korean or Latina is defined not only by a person’s physical appearance (so-called “racial” markers such as skin color, hair, facial features, body shape), but also by that person’s performance—by the script that individual animates. . . . Attention to race as performative, or scripted, reveals the less visible, structural regulatory function of racial scripts that exclusive attention to appearance overlooks. (p. 33)

Bailey asserted that the scripts that White people generally animate are scripts that evade their position of relative dominance and privilege, and yet traitorous, privilege-cognizant White scripts can be fashioned and animated as well. Bailey (1998) wrote:

Recognizing that whites can use the analyses of outsiders within to forge traitorous scripts means we can learn to think and act not out of the “spontaneous consciousness” of the socially scripted locations that history has

written for us, but out of the traitorous (privilege-cognizant) scripts we choose with the assistance of critical social theories generated by emancipatory movements (S. Harding 1991, p. 295). A key feature of privilege-cognizant standpoints is the choice to develop a critically reflective consciousness (p. 36).

Another contribution that Bailey (1998) made to the formation of the central construct for my research is her conceptualization of the idea of character. For Bailey, occupying the location of race traitor and animating privilege-cognizant White scripts needs to be understood as a change in character. In her discussion of what she means by character, Bailey made reference to Aristotle's (1980) discourse on the acquisition of moral virtue. Aristotle asserts that people become virtuous by doing virtuous deeds. Virtuous character is not some static state that is attained and then declared, but rather it is manifest in a continual process of acting in virtuous ways. Bailey (1998) wrote:

Achieving a traitorous standpoint, like cultivating virtue, is a process. When a person has the practical wisdom to know which lines in whitely scripts to change, when to change them, and when to leave them alone, then they can be said to possess the practical wisdom necessary for a traitorous character. (pp. 38-39).

Autoethnography

A growing body of scholarly literature indicates that autoethnography is gaining broader usage and perceived legitimacy as a qualitative research methodology, genre of inquiry, and medium for the presentation of research results.

Autoethnography is now routinely featured in qualitative research methodology handbooks and textbooks (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002), and there are a number of anthologies that feature autoethnographic writings and elucidations on the utility and aesthetics of autoethnography as a mode of inquiry (Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 1997).

My search of the titles of anthology contributions, academic journal articles and doctoral dissertations found autoethnographies with a wide variety of topical foci, including autoethnography as political resistance in Socialist Romania (Kideckel, 1997); a story of sexual identity transformation (Dent, 2002); an “Autoethnography of a Strip Club” characterizing the “life of an academic feminist stripper” (Johnson, 1999); and, perhaps most salient for me personally at this moment in my life, a “theoretically informed autoethnography, on the space inscribed between the proposal and the dissertation. . . . [that seeks to] evocatively problematize the epitome of the academic rite-of-passage, i.e., the writing of a modern dissertation, in times of post-modern inquiry and writing” (Noy, 2003, p. 1).

Champions of the autoethnographic genre continue to work to expand its breadth and application. One such champion, Ellis (1991,1999), exemplified this quest in a published article titled “Heartful Autoethnography.” In the abstract for the article, Ellis (1999) indicated that through the article she:

. . . seeks to develop an ethnography that includes researchers’ vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies, and spirits; produces evocative stories that create the effect of reality; celebrates concrete experience and intimate detail; examines how human experience is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral,

ethical, and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope; features multiple voices and repositions readers and “subjects” as coparticipants in dialogue; and seeks a fusion between social science and literature (p. 669)

Critics of autoethnography as legitimate research most often characterize it as a form of narcissistic self-indulgence. Sparkes (2000) acknowledged that the use of autoethnography within sociology is “at the boundaries of disciplinary practices and raises questions as to what constitutes proper research” (p. 21). Sparkes explored these questions “by focusing upon the criteria used by various audiences to pass judgment” on an autoethnography that Sparkes had published in a leading journal (p. 21). Sparkes (2000) particularly addressed the “charge of self-indulgence as a regulatory mechanism” and highlighted “problems of having inappropriate criteria applied to this work” (p. 21). Sparkes’ argument that different criteria need to be applied to judgments of quality, rigor and validity for autoethnographic research echoes the theoretical proposition by Habermas that I presented in the second chapter of this dissertation, placing my dissertation research within the aesthetic-expressive sphere of rationality that requires validity criteria that differ from those applied to post-positivistic inquiry.

Narratives of Racial Identity and Transformation

Autobiographical narratives concerning racial identity and personal experiences of transformation relating to racial identity can be found in the autoethnographic literature and in other scholarly and popular writing.

Vidal-Ortiz (2004), for example, supported conceptual and theoretical assertions concerning the use of racial categories in the United States by using an autoethnographic description of “Puerto Rican-ness.” In this way, Vidal-Ortiz (2004) illustrated “the limitations of U. S. ‘race’ and ethnic constructs by furthering racialization analyses with seemingly contradictory categories such as ‘white’ and ‘people of color’ (p. 179).

Gatson (2003) referred to her own multiracial identity as making her amorphous and uses a sociologically informed, autoethnographic approach to understanding her identity. Like Vidal-Ortiz (2004), Gatson has drawn inferences from her exploration of personal identity to inform insights relating to broader racial realities in the United States. To support and inform her autoethnographic work, Gatson collected and analyzed data from field notes, historical documents, and “the embedded interactions from within a larger culture of literature, scholarship, and popular understandings” (p. 20). Her autoethnography included examples of what she characterized as “confronting her Blackness, confronting her multiracialness, and confronting her Whiteness” (p. 20).

There are very few autoethnographic accounts that specifically explore White racial identity, Whiteness, or White antiracist identity that are within the formal body of scholarly literature and which have been composed with explicit attention to criteria of quality and validity that are appropriate to the autoethnographic genre as a qualitative research methodology in the social sciences. One of the few is an offering by Warren (2001). Warren presented an autoethnography of White subjectivity in which he explores what he calls “the role of absence for the White subject” (p. 36).

Warren (2001) articulated a gradual process of seeing Whiteness through involvement in evocative writing, and postulates ways in which he believes White supremacy is built on the perceived danger that people of color are believed by many White people to represent.

Although not in the form of autoethnographic inquiry and expression per se, scholars have presented a number of brief, first-person narrative accounts of emergence from socialized White denial to states of enhanced, action-enabling consciousness. One often-cited account by McIntosh (1990) was referenced earlier in this chapter. McIntosh (1990) recounted her emerging cognizance of White privilege by presenting her own personal inventory of unearned White privileges, naming some of those privileges in this way:

“I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time,” “Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability,” and “I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.” (pp. 2-3)

Another first-person narrative account was written in essay form by Croteau (1999). Croteau chronicled his own emergent realization that racism is, in part, manifest in him and in many White people as individualism. A worldview of individualism, Croteau discovered, was permitting him to abdicate responsibility for racism, as it placed the locus for racism in the moral or psychological failures of individual White people from whom he could dissociate. A key turning point came for Croteau when he was able to relate lessons he learned in the process of "coming

out" as a gay man to the collective nature of oppression based on race. For Croteau, this realization was critical to the formation of a White, antiracist identity.

A final example of autobiographical narrative on the emergence of cognizance of White privilege that begins to approach the autoethnographic form is that of Wolff (2005), who at the age of 62 accepted an invitation to participate in the development of a new doctoral program in Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts. A decision was made to ground the new program in the required reading of 56 carefully selected books. Wolff described the dramatic and transformative reeducation and personal enlightenment that he experienced as he read these 56 texts. Wolff's (2005) book is titled *Autobiography of an Ex-White Man* and is a tribute and allusion to the classic fictional memoir by J. Johnson (1960), *Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, that is a part of the African American literary tradition referred to earlier in this chapter. Wolff describes not only how his encounter with these books enlightened him to the obfuscated and distorted history of race and racism in America, but also how this reeducation process profoundly altered his understanding of himself as a White man.

There are also a number of collections of the life stories of antiracists. Singley (2002) is editor of a collection of very brief essays from both African American and European American writers. In the essays these writers share stories from their own personal histories that identify moments of clarity and transformation in their understanding of race and/or their commitment to antiracist identity and action. Singley's contributors are renowned writers and activists who might be considered celebrities of the antiracist movement, including Robert Coles, Beverly

Daniel Tatum, Julianne Malveaux, Robert Jensen, Tim Wise, Noel Ignatiev, Derrick Bell and others.

Another example of a collection of personal stories of development and transformation to antiracist character is provided by Thompson, Schaefer and Brod (2003). Unlike Singley's (2002) collection, all of the stories featured by Thompson, Schaefer and Brod are from White men, many of whom are common people of no particular renown beyond their own neighborhoods and communities. Contributors include teachers, community and labor organizers, clergy, a police officer, a fire fighter, a musician, a social worker and others. In this case, the authors of the collection interviewed the 35 men featured in the book and then collaborated with each man to develop a narrative that would best reflect the essence of their unique experiences.

In addition to collections of autobiographical essays or narratives, there are a number of scholarly research efforts utilizing field observation and interview methods in attempts to examine the lives of White antiracist activists and the activities, organizations and movements through which they incorporated antiracism into their identities and their lives. O'Brien (2001) conducted field research in order to explore the experiences of individuals who either found or created pathways to antiracist action. She also examined a number of antiracist organizations such as Anti-Racist Action and the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. Coincidentally, the latter of these two organizations played a significant role in the initiation of the organization called People Against Racism (PAR) based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. PAR was very influential in the growth of my own personal cognizance of racism and

White privilege, and members of PAR are among the people I purposefully selected to interview for dissertation research. O'Brien's inquiry provided illustrations of alternative models of Whiteness, accounts of individual antiracist strategies, and some of the means used to withstand personal struggles associated with White antiracism.

Warren (2010) interviewed 50 antiracist activists and outlined common developmental milestones, including seminal experiences that led to moral impulses to act; the way in which relationships with People of Color deepened commitment; formulating moral visions for a purposeful life; and working with other White people to challenge racism.

B. Thompson (2001) contributed a sociological and historical analysis of antiracist activism in the second half of the 20th Century with an intricate narrative based on the lives of 39 White antiracists. Over a five year period, B. Thompson traveled the United States interviewing people whom she selected because they were well known within progressive circles, but only within their local communities. She selected participants based on the kinds of racial and ethnic communities in which they worked and based on the variety of strategies they used. B. Thompson weaved the individual stories of these 39 people into her analysis of significant developments in social and political history, including the Civil Rights Movement and other social movements of the era. Her explicitly stated objective is to reveal the unknown and invisible history of White, antiracist activism in order to provide what she terms an "antidote to despair." B. Thompson (2001) wrote:

Might the attention to racism rather than antiracism serve as a form of beating up on the collective self that fosters a kind of immobility, a way out of the

hard work of naming how each of us is implicated and how we collectively might create a culture that is different from the one presently surrounding us? What is even more troubling about the dearth of attention to white antiracism is that it renders invisible organizing by activists of color. It is the centuries of activism against racism by people of color that has largely nurtured white antiracism.

For me, studying antiracist activism historically – its conflicts, successes, and limitations—is an antidote to despair. It is also a way to counter a long history of historical amnesia about progressive social change in this country in general. (p. xv)

**Approximations of Autoethnographies on Nurturing White,
Privilege-Cognizant, Antiracist Character**

There are several contemporary works that begin to approximate the autoethnographic form and that address the development of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

In *Daughters of Suburbia: Growing Up White, Middle Class, and Female*, Kenny (2000a) presented what she calls “part ethnography, part memoir, and part cultural study. It is an autobiographical ethnography or, more succinctly, an autoethnography. . . .” (p. 1). In addition to using remembrances of her own life stories, Kenny returned to her eighth grade alma mater in a Long Island suburban community to conduct fieldwork in which she sat in classrooms, roamed hallways, visited playing fields, went on overnight trips, visited local malls and movie theaters,

and attended school plays and after-school activities. Kenny (2000a) soon realized that:

Working within a community of similarity and a culture of avoidance makes the process of naming normative whiteness nearly impossible, especially when the researcher can also count herself among the researched, or at least one of their descendants. As an autoethnographer without a ready-made comparative field to study, I decided that one way to get a perspective on my hometown would be to turn to media stories about notoriously bad, white middle-class, suburban teen girls, and about Long Island girls in particular. (p. 8)

Kenny used the high profile notoriety of Amy Fisher, the so-called “Pistol-Packing Long Island Lolita;” Cheryl Pierson, a girl who hired a classmate to kill her father; and Emily Heinrichs, a former White supremacist teen mom, to draw contrasts that would elucidate the essence of the normative suburban “good girl,” including her former self, who was oblivious to race and White privilege. In writings separate from this book, Kenny (2000b) provided critical reflections on her methodological choices and on some of the unique challenges of researching “home.”

Significant, yet perhaps less indicative of autoethnography per se, are contributions from Kendall (2006) titled, *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race*, and Wise (2005) titled, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. Both of these authors make use of autobiographical storytelling to provide illustrations of the elements and dynamics of White privilege, institutional racism and hegemonic White supremacy. Both use a

very evocative writing style that places readers into the chemistry of their writings as participants rather than as disembodied spectators. Kendall (2006) used personal stories to illustrate and support specific prescriptions for White people intent on becoming cognizant of White privilege and acting in antiracist ways. The prescriptions include “the importance of doing our personal work,” “overcoming barriers to clarity,” “becoming an ally and building authentic relationships across race,” and “the challenge and necessity of making race our issue” (Kendall, 2006, p. vii). Wise (2005) organized his narrative storytelling around six major themes that he has identified in the process of becoming a White antiracist. Those themes are belonging, privilege, resistance, collaboration, loss and redemption.

The Envisioned Contribution of My Dissertation

I believe that my dissertation may occupy several currently uninhabited niches within the landscape of literature that I have summarized in this chapter. First, the fact that I will be locating my research squarely within the autoethnographic genre of inquiry and the fact that it will focus specifically on nurturing White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character locates it with very few inquiries of its kind. This means that there is a potential for my inquiry to extend knowledge construction; perhaps contradicting, perhaps reaffirming, perhaps enriching the understanding of opportunities to nurture White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

The autobiographical narrative that I presented on page 6 of this dissertation identified my particular status set and social location with respect to attributes relating to race, ethnicity, age, sex, religion and social class. It may be that a unique contribution of my research will be its exploration of White, privilege-cognizant,

antiracist character development for the particular cadre of people who share these social location attributes. The small body of research that approximates mine offers certain insights, but my own social location provides a very particular, privileged standpoint from which I examine White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character development. Furthermore, the results of my research may be particularly valuable for understanding the dynamics of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character development for people, like me, who believe they have reached an inadequate plateau of White privilege cognizance and antiracist identity formation but who aspire to a more complete embodiment of antiracist character and to more successful resistance to the many avenues of retreat and relapse.

Although, as I indicate elsewhere in this dissertation, my research is unconventional in a number of ways, I will be applying a number of conventional, rigorous methodological approaches for data collection and data analysis that are a part of the body of recognized qualitative methodologies for social science. This distinguishes my work from literary and other genres of inquiry and knowledge construction, including the kind of brief autobiographical narratives identified earlier in this chapter.

As I will outline in the next chapter concerning my research design and methods, my dissertation research not only involved the collection and analysis of data relating to my past, but also field note and journaling data collected contemporaneously over a two month period. This was augmented by routine processes of reflection and ongoing coding and analysis of data as it was collected. This contemporaneous data collection and analysis phase of my research allows me to

learn something about the degree to which such a process of reflection and analysis of the moments of daily life might be a useful way to enhance the nurturance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. This may be a significant stimulus for additional inquiry that will contribute significantly to the existing literature.

Like others writing in the autoethnographic genre, I plan to present my research findings in a way that evokes the engagement of others in my quest, their own quests, and the quests of others. I will employ a presentational modality other than evocative writing alone. An aesthetic and expressive presentational modality holds the promise of new insights into the ways in which research can be a catalyst for the kind of communicative action articulated by Habermas (1984), which I addressed in the second chapter of this dissertation. The aesthetic and expressive presentational modality may provoke the kinds of exchanges that contribute to personal transformation for me and for others, which would not only be a potential contribution to scholarly literature, but would also fulfill one of the purposes for my research and respond to the personal disquietedness to which I referred in the first chapter of this dissertation.

To the extent that my research exposes in more detail or with enhanced clarity the operative dynamics of racism, it holds the potential of merging with that wide body of research, thought and literary expression that forms a crack in the façade of hegemonic ideologies of White supremacy.

Finally, I began this dissertation by characterizing it as an episode in my own, personal ongoing quest for self-understanding and transformation, and for embodiment of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. This is a vacant

niche within the scholarly research literature that no other research or researcher can fill. I believe that my simultaneous engagement as researcher and subject in the quest I call doctoral dissertation holds tremendous promise for my own, personal ongoing transformation and liberation.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present my research design and methodology. I will illuminate the alignment of my design and methodology with the epistemological and theoretical terrain that I described in the Chapter 2 of this dissertation. I will articulate my rationale for the particular design and methods I selected and employed, and I will identify strengths and limitations of my methodology. At the end of this chapter I will also confront questions of ethical concern.

My Embrace of the Constructivist Research Paradigm

As I indicated previously, my autoethnographic research is located outside of the realm of post-positivist conventions, within what Habermas would call the subjective sphere of aesthetic-expressive rationality and what S. Harding would characterize as a feminist epistemology that asserts that all knowledge is “socially situated” (Habermas, 1992; S. Harding, 1991; Sitton, 2003). My claims to the warrant, validity and quality of my research are therefore based on different criteria than those that are used for conventional, post-positivist research.

This distinction represents more than a difference in the types of methodological tools that I have chosen to employ or in the specific criteria for the validity and quality of my research. It represents a profound difference in core beliefs concerning the nature of existence or being (i.e., ontology), the origin and nature of human knowledge (i.e., epistemology), as well as the processes and systems for inquiry (i.e., methodology). In Chapter 1, in a section titled “Voice, Venue and

Vantage,” I presented my beliefs with respect to some of the ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects of inquiry and knowledge construction. My beliefs are congruent with beliefs that are intrinsic to what has come to be known among methodologists as the constructivist paradigm of inquiry.

In their seminal volume on evaluation research methodology, Guba and Lincoln (1989) elucidated this profound distinction in belief systems concerning the nature of what is to be known and how it is to be known. Guba and Lincoln asserted that there are two contrasting paradigms of inquiry. They referred to the first paradigm by a number of names including conventional, scientific, positivist or post-positivist, each name connoting distinct manifestations of the same essential belief system. They contrasted this conventional paradigm of inquiry with one that they, and I, believe is now superseding it. They called this second paradigm the “constructivist paradigm.”

Each paradigm is characterized by differences rooted in ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs. While the conventional paradigm is based on a “realist ontology that asserts that there exists a single reality that is independent of any observer’s interest in it and which operates according to immutable natural laws” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 84), the constructivist paradigm is based on a relativist ontology asserting that:

. . . there exist multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by any natural laws, causal or otherwise. Truth is understood in the constructivist paradigm in terms of the best informed and most sophisticated construction around which consensus can be established. (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 84)

In terms of epistemology, the conventional paradigm asserts that a subject-object dualism must be maintained that keeps an observer distanced from the subject of inquiry. Value considerations can and need to be excluded. The constructivist paradigm, on the other hand, espouses a monistic, subjectivist epistemology in which “an inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in such a way that the findings of an investigation are the literal creation of the inquiry process” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 84). Furthermore, a constructivist insists that all processes of inquiry are imbued with values and biases.

I am referencing Guba and Lincoln’s distinction between these two paradigms of inquiry here because their characterization of the constructivist paradigm is an apt, integrated description of my own core belief system with respect to ontological and epistemological questions concerning research. Furthermore, my embrace of the constructivist paradigm has had profound implications for my methodological choices, which are detailed later in this chapter.

Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) articulation of the constructivist paradigm resonates with Habermas’ assertion that there is a legitimate mode of inquiry in the subjective sphere of aesthetic-expressive rationality. It also echoes his conceptualization of communicative action in a number of ways (Habermas, 1992; Sitton, 2003). First, it promotes a methodology that seeks to empower everyone who has a stake in a research endeavor, and to solicit and understand their constructions. Furthermore, it exposes all stakeholders to the constructions of others, and it seeks consensus on the most informed and sophisticated construction possible. My selection of the evocative use of autoethnography for my research is intended to

satisfy this constructivist tenet by stimulating response and action from those who receive the autoethnographic expression of my research results.

Guba and Lincoln's (1989) critique of positivist inquiry aligns well with the theoretical terrain that I presented in the second chapter of this dissertation. For example, Gramsci's (1971) conceptualization of hegemony is evident in Guba and Lincoln's insistence that extant, dominant epistemology legitimates conventional post-positivist modes of inquiry to the benefit of some people and to the detriment of others. Assumptions that conventional, scientific research is unbiased and value-free continue to go relatively unchallenged despite well-articulated criticisms to the contrary. Guba and Lincoln's analysis also aligns with critical theory and with the feminist epistemology of S. Harding (1991; 1986) and others. All of these perspectives share the axiom that the conventional paradigm serves to maintain the status quo of power relationships while the constructivist paradigm is predisposed to alter those relationships. Guba and Lincoln (1989) wrote:

It is in this sense that the conventional paradigm is labeled by some as an instrument of the status quo, or, worse, as an instrument of repression. Critical theorists such as Henry Giroux (1983), neo-Marxists such as Brian Fay (1987), advocates of participatory inquiry such as Paulo Freire (1970), and, in Europe, Peter Reason and John Rowan (1981), and feminist researchers such as Evelyn Fox Keller (1985) and Sandra Harding (1987), call for a radical revision in the conventional paradigm to take account of different value positions, particularly those of oppressed minorities.

If these critiques are taken seriously, it becomes clear that the conventional mode of inquiry – and indeed any mode of inquiry – can properly be called a political activity. (p. 65)

My Choice of Qualitative Methods

Before I share the specifics of my methodological choices and their rationale, I want to point out that I have made a deliberate decision to employ qualitative methods rather than quantitative methods. This choice is not determined solely by the epistemological tenets of the constructivist paradigm. A constructivist inquiry could also make use of quantitative methodologies, insofar as such methods would serve to inform and enhance the sophistication of constructions around which consensus could coalesce. My choice of qualitative methods is most influenced by the purposes for my research and by my specific research question.

In Chapter 1, I detailed the multiple purposes for my research. In addition to constructing new knowledge in response to my research question, my additional purposes include learning something about the extent to which I and others can nurture, develop and sustain privilege-cognizant, White, antiracist character; exploring the degree to which autoethnographic inquiry can be useful in this regard; inviting and inspiring White people to increase their own efficacy relative to nurturing and sustaining antiracist character formation and praxis; and exploring the use of autoethnography as a method of inquiry, means of expressive presentation, mode of knowledge construction, and catalyst for personal and social transformation. The specific question I posed for my research is “How is White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character nurtured and sustained?”

Direct reference to the qualitative methodology of autoethnography in several of my statements of purpose made it evident that qualitative methodology would be an integral part of the research design. Furthermore, the research purposes and the research question are exploratory in nature and, through their specification of the autoethnographic genre of methodology, are directed toward a rich description of a single case (i.e., my own lived experience), in which I will be both the instrument of measurement and the subject of inquiry. Patton (2002) identifies these same three characteristics (i.e., exploratory or discovery-oriented inquiry; detailed information on a small number of people or cases; and researcher as measurement instrument) as the hallmarks and forté of qualitative methodology (p. 14).

Autoethnography as Research Method and Expressive Presentational Form

The overarching methodological approach for my proposed dissertation is the qualitative approach of autoethnography. Ellis and Bochner (2000), two of the most prominent practitioners and champions of autoethnography as research modality, described it in this way:

Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes

beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms—short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought and language. (p. 739)

Autoethnographic research, with its subjective reflection and aesthetic presentational modalities, is firmly located within the constructivist paradigm of inquiry and is certainly a qualitative methodological genre. Autoethnography has allowed me to explore the formation and nurturance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character through a rigorous and thorough examination of my own life experiences as they are remembered, perceived and documented. The intentionally evocative nature of autoethnographic expression is also well suited to my stated research purposes. It holds the potential for stimulating the engagement of others in responding to the accounts of my own pursuit of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. It also holds promise for inviting and inspiring others to engage in their own, similar pursuits.

Autoethnographic research is also well aligned with the epistemological and theoretical terrain for my research that I referenced in Chapter 2. Habermas (Habermas, 1992; Sitton, 2003) could reasonably be expected to characterize it as a form of dramaturgical action based on aesthetic-expressive rationality and employing

a subjective, expressive form of speech. Critical theorists and feminist epistemologists would further characterize my autoethnographic dissertation as an effort to evoke a domination-free discourse and to constitute knowledge concerning the nurturance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character in the interest of altering existing power relationships for the liberation of myself and others.

Although autoethnography is the overarching methodological approach for my dissertation quest, I used a multiplicity of qualitative methods to gather, analyze and interpret data to inform and constitute the autoethnography. I will next address the types of data that I chose to collect; the sampling strategies I used to determine the sources for the data; and the specific data collection methods that I employed.

Data Types

As an autoethnographic researcher, I am both researcher and primary subject. The purpose of data collection is to assemble information that helps me to describe and explore my own life experiences and the social contexts in which they occurred as they relate to my research question. I chose to gather four types of data. They are guided interview data, archival documents, journaling data and field notes. One reason that I chose multiple types of data was to enhance the confirmability of memories. For example, my own memories and the memories of interview participants were stimulated and/or evaluated through a review of relevant archival documentation, including records, newspaper articles, recordings, photographs and other artifacts.

Sampling

My choices concerning whence to collect data and which data to collect are essentially sampling decisions. Purposeful sampling was the overarching sampling strategy that I used for the selection of sources for all four types of data. My selection of guided interview participants involved stratified purposeful sampling and chain sampling as well. Before providing a specific description of these sampling strategies, I will present a discussion of my decision to establish a temporal sampling frame within which the strategies were implemented.

Temporal Sampling Frame

My life experiences that are relevant to my research question span a 52-year period and they continued to accumulate throughout the time that I engaged in dissertation research. Furthermore, people, events and circumstances that have influenced my life in ways that are relevant to my research question reach well beyond that 52-year period through the time prior to my birth.

I made a decision to examine my relevant life experiences and influences in three distinct periods of time. This decision constitutes a temporal sampling frame. I made this decision for several reasons. First, I perceived that significant, relevant experiences have occurred throughout my life and continue to occur, but that the nature of these experiences varies with temporal, biographical and social contexts. Secondly, I believe that such a temporal sampling frame assists in developing what Patton (2002) called context sensitivity; i.e., placing findings in social, historical and temporal context. Context sensitivity avoids interpretations of data that span time and space. It enables, instead, very careful “comparative case analyses and extrapolating

patterns for possible transferability and adaptation in new settings” (Patton, 2002, p. 41). Since one of the purposes for my autoethnographic inquiry is to invite and inspire other White people to increase their own efficacy relative to nurturing and sustaining antiracist character, I must provide my research findings with sufficient context sensitivity for those people to make quality judgments concerning the transferability of my findings to their own contexts. Temporal framing helps to clarify temporal context and thus helps those who receive my findings to make better judgments about transferability to their own circumstances.

Finally, my decision to examine life experiences and influences in three separate periods of time was made because I believe that the sources and nature of the data that are available in each period require different data collection methods. For example, data concerning my earliest life experiences and influences reside primarily in certain documentation, in the memories of others and, to a lesser degree, in my own memories. This suggests methodology such as review of relevant documents and artifacts, as well as interviews with witnesses to my childhood and adolescence. On the other hand, contemporaneous data concerning the relevant experiences that occur while I am engaged in dissertation research may best be understood through an analysis of journal entries or field notes composed within minutes or hours of those experiences taking place. I will now present a description of each of the three time periods that make up the temporal sampling frame, name the types of data that I collected for each, and provide my rationale for collecting each type of data.

Time period #1. This time period is the period that precedes my conscious awareness of White privilege and my putative commitment to incorporating antiracist

action into my life. It includes influences prior to my birth, all of my childhood, and my life until the beginning of a personal commitment to work against racism while sustaining an awareness of my White privilege. I determined through my research that the ending point for this period on my life was in the latter half of 1990, when I was 33 years old and I was beginning my involvement with a group of people called People Against Racism in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The significance of this time period for the construction of my autoethnography is that it provided information and understanding regarding the agents of socialization that determined the way in which White privilege was constructed and enacted in my early life. It also yielded insight into the influences, experiences and/or processes that contributed to my emergent interest in nurturing a White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. If a major theme in the scholarly literature on Whiteness and White privilege has merit, one of the forces that maintain White privilege is the obliviousness of White people to the privilege they possess by virtue of their Whiteness (McIntosh, 1990). Gathering data on my earliest life experiences and influences helped to inform my autoethnography with respect to how, when, why and to what degree this obliviousness began to dissipate in my life.

The primary type of data I collected for this time period was interview data. I used an interview guide approach described later in this chapter to conduct interviews with people who were close witnesses to this period of my life. I chose interviews for data collection because of their potential to provide cases, accounts, details or interpretations of experiences that I might not recall or otherwise consider. They were selected as a means to direct me to new sources of documentation. Interviews

with some participants provided ideas for probing questions for subsequent interviews conducted for this time period and the one to follow.

A second type of data that I collected for this time period was documentation. Documentation consisted of archival records and physical artifacts including photographs; letters; previously written journals and memoirs; school curricular materials and written work; training materials; calendars; written papers; composed poetry or songs; letters; notes; books read; films watched; recordings made or heard; and published articles. These kinds of documentation served to prompt memories and to generate ideas for probing interview questions. They also provided data that either directly substantiated or challenged experiences as I or others had remembered them.

As a stimulus for my memory of significant people and events to incorporate in my autoethnography for this time period, I visited geographic sites where particular relevant experiences occurred. I documented these visits by taking still photographs and making on-site audio recordings of memories that were roused. The memories that were stimulated in this way were also useful in composing additional probing and clarifying questions for interview participants, and for directing me in the collection of relevant documentation data.

Finally, I constructed two biographical time lines. One juxtaposes key biographical milestones in my life (including seminal influences, experiences, events, episodes or epiphanies) with mezzo-level social contexts such as organizations and communities of which I was a part. The other juxtaposes the same biographical milestones with macro-level, historical developments related to race. These time lines served as a temporal mapping of experiences, which was useful for interviews.

They prompted me to consider and document the social contexts of relevant personal experiences, which is essential for the development of an autoethnographic analysis with context sensitivity, the value of which was alluded to earlier in this chapter.

Time period #2. This time period begins at the end of Time Period #1, i.e., in the latter half of 1990, when I was 33 years old; living in a racially, ethnically, economically and religiously diverse neighborhood in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; working as Executive Director of the nearby Neighborhood Center of the United Methodist Church, Inc.; and increasingly active with a local group of people called People Against Racism. This is the point in my life that best represents the beginning of a personal commitment to work against racism while sustaining an awareness of my White privilege. This time period continues until the formal commencement of my dissertation research, which occurred on July 8, 2008 following my successful defense of my dissertation research proposal and approval for my research by my Dissertation Committee and by the Institutional Review Board of Indiana University of Pennsylvania on July 8, 2008.

The significance of this time period for the construction of my autoethnography is that it offered data concerning my deliberate actions and inactions with respect to my putative efforts to combat racism at a time when I was privilege-cognizant, albeit intermittently. I distinguished this period of my life from others because I initially perceived it to include episodes of personal learning, awakening and change with respect to privilege-cognizance and White, antiracist character development. I also perceived it to include moments of resistance, retrenchment, denial, and rationalization, as well as much inadvertent complicity with racist social

dynamics and social structures. In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I referred to the “source of my disquiet” that led to a quest for personal transformation of which my dissertation research is a part. It is in this time period that this disquietedness began and grew. Data collected from and about this time period enabled a rich description of some of the dynamics that encouraged or frustrated my deliberate, intentional efforts to nurture and sustain White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

Although the sources of data differ, the types of data collected and the rationale for collecting it remain very similar to those for the data for the previous time period. For example, my experiences with the People Against Racism (PAR) group in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania were a critical data set from this time period because of my active involvement with this group and the formative impact the group had on my awakening to White privilege and to the complexities and nature of effective antiracist action and character development. Although the people of PAR were very different sources of data than the people who were intimate witnesses to the earlier period of my life, the primary types of data collected concerning my experiences with PAR were the same, i.e., interview data and documentation. The biographical timelines that I constructed for Time Period #1 were extended through Time Period #2, and they served the same purposes as they did for Time Period #1.

Time period #3. This time period begins at the end of Time Period #2 (i.e., the July 8, 2008 formal commencement of my dissertation research). This time period continues until early October of 2008, which was the end of a two-month period of continuous daily journaling and field note entries that occurred from August 1, 2008 through October 6, 2008.

The significance of this time period for the construction of my autoethnography is that data were collected contemporaneously as relevant experiences occurred, rather than through processes of remembrance and reconstruction, as had been the case for the previous two time periods.

With the exception of documentation, which was collected for all three time periods, the types of data collected for Time Period #3 differed from those of the previous two time periods. I collected three primary types of data for Time Period #3. They were daily journaling entries, field notes and documentation. Using methods that I detail later in this chapter, I composed journal entries, at first on an intermittent basis, and then on a daily basis for a two-month period. Embedded in this journaling were field notes, in which I recorded detailed descriptions of experiences occurring in my life that I identified to be relevant to my research question. In addition to the field notes, journaling included my reflections, thoughts and interpretations of those experiences. Journaling also contained what I termed “Process Notes,” which were commentaries on any methodological decisions that I was making and my rationale for making them; emerging ideas for data coding and analysis; or ideas for collecting documentation or other data concerning a particular experience. My rationale for including a two-month period in which I made routine, daily journal entries and field notes was that the routine served as a prompt for me to consider, on at least a daily basis, the experiences I had had that might be relevant to my research question. This reduced the possibility that experiences, and/or the details needed for constructing rich descriptions of them, were not disregarded or forgotten. Furthermore, collecting this type of data in this way helped to minimize the degree to

which time and subsequent events influenced my observations and recollections. They facilitated my recognition of the way in which such influences change my perceptions over time, an important element of progressive reflexivity, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

For Time Period #3, I also continued to collect available documentation of the types previously indicated for the prior two time periods. Documents were collected in order to enrich and either substantiate or challenge the accounts of experiences that I generated in daily journaling and field notes. For example, if I made journal entries detailing some relevant experience as it occurred and there were letters or email communications relating to that experience, the letters and emails were collected.

Having completed my description of the temporal sampling frame within which sampling strategies were implemented, I turn now to a description of each of the sampling strategies that I employed.

Stratified Purposeful Sampling

I used purposeful sampling throughout all three time periods. I used purposeful sampling to select an initial group of interview participants for time periods #1 and #2; to select salient documentation for all three time periods; and to select those contemporaneous experiences from Time Period #3 for which I would make journal and field note entries. Purposeful sampling is a hallmark of qualitative research in general and autoethnographic research in particular. Patton (2002) wrote:

Perhaps nowhere is the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods better captured than in the different strategies, logics and purposes that distinguish statistical probability sampling from qualitative purposeful

sampling. Qualitative inquiry typically focuses on relatively small samples, even single cases (N = 1) . . . selected purposefully to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth. (p. 46)

Whereas the purpose of probability sampling is to generalize a sample's results to its larger population, the logic and power of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases that will provide in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002). Thus, for my research, an initial group of interview participants was selected based, in large part, on my perception of the likelihood that they would provide rich descriptions of remembered experiences and convey in-depth understandings of the social context and dynamics of the White privilege and racism to which they were witnesses. I now turn to a more detailed description of the additional criteria I used in my research for the purposeful selection of guided interview participants and other sources of data.

The purposeful sampling strategy that I used was, more specifically, stratified purposeful sampling. By incorporating a number of strata within purposeful samples, particularly with respect to the selection of interview participants, I ensured that anticipated variations of perspective and interpretation based on unique standpoints were likely to be captured. Interview participant selection was stratified by race, gender, and social context in order to ensure that each of these critical dimensions was represented within my purposeful sample. So, in addition to selecting interview participants who were witnesses to my life in the different time periods of the temporal sampling frame described above, my selection decisions were influenced by a goal to have a diversity of standpoints based on race, gender and social context. I

purposefully selected 13 initial interview participants. The stratification of the sample is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Stratified, Purposeful Sample of Interview Participants

Interview Participant Number	Primary Time Period Relevance	Racial/Ethnic Identity	Sex	Social Context
1	1	European American / White	M	Family Member/Friend
2	1	European American / White	F	Family Member/Friend
3	1	European American / White	F	Family Member/Friend
4	1	European American / White	M	Family Member/Friend
5	2	African American / Black	F	Interracial Church
6	2	African American / Black	M	Interracial Church
7	2	African American / Black	M	Interracial Church
8	2	African American / Black	M	Urban Community Center
9	2	African American / Black	F	Urban Community Center
10	2	European American / White	F	People Against Racism
11	2	Latina	F	People Against Racism
12	2	European American / White	F	State Civil Rights Enforcement Agency
13	2	African American / Black	M	State Civil Rights Enforcement Agency

Purposeful sampling was also employed for the selection of documentation data for all three time periods, and to select those contemporaneous experiences from Time Period #3 for which I would make journal and field note entries. All purposeful sampling decisions were guided by sensitizing concepts closely related to my

research question. Sensitizing concepts are addressed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Additional criteria for my selection of interview participants were the proximity and duration of prospective participants' observations of my relevant life experiences, as well as my assessment of their potential to describe and provide insight into relevant influences, experiences and/or processes that contributed to my interest in nurturing a White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. Additional criteria for the selection of documentation data included the relevance and salience of the documentation with respect to the purposes for documentation data that were detailed for each time period of the temporal sampling frame described earlier in this chapter. I selected documents and artifacts based on my assessment of their potential to stimulate or validate remembered experiences that relate to my research question or to stimulate or validate the stories or remembrances of people whom I interviewed.

I documented the specific rationale for all purposeful sampling decisions, including the reasons why some potential participants were not selected for interviewing and why some documentation was not collected for inclusion in my data set.

Chain Sampling

Before addressing the sensitizing concepts that I used to guide purposeful sampling decisions, I will point out here that I also used chain sampling for the selection of some interview participants. Patton (2002) listed chain sampling among a number of approaches for enhancing purposeful samples. In the case of chain sampling, the enhancement is provided by "locating information-rich key informants"

(Patton, 2002, p. 237). I used chain sampling in order to allow people other than myself to identify additional interview participants. These were people who were well-informed about both my life experiences and the purposes of my research (i.e., the 13 people whom I had purposefully selected as interview participants).

Chain sampling strengthened the integrity of my sample. It reduced the likelihood that my sample selection decisions excluded potentially divergent perspectives. Preconceptions of what I was likely to learn from my inquiry may have inclined me to select interview participants that would tend to affirm those preconceptions. As I will discuss later in this chapter, I employed an additional strategy of progressive subjectivity to minimize the influence of my own, a priori expectations for my research. Unlike the strategy of progressive subjectivity, however, the use of chain sampling moved decisions from myself to well-informed others, at least with respect to selecting some of the sources for data collection.

I gave each of the 13 interview participants whom I had selected through my own purposeful sampling decisions the opportunity to recommend one person whom she/he believed I could learn the most from in relation to the purposes of my research. I informed each participant of this opportunity as I concluded my interview with her/him. I opted for this timing deliberately and for two reasons. First, I believed that the experience of the interview itself would ensure that the participant was well-informed as to the purposes of my inquiry. Secondly, I believed that the immediacy of having just participated in the interview would increase the likelihood that the participant would recall and consider a larger pool of people from which to make their choice. I emphasized verbally with interview participants that they were free to

choose a person whom they believed might affirm their own observations or perspective, or that they may choose to recommend someone who was likely to have a very different perspective. I also made it clear that the person they recommended did not need to be someone who knew me from the same time period or social context from which they, themselves had known me.

Participants were given the choice of naming a person immediately or contacting me at a later time with their recommendation. Eventually, I mailed each of the 13 interview participants whom I had purposefully selected and interviewed a letter and an “Interview Subject Suggestion Form.” Appendix D is the template for the letter and Appendix E is the form. With this letter and form, I requested that they either make a suggestion or indicate on the form that they did not desire to make a suggestion. I asked them to return the form to me by a specific date that was included on the form. Of the 13 interview participants whom I had purposefully selected and interviewed, 6 made suggestions on a returned form, 3 returned the form indicating that they were declining to make a suggestion, and the remaining 4 did not return the form.

I interviewed all 6 of the people who were suggested as interview participants through this chain sampling technique. Table 2 provides some descriptive data concerning these 6 additional interview participants.

Table 2

Descriptive Data for Chain Sample of Interview Participants

Interview Participant Number	Suggested by Interview Participant Number	Primary Time Period Relevance	Racial/Ethnic Identity	Sex	Social Context
14	2	1	European American / White	F	Family Member/Friend
15	4	2	African American / Black	F	Interracial Church & Urban Community Center
16	6	2	African American / Black	M	Interracial Church & Urban Community Center
17	10	2	European American / White	M	People Against Racism
18	11	2	European American / White	F	People Against Racism
19	12	2	African American / Black	F	State Civil Rights Enforcement Agency

Sensitizing Concepts

Purposeful sampling decisions are, by definition, decisions that are to be based on purposive criteria determined by the researcher. As indicated earlier in this chapter, my initial 13 interview participants were selected based on my belief that they would provide rich descriptions and convey in-depth understandings of dynamics of the White privilege and racism to which they were witnesses. Selection decisions were further influenced by my intent to develop a sample that was stratified

by dimensions of time period relevance, racial/ethnic identity, sex and social context. In addition to these criteria, I made use of sensitizing concepts to guide my decisions for sample selection for all four data types that I collected for the construction of my autoethnography. Sensitizing concepts also informed my construction of interview questions, interview guides, and the conduct of guided interviews.

Blumer was perhaps the earliest proponent of the idea of using sensitizing concepts to direct ethnographic fieldwork, although Blumer's particular emphasis concerned the use of concepts with meanings that were prevalent among the people being studied (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) indicated that the idea of sensitizing concepts has taken on a broader connotation within contemporary qualitative research, now referring to "loosely operationalized notions" that provide initial direction to field research (p. 278). Patton (2002) wrote:

The notion of "sensitizing concepts" reminds us that observers do not enter the field with a completely blank slate. While the inductive nature of qualitative inquiry emphasizes the importance of being open to whatever one can learn, some way of organizing the complexity of experience is virtually a prerequisite for perception itself. (p. 279)

I decided to distill the sensitizing concepts that I would use from the words that comprise my research question. Here is a list of my sensitizing concepts with a brief description of the way in which I allowed each to guide sample selection and other aspects of my inquiry.

1. Nurture and Sustain: These are two distinct yet closely related concepts. Sensitization to nurturance and sustenance involved an interest in

those conditions or circumstances that contribute to the precipitation, encouragement, support or maintenance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character or, conversely, to the stifling, resistance, undermining or destruction of such a character.

2. White: This concept is understood as conceptualized in the scholarly literature on “Whiteness;” i.e., descriptions of the essence of Whiteness as a distinguishing social enactment. The idea of “White” is a social construction and there are dangers inherent in its reification. Sensitization to “White” or “Whiteness” involved attending to what is unique and/or predominant about “White” as a lived experience. It also involved attentiveness to those particular phenomena that may be most apparent from the distinctive standpoint of Whiteness.

3. Privilege-cognizant: This entailed conscious awareness of ways in which I am in a position of relative dominance due to my racialized social identity. It also involved ways in which I use the disproportionate power conferred to me by virtue of that identity to either strengthen or weaken racism and/or to construct or destruct antiracist character. Sensitization to privilege cognizance involved an interest in documenting stimuli and circumstances relating to awakenings to both new and previously recognized forms of White privilege, power and supremacy. In the context of autoethnographic research it is particularly concerned with awareness of the White privilege that I, myself, have exhibited, used and benefited from.

4. Antiracist and Antiracism: Antiracism is understood as action that effectively challenges power relationships and social structures that sustain oppression based on the socially constructed idea of race. An antiracist person exhibits more than a passive awareness of White privilege and White supremacy. An antiracist person exhibits active manifestations of antiracism, in which power relationships and social structures based on racism are effectively challenged and altered through personalized agency. Sensitization to antiracist or antiracism involved documenting instances in which I or others took effective action to challenge racist relationships or social structures. It also involved exploring how and/or why those actions were taken, as well as how one is to discern the level of effectiveness of such action.

5. Character: Character is understood in the Aristotelian sense described by Bailey (1998); i.e., as a continual process rather than a static state. Of the “traitorous character” that she espouses, Bailey (1998) wrote, “Achieving a traitorous standpoint, like cultivating virtue, is a process. When a person has the practical wisdom to know which lines in whitely scripts to change, when to change them, and when to leave them alone, then they can be said to possess the practical wisdom necessary for traitorous character.” (pp. 38-39). Sensitization to character involved interest in data that indicates a continual process of privilege cognizance and antiracist action, interruptions to such a process, and/or the lack of such a process.

In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I reviewed the recently emerging literature relating to biographical narratives of Whiteness and White privilege. Some of these

works presented thematic patterns that emerged from biographical reflection. In *White Like Me*, for example, Wise (2005) organized life story illustrations around the themes of belonging, privilege, resistance, collaboration, loss and redemption. Burke's (2007) doctoral dissertation titled "An Autoethnography of Whiteness" was composed around two affective themes that she called "despair" and "White shame." Kendall (2006) offered specific prescriptions for White people intent on becoming cognizant of White privilege and acting in antiracist ways, including "the importance of doing our personal work," "overcoming barriers to clarity," "becoming an ally and building authentic relationships across race," and "the challenge and necessity of making race our issue" (p. vii). I have encountered additional themes in the course of my own antiracism work with others including "relationship," "community," "clarity" and "spirituality."

While I did not adopt these and other themes and prescriptions as additional sensitizing concepts per se, I did use them as touchstones for the recognition of data relating to the sensitizing concepts listed above.

Data Collection

Having shared my strategies and criteria for selecting the sources for the data that I collected, I turn now to a description of the specific methods I used for data collection and the rationales for my methodological choices. I will present my data collection methodology in four sections, with each section addressing methodology for one of the four types of data that I collected. These four data types are guided interview data, archival documentation, journaling data and field notes.

Guided Interview Data

I considered a number of possible approaches for the collection of interview data, including informal conversational interviewing; standardized, open-ended interviewing; and an interview guide approach. I selected the interview guide method because it ensured that core questions, ideas and issues could be consistently addressed with each person interviewed, while allowing sufficient flexibility for clarifying and probing questions to illuminate and/or explore in more depth any specific issue or account that emerged (Patton, 2002).

I composed two interview guides, one for each of the two time periods of my temporal sampling frame for which interviews were to be conducted. The interview guides for Time Period #1 and Time Period #2 are provided in Appendices A and Appendix B respectively.

After conducting my first several interviews, I noticed and recorded the fact that the interviews tended to quickly depart from the planned structure provided by the interview guides, taking on a more conversational quality. I made a deliberate, documented decision at this time to continue to allow for this pattern of interview interaction and dialogue to emerge, primarily because I believed that it resulted in a higher quality of rapport with interview participants and, thus, a more complete exploration of experiences, ideas and issues that my constructed questions were intended to elicit. Furthermore, my more fluid participation in the interviews and the dialogue that it facilitated were better aligned with the constructivist paradigm and theoretical framing of my research.

In order to maximize the likelihood that participants would feel comfortable and secure, I allowed the interview participants to select the locations for interviews. Of the 19 interview participants, 14 chose to be interviewed in their own homes, 3 selected a private setting at their workplace, and 1 chose a very public setting.

All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the interview participants. This was done in order to facilitate my full engagement in the interview dialogue and my formulation of emergent clarifying and probing questions during the interview, as well as to accurately capture the interview data. For ease of transcription, most original audio recordings were in cassette tape format, although a few were recorded with digital recording equipment. Eventually, all audio recordings were converted to digital format for ease and integrity of storage and to avoid cassette tape damage during frequent review of the audio data in the analysis stage of my research.

Audio recordings were transcribed. Due to the volume of data and the limited time and financial resources available, transcriptions were not subjected to thorough review for verbatim accuracy. I decided this limited transcription accuracy was acceptable because I planned to use transcriptions only for quick reference to interview content. For any final analysis or quotation of interview content I would rely on the audio recordings. For ease of reference during analysis, line numbers were assigned to each line of transcribed interview content for each interview.

Archival Documentation

Earlier in this chapter I described the types of data collected for each of the three time periods of my temporal sampling frame. Archival documentation data and

physical artifacts were collected that related to all three time periods. These data included photographs; letters; previously written journals and memoirs; school curricular materials and written work; training materials; calendars; written papers; composed poetry or songs; letters; notes; books read; films watched; recordings made or heard; and published articles. Sources for these data included my own personal digital and hard copy files; my own collections of childhood and other memorabilia; records provided by interview participants; and internet, library and archive research at multiple locations. Selected documentation was organized into both hard copy and digital filing systems. Hard copy documentation that was most significant, based on the purposeful sampling criteria indicated earlier in this chapter, was electronically scanned into digital format for more secure preservation and more efficient retrieval for analysis.

As a further stimulus for my memory of significant people and events to incorporate in my autoethnography, I visited geographic sites where particular relevant experiences occurred. I documented these visits by taking still digital photographs and making on-site digital audio recordings of memories that were roused. These photographs and recordings became a part of the body of documentation data collected and selected for analysis. Memories that were stimulated in this way were also useful in composing additional probing and clarifying questions for subsequent interviews, and for directing me in the collection of additional, relevant documentation data.

Finally, I used documentation data to construct two biographical timelines. One timeline juxtaposes key biographical milestones in my life (including seminal

influences, experiences, events, episodes or epiphanies) with mezzo-level social contexts such as organizations and communities of which I was a part. The other juxtaposes the same biographical milestones with macro-level, historical developments related to race. These time lines themselves became a part of documentation data. They also served as a temporal mapping of experiences, which was useful in conducting interviews and for data analysis later in my research process. The timelines prompted me to consider and document the social contexts of relevant personal experiences, which is essential for the development of an autoethnographic analysis with context sensitivity, the value of which was alluded to earlier in this chapter.

In addition to the sampling criteria detailed earlier in this chapter, I selected relevant incidents and experiences with which geographic sites are associated based on the frequency and intensity of my recollections of them and references to them in the course of conducting interviews.

Field Note Data

For a two-month period from August 1, 2008 through October 6, 2008 I recorded field notes and journal entries on a daily basis. Most often, these daily entries were in the form of digital voice recordings but, on some occasions, they were documents composed on a laptop computer or written by hand.

In field notes I recorded detailed descriptions of experiences occurring in my life that I identified to be relevant to my research question. I created field notes as soon after relevant experiences occurred as possible. Seldom were field notes recorded more than 48 hours after an experience occurred. Field notes were

distinguished from daily journaling in that they were primarily descriptive, rather than reflective, analytical or interpretive in nature. Field notes did, however, occasionally describe my own feelings and reactions to the extent that these feelings and reactions were perceived to be a part of an experience itself.

Field notes minimized probabilities for inaccurate recording of descriptive detail due to lack of recall. On occasion, however, time constraints for daily field notes and journaling work prevented prompt recording of entries, particularly when a given day's experiences were numerous, significant, and/or extremely rich in detail. On some of these occasions I made hand-written outlines and notes from which I later recorded more detailed descriptions. I always documented the details of any such departure from my daily routine of field note and journal entries.

Journaling Data and Process Notes

While field note data was descriptive data concerning daily, lived experiences that I determined to be relevant to my research, journaling data documented my thoughts, feelings, reflections and interpretations of these experiences. Journaling entries were made concurrently with field note entries.

The fact that I was already beginning to formulate an autoethnography influenced the way in which experiences were lived and interpreted. Although potentially problematic in a post-positivist paradigm of inquiry, this dynamic interaction between research and researched is very much anticipated and in keeping with qualitative, constructivist inquiry. I was aware that my interpretations of the meaning of daily experiences and, indeed, the way lived out those experiences were influenced by the fact that I was engaged in research processes. I made deliberate

efforts to document in journal entries my perceptions of the way in which my ongoing research may have influenced perceptions, experiences and interpretations.

Journal entries were also used to capture what I termed “process notes.” Process notes were commentaries on any methodological decisions that I was making and my rationale for making them; emerging ideas for data coding and analysis; or ideas for collecting documentation or other data concerning a particular experience.

My rationale for including a two-month period in which I made routine, daily field notes and journal entries was that the nature of the routine served as a prompt for me to consider, on at least a daily basis, the experiences I had had that might be relevant to my research question. This reduced the possibility that experiences, and/or the details needed for constructing rich descriptions of them, were not disregarded or forgotten. Furthermore, collecting this type of data in this way helped to minimize the degree to which time and subsequent events influenced my observations, recollections or subsequent reflections. They facilitated my recognition of the way in which such influences change my perceptions over time, an important element of progressive reflexivity, which will be discussed later in this chapter. I also made use of daily journaling to note any issues relating to the kinds of ethical concerns that I describe at the end of this chapter.

The Accumulated Data Set

My research generated an extensive body of data, which is summarized in Table 3 below. The 19 interviews I conducted yielded a total of over 28 hours of audio recordings that were transcribed to nearly 900 double-spaced pages. The

duration of interviews ranged from approximately 46 minutes to nearly 2 ½ hours, with an average (mean) of about 1 ½ hours for each interview.

From an initial review of many archival documents and artifacts, and based on the sampling criteria detailed earlier in this chapter, I selected, organized and filed hundreds of documents. After a second iteration of review and purposeful sampling selection, I digitally scanned and stored those documents that were most relevant to my research and that would comprise my final data sample.

Almost all of the daily field notes, journaling and process notes that I generated were captured through a total of over 13 hours of digital audio recordings. In order to facilitate analysis, I summarized and paraphrased the contents of these recordings in a 220-page, single-spaced reference document.

Table 3

Summary of Types and Quantity of Data in the Accumulated Data Set

Type of Data	Quantity
<u>Interview Recordings</u>	19 (28+ Hours)
<u>Photographs</u>	
Archival – Childhood, Family, Friends	38
Taken During Research – Visits to Sites of Significance	55
<u>Newspaper Articles</u>	14
<u>Childhood Schoolwork, Artwork, Writing</u>	21
<u>Audio Recordings</u>	

Music	13
Recorded Commentary During Visits to Sites of Significance	23
Other	6
<u>Video Recordings</u>	3
<u>U. S. Census Data Documentation</u>	24
<u>Images of Artifacts</u> (e.g., Childhood Books, Record Album Covers, Event Booklets)	21
<u>People Against Racism Group Archival Documents</u>	39
<u>Other Documentation and Scanned Images</u>	44
<u>Journal Entries</u> (08/01/2008-10/06/2008)	
Written	3
Audio Recordings	45 (13+ Hours)

Data Analysis

Analysis Concurrent with Data Collection

Qualitative methodology based in a constructivist paradigm that seeks to build understandings of phenomena through an inductive, rather than a deductive analytical process can exploit opportunities to begin to make sense of data as that data is collected. I tried to exploit these opportunities in my research.

In his discussion of qualitative research data analysis, Patton (2002) observed that, in contrast to research designs involving surveys or experimental designs, “the

fluid and emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry makes the distinction between data gathering and data analysis far less absolute,” (p. 436). Patton (2002) argued that an attempt to bifurcate data collection from analysis “ignores the emergent nature of qualitative designs and the power of field-based analytical insights,” (p. 436). In order to avoid formulating premature conclusions I incorporated methodological techniques (e.g., progressive reflexivity) into my research design that would assist in this regard. I did not, however, attempt to avoid all analysis of data during data collection. Doing so would have forfeited opportunities to enrich descriptions and understandings of complex phenomena. Concerning this Patton (2002) wrote:

. . . repressing analytical insights may mean losing them forever, for there’s no guarantee they’ll return. And repressing in-the-field insights removes the opportunity to deepen data collection that would test the authenticity of those insights while still in the field and fails to acknowledge the confirmatory possibilities of the closing stages of fieldwork. (p. 437)

Patton further argued that field-based analysis can drive “an in-the-field form of emergent, purposeful sampling” and that:

Such overlapping of data collection and analysis improves both the quality of data collected and the quality of the analysis so long as the fieldworker takes care not to allow these initial interpretations to overly confine analytical possibilities. (Patton, 2002, p. 437)

I remained open to what appeared to be initial emergent patterns and themes as data collection was underway. Often this openness led to additional probing questions in an interview or deeper review of particular archival documentation that

enriched and verified descriptions of experiences as well as descriptions of the broader social contexts in which they occurred. I believe that allowing for a concurrent data collection and analysis processes also enhanced the overall inductive power of my inquiry and better served the exploratory purposes inherent in my specific research question.

Undoubtedly, engaging in analytical work while data collection is still underway influenced subsequent data collection. In the positivist paradigm of inquiry such an influence would be viewed as an unacceptable compromising of objectivity, control and measurement reliability. Within the constructivist paradigm that I embrace, however, it is welcomed as a resource for directing continuing inquiry and for constructing a more sophisticated, credible and veracious autoethnographic expression.

Charmaz (2000), in an article concerning grounded theory strategies for data analysis, presented an approach by which codes are created and data is coded as it is collected. Charmaz (2000) wrote:

We should interact with our data and pose questions to them while coding them. Coding helps us to gain a new perspective on our material and to focus further data collection, and may lead us in unforeseen directions. Unlike quantitative research that requires data to fit into preconceived standardized codes, the researcher's interpretations of data shape his or her emergent codes (p. 515)

Charmaz' (2000) proposed a technique of "memo writing" for the elaboration of the researcher's decision-making during this emergent coding process. She described memo writing as:

. . . the intermediate step between coding and the first draft of the completed analysis. This step helps to spark our thinking and encourages us to look at our data and codes in new ways. It can help us to define leads for collecting data—both for further initial coding and later theoretical sampling. Through memo writing, we elaborate processes, assumptions and actions that are subsumed under our codes; we expand upon the processes they identify or suggest. Thus our codes take on substance as well as a structure for sorting data. (Charmaz, 2000, p. 517)

My research did not involve the grounded theory approach that Charmaz delineates, but rather an inductive data analysis process that I will more fully describe below. Nonetheless, I made some limited use of Charmaz' techniques for emergent coding and memo writing to guide the initial iterations of analysis I conducted concurrently with data collection.

Due to constraints in the resource of time, I could not fully implement Patton's suggestion that a researcher transcribe most or all interview, field note and journal entry recordings. Patton (2002) made this suggestion as a way to ensure that the researcher remains sufficiently immersed in the data to generate ideas for coding and analysis and that the source of those ideas is within the data itself. Although I did review, collect and archive documentation data, and I did summarize and paraphrase

all field note, journaling and process note audio recordings into a comprehensive written document, I did not do the transcribing of interview recordings myself.

Finally, I did adopt Charmaz' (2000) and Patton's (2002) prescription to systematically record information concerning the emergent coding and analysis decisions that I made as data was collected. In addition to generating a separate file of memos, coding decisions and initial perceptions of patterns within the data were captured in the process notes that I incorporated into daily journaling entries. In this way many assumptions, thought processes and reasons for preliminary coding and analysis decisions were memorialized. These records were critical sources for the dependability and confirmability audits that I conducted later, and which are described later in this chapter.

As a result of my decision to commence analysis while data collection was still underway, when data collection was concluded I had two initial sources to draw on for the organization of my final inductive analysis process. Patton (2002) identified these sources as:

- (1) The questions that were generated during the conceptual and design phases of the study, prior to fieldwork, and (2) analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during data collection. (p. 437)

Inductive Content Analysis Subsequent to Data Collection

I formally ended the data collection process at the conclusion of Time Period #3 as described above. This occurred in early October of 2008, which was the end of the two-month period of continuous, daily field note and journal entries. This decision to discontinue the data collection activities of my research was informed, in

part, by the analysis that I had begun to conduct concurrently with data collection and, in part, based on my determination that a sufficient amount and quality of data had been collected with which to fashion my autoethnography.

The process of analysis that I then performed is best characterized as inductive analysis. The intent of inductive analysis is to discover patterns, themes and categories. This is in contrast to deductive analysis, in which data are analyzed according to some a priori framework (Patton, 2002, p. 453).

In particular, I used the strategy of content analysis. According to Patton, content analysis generally refers to “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” and usually refers in particular to the analysis of text rather than observation-based field notes (Patton, 2002, p. 453). I departed from this specific convention, as I used content analysis techniques described below to analyze the content of field notes, journal entries, interview data and documents.

Specific Protocol for Inductive Analysis

My first step in what were, eventually, multiple iterations of inductive analytical process, was to develop a manageable coding or categorization system. My earliest iterations of analysis, both during and immediately after data collection used color coding and alpha character symbols to identify initial themes and patterns perceived in interview transcripts. I carefully examined all of the process notes that I had recorded within my daily journaling and in other documents regarding the analysis decisions that I made during data collection, in light of my new ability to immerse myself in the totality of the data now collected.

In order to begin to develop possibilities for coding and categorization, I immersed myself in my data on several separate occasions over a period of almost two years. On each occasion I listened to all audio recordings of interviews, field notes, journaling and process notes. I reviewed, sorted and resorted my collected archival documentation, interview transcripts, and summaries and paraphrasing of field note and journal entries, making margin notes and/or attaching self-adhesive notes or color-coded flags with my ideas for grouping the data. I found that several complete, immersive encounters with the totality of the data were necessary before I felt confident that the data was categorized in one or more meaningful ways (Patton, 2002, p.463).

As I made decisions on the grouping of data, I periodically and intentionally attended to what Guba (1978) has characterized as dynamics of convergence and divergence (as cited in Patton, 2002, pp. 465-466). Convergence refers to the ways in which data fit together based on recurring regularities and similarities. Convergent data will exhibit internal homogeneity (i.e., data within a category coalescing in a meaningful way) and external heterogeneity (i.e., categories of data exhibit differences among the categories that are stark and clear) (as cited in Patton, 2002, pp. 465). On several occasions I needed to respond to apparent deficiencies in my categorization systems. I attended to Guba's point that "The existence of a large number of unassignable or overlapping data items is good evidence of some basic fault in the category system" (as cited in Patton, 2002, p, 465) and, on a number of occasions, I sought new categories that would capture a larger overall proportion of the data.

After generating three similar but different schemes for categorizing data, I chose one that I preferred based on Patton's (2002) suggested criteria of "utility, salience, credibility, uniqueness, heuristic value and feasibility" (p. 466).

The Primacy of Descriptive Data and Experiences as They Are Lived and Observed

One of the challenges that I faced in the final iterations of my inductive analysis was the fact that themes and subthemes that I was identifying were reducing a tremendous amount of rich, meaningful data into what seemed to be rather sterile conceptual constructs. Patton (2002) warned of such an end result of inductive analytical processes, that:

Concepts are never a substitute for direct experience with the descriptive data. What people actually say and the descriptions of events observed remain the essence of qualitative inquiry. The analytical process is meant to organize and elucidate telling the story of the data. (p. 457)

This point is all the more salient given my choice of autoethnography as the overarching methodology and genre for expressing the results of my inquiry. Although ensuring a rigorous implementation of my data collection and analysis methods was imperative to establishing the credibility and veracity of my results, it was critical to recast broad patterns and conceptualizations in terms that rely heavily on my descriptive data concerning the way in which the experiences of my life unfolded and acquired their meaning. Later in this chapter, I discuss my limited use of peer debriefers to consult with me about what I believed were the emerging results of my analysis. Consultations with one of these peer debriefers late in my analysis

process prompted yet another return to the data to ensure that I was discerning the most poignant meanings and that I was telling the story of my findings through the data itself.

Deductive Confirmation of Inductive Analysis Result

Although I will rely primarily on inductive analysis, deductive processes were utilized to some degree as well. After patterns, themes, and categories and meanings were identified through inductive analysis, I used a deductive analytical process to test the authenticity of the inductive content analysis. Patton (2002) pointed out that such deductive analysis is a frequently necessary part of the final, confirmatory stage of qualitative analysis. One important aspect of this final deductive process was the consideration of divergence that I discussed above, including attention to data that were not accounted for within the categories or patterns that I originally constructed (Patton, 2002, p. 454).

Finally, at the conclusion of each iteration of analysis, I perceived a need for additional data collection. Of this possibility Patton (2002) wrote:

Even then, once analysis and writing are under way, fieldwork may not be over. On occasion, gaps or ambiguities found during analysis cry out for more data collection, so, where possible, interviewees may be recontacted to clarify or deepen responses, or new observations are made to enrich descriptions. (p. 437)

I did not often return to interview participants for additional data or for clarification, but some initial analysis results did prompt me to seek archival documentation to

either confirm, challenge or enrich the level of detail in the data concerning an emergent theme.

Quality and Rigor of Inquiry

In more conventional dissertation research grounded in the post-positivist paradigm, attention would be given to maximizing the quality and rigor of the research by incorporating certain strategic elements within the research design. These elements would be specifically designed to assess and maximize validity (both internal and external); to measure and maximize reliability of measurement instruments and processes; to assess and maximize control of potentially confounding variables and researcher biases; and to generally substantiate claims to objectivity.

As I articulated early in this chapter, the constructivist paradigm in which my proposed research is situated relies on very different ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions than those upon which the post-positivist paradigm is based. As a result, specific criteria for quality and rigor of research differ from those of the post-positivist paradigm. Nor are perceptions as to potential threats to validity and to the overall credibility of the research shared.

Habermas could be expected to locate constructivist, autoethnographic research within what he calls the subjective sphere of aesthetic-expressive rationality. He would argue that such research be evaluated with quite different criteria than that required for the cognitive-instrumental rationality of post-positivist inquiry. Rather than criteria of internal or external validity as conceived within post-positivist conventions, criteria such as “normative rightness and truthfulness, or sincerity of expression” would apply (Sitton, 2003, pp. 46-47). For Habermas, the degree of

realization of these standards would be judged primarily by those to whom my findings are communicated, rather than by the researcher.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) offered an approach for evaluating the rigor and quality of constructivist research. The criteria, strategies and techniques that they propose are congruent with both the subjective sphere that Habermas describes and the constructivist paradigm that I discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Trustworthiness Criteria and Strategies

I employed the four major criteria that Guba and Lincoln (1989) referred to as trustworthiness criteria. These criteria are alternately referred to as parallel or foundational criteria because they are intended to be parallel or analogous to the four predominant quality criteria used in the conventional, post-positivist paradigm; i.e., internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. The analogous trustworthiness criteria within the constructivist paradigm are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability respectively.

Credibility

The criterion that Guba and Lincoln (1989) called credibility is analogous to internal validity in the post-positivist paradigm. There are six specific techniques that Guba and Lincoln prescribe for assessing and strengthening credibility. I used all six of these techniques in my research process.

The first of the six credibility techniques is prolonged engagement. I was substantially and intensely engaged in my inquiry activities during three separate periods over the course of approximately two years period. The first of these periods was the six-month period beginning in mid-August of 2008 during which I conducted

interviews. From August 1, 2008 through October 6, 2008 I gathered daily field note and journaling data as well. During several summer months of 2009, I immersed myself in the interview data, repeatedly listening to audio recordings of the interviews, reviewing written transcripts, and beginning processes of inductive analysis. During these same summer months I obtained, organized and reviewed an extensive array of archival documentation, and I personally composed an extensive written summary and paraphrasing of all audio recordings of field note and journaling data. The intensity of my involvement with the data declined for a period of approximately nine months, and I returned to a second iteration of intensive and prolonged engagement for three months in the Summer of 2010, concluding a number of additional iterations of analysis that were informed by a series of consultations with peer debriefers. This kind of prolonged engagement was intended to reduce the effects of “misinformation, distortion, or presented ‘fronts’ . . .” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). This included, in my case of autoethnography, avoiding a documented tendency that I exhibited for “fronting” myself; i.e., presenting myself in disingenuous ways and/or failing to examine unflattering aspects of my life that related to my research question.

A second credibility technique that I employed was persistent observation. This technique was most important during the two-month period of daily field notes and journaling on emergent life experiences for the third time period frame of my research. At times it was difficult to maintain the daily discipline of composing detailed written descriptions of experiences and accounts of my reflections and interpretations of them, but my persistence over an intensive two-month period

ensured the capturing of a significant level of detail. Persistent observation, according to Guba and Lincoln, is intended to enable a researcher to identify elements most relevant to a research question and to focus on them in detail. It is meant to “add depth to the scope which prolonged engagement affords” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237).

Peer debriefing is a third technique for strengthening credibility. I employed this technique in a modified and limited way. Peer debriefing, in its most complete application, is a process in which a researcher routinely calls upon a number of peers who have relatively little direct, vested interest in the research per se to ask searching questions and engage in extensive discussions concerning tentative analyses, interpretations and findings. The purpose of this debriefing process is to test the researcher’s decision-making processes and to elucidate the researchers own values, assumptions, posture and position within the research process, including ethical concerns.

Early in my research process I consulted briefly with three people whom I identified as peer debriefers. One debriefer was a recent graduate of the doctoral program in which I am enrolled. He had conducted qualitative, case study research and he was able to help me to refine my research design and expectations in order to avoid an overly ambitious research agenda. Interviews were underway at this point, and he asked clarifying questions about some of the decisions I was beginning to make and document concerning slight modifications to my interview techniques and approach. Two other debriefers who I consulted early in the research process were published scholars who were well acquainted with the scholarly literature on

Whiteness and White identity. They helped me to anticipate potential themes and to sharpen my attentiveness to the sensitizing concepts that would guide my ongoing decision-making concerning the relevancy of data to my research question.

Members of my dissertation committee served a limited peer debriefing function, although they had a more direct stake in my research. My dissertation committee chairperson, in particular, was my primary debriefing resource with respect to questioning tentative analyses, interpretations and findings. She challenged me to extend and refine initial analyses in order to further distill essential themes and their meanings and to elucidate my own values, assumptions, posture and position within the research process.

Finally, I also found it quite helpful to use discussions with peer debriefers for a kind of cathartic reduction of psychological stressors I experienced as I immersed myself in fieldwork and intensive self-reflection.

I made some limited use of Guba's and Lincoln's (1989) credibility technique called negative case analysis. Guba and Lincoln (1989) have characterized negative case analysis as analogous to tests of statistical significance in quantitative research. Just as statistical significance at the .000 level is never achieved, no one finds every case and datum in qualitative research to fit into available analytical categories. When a considerable proportion of all cases and data do fit into appropriate categories, negative case analysis helps to provide confidence that I have tried and rejected alternative possibilities for analysis and/or interpretation of findings. As I indicated above in reference to addressing divergence within systems of inductive analysis categorization, negative case analysis ensures that data or cases that do not fit

into my analytical rubrics are carefully examined. Peer debriefing processes also strengthened negative case analysis, as I was challenged to consider alternative analyses and alternative interpretations of research findings.

Another technique for edifying the credibility of qualitative research is called member checks. Given constructivists' dedication to dialectical, hermeneutic processes that consider multiple constructions of reality, Guba and Lincoln (1989) indicated that member checks are a critical strategy for ensuring research credibility. Member checks invite various stakeholders to critique the knowledge construction that is emerging through research and offer their own, alternative constructions for consideration. My autoethnographic research, by virtue of its single case focus in which I am both the researcher and the researched, limits the extent to which member checks can be utilized in the way in which Guba and Lincoln do within the context of evaluation research, for which distinct stakeholder groups are often clearly identifiable. Nonetheless, my final autoethnographic expression of research findings will be intended to evoke response from those to whom it is directed. I plan to find a variety of ways to represent my research results to various audiences in order to enhance the opportunities for people with a variety of standpoints to engage with me in interpreting the meaning of my autoethnography.

Within my research process itself, however, member checks were used in a more limited way to verify the accuracy of descriptive data collected and, to some extent, to verify or challenge my emergent interpretations of data. In presenting interview excerpts as illustrations of research results, for example, I returned to some interview participants to confirm my interpretations of the comments I was planning

to quote. In creative writings I composed as representations of findings, I consulted with people upon whose contributions the writings were based in order to provide them with an opportunity to react to or even to revise my characterizations of their contributions.

A final credibility technique is called progressive subjectivity. Progressive subjectivity is a process through which researchers monitor their own developing constructions as the research process moves forward in time. Of progressive subjectivity, Guba and Lincoln (1989) wrote: “The inquirer’s construction cannot be given privilege over that of anyone else (except insofar as he or she may be able to introduce a wider range of information and a higher level of sophistication than may any other single respondent). The technique of progressive subjectivism is designed to provide a check on the degree of privilege (p. 238).”

At the commencement of my formal research and at routine intervals in daily journaling, field notes and peer debriefing sessions throughout my research process I implemented progressive reflexivity by memorializing my own a priori thoughts and expectations as to what I expected to observe or conclude. When I found that my own preconceptions and initial constructions were changing very little, I interpreted this as an indicator that I may not be adequately attending to the possibilities of alternative constructions. This, in turn, prompted considerations of alternative constructions through additional structured reflection; additional peer debriefing or member checks; seeking additional disconfirming evidence; and enhancing negative case analysis. All of my progressive subjectivity activity was recorded. When, at the conclusion of my research, I assessed the quality of my implementation of reflexive

subjectivity techniques, I found that it fell far short of intended effectiveness. To the extent that I was able to implement reflexive subjectivity, however, it did contribute to its intended purpose of providing a systematic and recorded challenge to my own thinking processes in a way that further strengthened the warrant to my claims of research credibility.

My implementation of these six strategies was intended to strengthen credibility, the first of Guba and Lincoln's (1989) four trustworthiness criteria. The three remaining criteria that I addressed were transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Transferability

Transferability in constructivist inquiry parallels the post-positivist criterion of external validity or generalizability. Transferability has to do with the degree to which the context of the researcher's constructed reality is similar to the contexts of people who receive the researcher's description of that reality. If recipients of my dissertation perceive that the reality I construct and convey is very similar to her/his own, she/he will attribute a higher level of transferability of my constructed reality to her/his own context. In the post-positivist paradigm, the burden of proof for claimed generalizability is on the researcher and is based on the degree to which ideal conditions for randomization and sampling are met. The burden of proof for claimed transferability in the constructivist paradigm, however, is on the recipient of the reality described by the researcher.

To strengthen the potential for transferability of my research, I used the technique of what has come to be referred to within qualitative methodology as "thick

description.” Although there is not a consensus on what constitutes thick description, its general purpose is to:

. . . provide as complete a data base as is humanly possible in order to facilitate transferability judgments on the part of others who may wish to apply the study to their own situations (or situations in which they have an interest). (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242)

Although presentation within dissertation severely limits the extent of detail that can be provided for narrative accounts of experiences, I made efforts to use archival documentation, interview data, and field note data to provide the thickest description possible when I offered illustrations for research themes. I conducted additional archival research, obtained descriptive demographic data, and assembled relevant seminal events in historical timelines so that I could also provide the mezzo- and marco-social and historical contexts for the life experiences I shared. This provision of social and historical context is not only the hallmark of autoethnographic representation, but it also strengthens the potential for transferability judgments by the recipients of my research results. This was particularly important for my dissertation research because one of my stated research purposes is to invite and inspire White people to increase their own efficacy relative to nurturing and sustaining antiracist character formation and praxis. If my research is to contribute in this way, transferability of findings is critical.

Dependability

Dependability parallels the post-positivist criterion of reliability. The central concern for both dependability and reliability is the stability of data over time.

Within the post-positivist paradigm, strong stability is an indicator of, among other things, reliable measurement instruments and consistent implementation of measurement protocols, both of which are viewed as evidence of strong reliability and high quality research. Conversely, methodological instability is considered evidence of a weak research design and/or poor implementation.

Methodological instability within the constructivist paradigm, however, can have a very positive connotation. Guba and Lincoln (1989) wrote:

But methodological changes and shifts in constructions are expected products of an emergent design dedicated to increasingly sophisticated constructions. Far from being threats to dependability, such changes and shifts are hallmarks of a maturing—and successful—inquiry. But such changes and shifts need to be both tracked and trackable (publicly inspectable), so that outside reviewers ... can explore the process, judge the decisions that were made, and understand what salient factors in the context led ... to the decisions and interpretations made. (p. 242)

The technique that Guba and Lincoln proposed for documenting the logic of process and methods decisions is the dependability audit, based on the metaphor of a fiscal audit. As I indicated above, I used what I called process notes, embedded in my daily journaling and recorded in other documents, to memorialize rationales for decisions I made on purposeful sampling, emergent coding schemes, and ongoing analysis. These records were the basis for two dependability audits that I conducted during the course of my research. I conducted one audit relatively early in my research process so that I could benefit from what I learned from it and make

appropriate adjustments. The primary adjustment that I made following this initial audit was an improvement in the organization of my documentation of methodological decisions and my rationales for them. I conducted the second dependability audit at the conclusion of my research as a means of evaluating the overall level of dependability that was evident in my research as a whole.

These two dependability audits were helpful in evaluating the integrity of my research process and the quality of my system for tracking the logic of my ongoing decision-making. The second and final assessment of dependability was also helpful in evaluating the value of autoethnography as a method of inquiry, means of expressive presentation, mode of knowledge construction, and catalyst for personal and social transformation, which was one of the stated purposes for my research.

Confirmability

The final trustworthiness criterion offered by Guba and Lincoln (1989) is confirmability, which is analogous to the post-positivist criterion of objectivity:

Like objectivity, confirmability is concerned with assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the [researcher] . . . and are not simply figments of the [researcher's] . . . imagination. . . . This means that data (constructions, assertions, facts, and so on) can be tracked to their sources and that the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit. . . . (p. 243)

The technique for assessing and strengthening confirmability, like that for dependability, is based on an auditing model. Unlike a dependability audit, for which

the object of evaluation is the process of research and the systems for tracking the logic and rational for process-related decisions, the confirmability audit examines the data themselves, measuring the degree to which data can be traced to their sources and the degree to which interpretation and analysis processes are documented.

I used several strategies for enhancing confirmability of collected data. Archival documents were organized and filed in such a way that they could be easily found and reviewed during confirmability audits. Documentation that was most relied on to illustrate research findings in the text of this dissertation was memorialized in digital form as well, through photographic and scanning processes. Recordings of interviews were converted from audiotape to digital format to facilitate searching the recordings to confirm transcript text. No such process was necessary for most field note and journaling data, as it had been originally recorded in digital format. Finally, any quotation of interview, field note or journaling data that was used in the text of the dissertation was documented with an accompanying notation as to the exact location of the data in both the digital recording and the written transcript.

On one occasion, in the midst of the data analysis phase of my research, I conducted a confirmability audit by selecting a sizable sample of the data I was then planning to rely on for illustration of research results. I then assessed the degree to which the original sources of the selected data could be identified and verified. With very few exceptions, I found documentation of the precise source locations for data to be accurate and I found written quotations to be very accurate, verbatim representations of recorded data. I repeated this confirmability audit process at the

conclusion of my research as a part of my final review, verification and editing of the text of the completed dissertation.

Substantive Significance

I found Patton's (2002) notion of substantive significance to be a useful concept and an additional guide that I could use to evaluate the overall rigor and quality of my research. As Patton presents the idea of substantive significance, it has some similarities to the trustworthiness criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1989) that I reviewed above. Patton (2002) wrote about substantive significance:

In lieu of statistical significance, qualitative findings are judged by their substantive significance. The analyst makes an argument for substantive significance in presenting findings and conclusions, but readers and users of the analysis will make their own value judgments about significance. (p. 467)

At the conclusion of each of my multiple iterations of analysis and each of my multiple iterations of interpreting the meanings of specific results of those analyses, I used Patton's conceptualization of substantive significance to stimulate my considerations of the significance of my research as a whole, and to help me to make decisions about whether or not there was a need for additional analysis or interpretation of particular results. Furthermore, at the conclusion of my dissertation, I explicitly invite readers, receivers and users of my research to engage in dialogue with me concerning my research results and my interpretations of them. By doing so, I am inviting others to participate in evaluating the substantive significance of my research.

I prompted and structured my consideration of substantive significance by responding to a series of four questions that Patton indicates are central to such an assessment. Those questions are:

1. How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of the findings? (Triangulation, for example, can be used in determining the strength of evidence in support of a finding.)
2. To what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied (Verstehen)?
3. To what extent are the findings consistent with other knowledge? (A finding supported by and supportive of other work has confirmatory significance. A finding that breaks new ground has discovery or innovative significance.)
4. To what extent are the findings useful for some intended purpose (e.g., contributing to theory, informing policy, summative or formative evaluation, or problem solving in action research)? (Patton, 2002, p. 467)

Validity Concerns Unique to Autoethnography

One of the most common criticisms of autoethnography as a research genre stems from its use of self as the only or primary data source for inquiry.

Autoethnographer Sparkes (2002) has, in a number of published writings, carefully considered the frequent accusations that autoethnography is self-indulgent and narcissistic, and concludes:

In light of the issues I have raised, I believe that the universal charge of self-indulgence so often leveled against autoethnography (and narratives of self), is based largely on a misunderstanding of the genre in terms of what it is, what

it does, and how it works in a multiplicity of contexts. Autoethnographies can encourage acts of witnessing, empathy, and connection that extend beyond the self of the author and thereby contribute to sociological understanding in ways that, among others, are self-knowing, self-respectful, self-sacrificing, and self-luminous. (p. 222)

Beyond the accusation of self-indulgence, however, is a growing critique that the most common methods for qualitative inquiry, including the “foundational” or “parallel” criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1989) that I employed, may not be appropriate for autoethnography (Holt, 2003). The parallel criteria, as Guba and Lincoln (1989) themselves acknowledged, are questionable, in part, because they have their genesis in assumptions of the post-positivist paradigm and,

. . . while adjustments have been made for the different assumptions of the [constructivist] . . . paradigm, there remains a feeling of constraint, a feeling of continuing to play “in the friendly confines” of the opposition’s home court. (p. 245)

I have chosen to make use of autoethnography and of Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) parallel, “trustworthiness” criteria despite these criticisms for several reasons. First, my conceptualization of autoethnographic research does not place exclusive or even primary emphasis on self as data source. By selecting a variety of data types and sources, I avoided an over reliance of self as data source. Purposeful sampling of interview participants was extended through chain sampling, in part, to avoid my having exclusive purposeful sampling discretion. Secondly, I employed a number of strategies that prompted critical analysis of my research decisions, findings and

interpretations. Progressive subjectivity and peer debriefing, for example, reduced the potential for unexamined self-indulgence. Thirdly, I supplemented the use of parallel, trustworthiness criteria with Patton's (2002) conception of substantive significance. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the invitation I proffer to readers at the conclusion of my dissertation is a part of my planned, ongoing assessment of the significance of my research by others. This will be a mechanism to ensure that recipients of my research have opportunity to offer their own constructions or reconstructions, thus limiting the potential that my research will be only subject to my own evaluation.

Richardson (2000) offered a list of five criteria for evaluating ethnographic writing, which includes autoethnography. Although there are some similarities between Richardson's criteria and both the parallel, trustworthiness criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Patton's conceptualization of substantive significance, Richardson's criteria relate even more directly to what is unique to quality issues related to autoethnographic writing, particularly within the sphere of the social sciences. I have therefore also used Richardson's five criteria to inform and evaluate my research and, particularly, my final interpretations of findings. Here are Richardson's five criteria with an illustration of the way each was used to guide the assessments I made of my findings, my interpretations of those findings, and my final conclusions:

1. Substantive contribution: Substantive contribution relates to the degree to which a piece contributes to understanding of social life and the degree to which the writer demonstrates a social scientific perspective that has informed

the text. Illustration: Similar to my assessment of substantive significance, I considered the degree to which my work contributes new understandings of the nature of Whiteness, new manifestations of White privilege, or new constructions of White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character in comparison to existing constructions.

2. Aesthetic merit: Aesthetic merit does not represent a reduction in standards, as some positivist critics argue, but the enhanced expectation that an autoethnographic piece succeed aesthetically. Aesthetic merit is judged by the degree to which creative analytic processes evoke interpretive response and the degree to which the text is “artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring” (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). Illustration: I incorporated in peer debriefing the solicitation of comments concerning the aesthetic quality of my writing.
3. Reflexivity: Reflexivity concerns the degree to which an author offers adequate self-awareness and self-exposure to the reader to enable the reader to make judgments about the writer’s perspectives and conclusions. It concerns the degree to which the text and the processes that lead to its composition are critically self-conscious. Illustration: I used strategies such as negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity, thick description and peer debriefing to ensure an adequate level of critical self-consciousness. In particular, the fact that I describe in detail a finding from my research relating to disingenuous image-building indicates that some significant honest self-exposure is evident in my writing. Supplementary data that I gathered to ensure thick description

of the social and historical contexts of my life experiences enhanced the reader's ability to make judgments concerning my perspectives and conclusions.

4. **Impact:** Impact involves the degree to which the text evokes an emotional or intellectual response from the reader. Text with high impact provokes questions, stimulates further inquiry and moves people to action. **Illustration:** To a limited extent, I was able to assess impact through peer debriefings. Impact will not be fully understood, however, until I am able to assess the reactions to my written dissertation and to any other autoethnographic representation of my findings that I choose to compose and disseminate in the future. As I make clear at the conclusion of my dissertation, I am inviting and encouraging the consumers of my research to respond and to engage in continuing dialogue concerning my research findings. As this does or does not take place over time, I will be able to better assess the impact of my research.
5. **Expression of reality:** Expression of reality relates to the degree to which the text embodies an authentic sense of lived experience and the degree to which it is perceived to be a true, "credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the 'real'" (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). **Illustration:** Again, my assessment of the degree to which my autoethnographic representations are authentic expressions of reality has been partially informed through peer debriefings and, in the future, will be gained from reactions by those who receive my research findings and interpretations.

Strategies for Data Integrity and Storage

The integrity of collected data was ensured, primarily, through the credibility strategies listed above. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation, for example, helped to minimize misinformation, distortion, omission, neglect or insufficient descriptive detail. In addition to the myriad strategies indicated above, I used a number of specific tactics to ensure the integrity and safe storage of data. All interviews were audio recorded, and stored securely in original audiotape and subsequent digital formats. Audio recording the interviews allowed for note-taking during interviews, which assisted me in capturing ideas for collecting substantiating data, and freed my attention for the formulation of emergent, probing and clarifying questions (Patton, 2002, p. 383). All audio recordings of interviews, field notes and journaling entries were transcribed or summarized in text documents.

I used triangulation techniques to the extent it was reasonably feasible to do so. I sought multiple sources of data relating to the same experience or account in order to verify the accuracy of details and/or to facilitate the presentation of multiple perceptions and constructions.

Finally, all data that was collected in digital format or converted to digital format was stored securely on the hard drive of a password protected laptop computer. These data were copied to a portable hard drive, CD/DVD discs and flash drives that were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet. Data collected in other media formats, e.g., audiotape, hard-copy documents, etc. were stored securely in the same locked filing cabinet.

Aesthetic Expression of Research Findings

Autoethnographic research has employed the conventional scholarly, third-person presentational form, but also first-person narrative, poetic, visual art, literary and dramatic forms. For dissertation, I made a decision to represent my research findings primarily in a modified conventional form, relying on a narrative account of my research findings and my interpretations of those findings. The modification was my use of the first person voice throughout this narrative.

I decided, however, to provide an alternative expression of some of my research results, in the form of a number of creative writing pieces that were included in the dissertation as appendixes. The most extensive of these appears in Appendix H, and it is titled “The Crownsville Conversation.” I provided these alternative representations of research findings to deepen the credibility of my findings and to provide illustrations of the alternative forms with which autoethnographies are often presented.

One of the purposes for my dissertation quest that I articulated in the first chapter of this dissertation was to use the dissertation as an invitation and inspiration for others to actively engage with me in my quest for nurturing White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character and to embark on their own quest as well. Furthermore, judgments of the quality, rigor and trustworthiness of my constructivist research will be within the purview of the recipients of the research and its findings. For these reasons, I plan to continue, after the completion of this dissertation, to develop additional modes and means for conveying research results, perhaps through drama and/or film. Presentation of findings must be fashioned to stimulate

domination-free discourse for a collective construction of knowledge in the interest of a collective emancipation.

Ethical Concerns

Conventional Ethical Research Protocols

My research conforms to conventional ethical standards for research with human participants, including all of the requirements of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, which is the regulatory body of Indiana University of Pennsylvania responsible for the review of research that involves human participants.

Although in my autoethnographic inquiry I was both researcher and primary subject, there were other human beings from whom data were collected to inform my autoethnography. Written, informed consent (See Appendix C) was obtained from all interview respondents. I required the only person who assisted with transcription of audio data to sign a written confidentiality agreement. All appropriate precautions were taken and documented to ensure that confidentiality was maintained to the greatest extent possible. Pledges of absolute confidentiality or anonymity, however, were not given because, due to the nature of autoethnography, it is extremely difficult to fully protect most informants' identities.

Representation of findings in the written dissertation and/or in any other presentation of research results is and will continue to be fashioned in such a way as to obfuscate the identity of the persons involved. Some field note and journaling accounts involve people from whom written, informed consent was not obtained. In order to avoid disclosing the identities of such persons in any presentations of these

accounts, I create fictional or even composite, fictional characters that represent the essence of their contributions to my findings.

Deeper Ethical Concerns and Strategies to Address Them

Some of the ethical dilemmas that I have identified through literature review and through processes of reflection include the danger of reifying Whiteness and my particular manifestation of it; considering whether my use of the storytelling narratives of autoethnography constitutes a cultural appropriation of the primary means of expression that has been used by marginalized and oppressed people; bringing Whiteness to the center of attention; and recasting the White experience as one of victimization, albeit a self-inflicted victimization. I used journaling entries and peer debriefing to keep such ethical questions at the forefront of my consciousness throughout the research process.

I believe that the most profound ethical concerns relating to my dissertation research spring from what I referred to in the first chapter of this dissertation as my vantage or standpoint. By this I mean more than my unique biographical context. I mean my particular social location within social structures of power and privilege. As a 53-year-old, White, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian, Protestant man with United States citizenship working within higher educational institutions both as a vocation and as a doctoral candidate, I am firmly positioned within systems of conferred dominance and privilege relative to many others in the United States. This represents more than a vantage point in terms of the place from which my perspective is determined; it is literally a point of vantage, i.e., a position of superiority that provides advantage.

The first major ethical concern that derives from this position of power is one identified by Ellis (1997) as the potential for autoethnography to be “a strategy that permits intellectual elites to control the stories that get told...and silences all voices not in the position of power to tell theirs—members of other ethnic groups, poor and uneducated people, for example,” (as quoted in Burke, 2007, p. 46).

The hermeneutic, dialectical processes of constructivist research ensure at least some opportunity for marginalized voices and constructions other than those of the researcher to be considered, included and legitimated. The autoethnographic genre, however, limits some of this benefit by relating all relevant data to the examination of the researcher as the subject of inquiry.

Ironically, a central purpose for my research and a core sensitizing concept is privilege cognizance. The literature on Whiteness emphasizes the propensity for White people to be oblivious to many forms of White privilege (McIntosh, 1990). Given this propensity, it has been important, not only on ethical grounds but to the integrity of my inquiry itself, that I solicit the assistance of others to confirm or challenge my perceptions of my own privilege. Peer debriefers have, for example, pointed out manifestations of privilege that I did not see or acknowledge.

A second area of ethical concern involves the degree to which my enactment of research on racism may, itself, constitute a manifestation of racism. This unintentional and antithetical potential could be realized in a number of ways. Racism as I have conceptualized it is, in part, evidenced by the use of power to direct resources to the benefit of those who are privileged by virtue of the construct of race. My research has involved the deployment of many kinds of research-related resources

in ways that will continue to benefit me in my pursuit of a completed dissertation, a doctoral degree, and the personal transformation that I seek. It has involved my use of time, emotional energy, and effort of others – all resources that those others could have used to more directly and immediately benefit themselves. Furthermore, my research findings now have the potential to influence the subsequent distribution of significant resources. People who are influenced by my findings may redirect their efforts and their life courses to new pursuits and in new ways. I must acknowledge and communicate the potential for my research to have inadvertent and counter-productive consequences for an agenda of liberation from racism. I plan to mitigate this danger by including these possibilities in my deliberations for the future ways in which findings are presented. Furthermore, some of the strategies that I outlined above for evaluating the quality and rigor of my research will be used, in part, to illuminate and respond to this particular ethical conundrum.

Another key strategy for minimizing the potential for harm due to my privileged vantage point is to intentionally, systematically and continually examine ethical concerns. My commitment to this ongoing examination began in the earliest stages of forming a proposal for my dissertation research. I presented a paper titled “White Guy Plans Autoethnographic Dissertation Relating to Collaborative Research on White, Anti-racist Identity: Can You Say, Ethical Labyrinth?” at the Second International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (D. Welliver, 2006). After the completion of my dissertation, I plan to convene an “accountability conference,” in which I will gather peer debriefers, interview participants, and others with an interest to respond to my research and, especially, point out ways in which my privileged

position may have resulted in compromises to ethical principles through my research process.

Another strategy I used to prompt deeper ethical considerations was to review the existing scholarly literature in this realm. There is a growing body of literature on ethical issues relating to research conducted by White researchers who are researching race or racial identity (Gallagher, 2000; Helms, 1993; Twine & Warren, 2000). Twine (2000) argued that the kind of ethical dilemmas that are likely to arise through research like mine may have significant theoretical implications. Twine writes that considerations of these ethical issues

. . . advance theoretical debates in qualitative methods scholarship about particular dilemmas racial ideologies and racialized fields generate for researchers. These dilemmas have theoretical implications for the way knowledge about racial and social inequality is produced. (Twine, 2000, pp. 26-27)

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Two essential findings emerged from the inductive data analysis processes outlined in the previous chapter. These two findings are supported by a series of themes and subthemes that emerged from that analysis as well.

The first essential finding is that there may be particularly virulent and insidious obstacles to realizing White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character for people who, like me, are conferred with multiple dimensions of privilege, e.g., White privilege; male privilege; upper-middle social class privilege; etc. The second essential finding is that the quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character takes meaningful form only as a part of a larger quest. It must be a part of a holistic, humanistic or spiritual quest to transcend self-interest through cultivating both desire and action for tangible expressions of transformational love, social justice, and full human liberation.

These two findings are supported by five strong themes that emerged from inductive analysis. They are:

1. Socialized Values and My Socialization Into Them
2. Image-Building
3. Relationships
4. Control
5. The Unavoidable Spiritual Dimension and My Attempts to Avoid It

Each of these five themes, in turn, was substantiated by a constellation of subthemes.

In this chapter on research results, I will present the five themes. I will include in my explication of each theme the various subthemes supporting it. I will also provide

data and characterizations of data that are particularly illustrative of the themes and subthemes. I believe that, at the conclusion of this presentation of themes and subthemes, the two essential findings from my research will be supported and evident.

Theme #1: Socialized Values and My Socialization into Them

Early Socialization into Values of Selfless Caring and Love

Autoethnographic inquiry revealed that I have experienced what appear to be strong, early socialization influences rooted in values that might incline me to be and to act in caring and loving ways, including antiracist ways. The primary agents for this socialization were my parents, who clearly modeled active commitment to these values. Other agents of socialization that reinforced these values were my religious community and the media that my parents exposed me to, particularly in the form of books and audio recordings. Values of selfless caring and love were, to a great degree, contradictory to the values of the communities and broader cultural context within which my early life was lived.

In separate interviews, each of my parents expressed a belief that my early exposure to certain values rooted in the teachings of Christianity were likely very influential in the later development of my interest in race and racism. They cited the “Sunday School” curriculum at church, as well as the many references to and demonstrations of ideals of Christian love at home.

My father, Allyn, is a retired United Methodist pastor, himself the son of a Methodist pastor. Allyn is theologically rooted in the Christian gospel scriptures and in the “works of piety and works of mercy” of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism and strident opponent of the African slave trade (General Board of Global

Ministries of The United Methodist Church, 2011). My father was devoted to the leadership work of the local church and served his parishioners with the utmost professional integrity and personal concern.

My mother, Ruth, is the child of parents who were deeply committed to the peace and justice faith traditions of the Church of the Brethren (See Appendix F, “A Less-than-Pleasant, Defining Moment”). My mother’s life orientation is very much guided by the Christian scriptures. She lives the principles of her faith through daily prayer, reading of scripture and, most apparent to me as a child, through her active involvement with people who were among the most powerless and ostracized in the communities in which we lived. The socialization influence of witnessing the lives of my parents was undoubtedly the predominant force that predisposed me to a quest for antiracist character formation.

Jesus stories. I attended church weekly as a young child. Although I had a limited capacity to fully understand, I listened to Sunday School lessons. I heard my father’s sermons, which consistently centered on what a Methodist pastor would characterize as the transforming love of God through Jesus Christ. Among other things, I was being instructed that Jesus took active steps to encounter and share love and healing with the most powerless, ostracized and despised people.

I heard Jesus stories at home as well. In my interview with her, my mother recalled a bedtime story book, *Little Visits with God: Devotions for Families with Grade School Children* (Jahsmann & Simon, 1957), which she believed was influential for me and my siblings. As part of my research I acquired and examined a copy of this book. The cover looked familiar to me, but I had no specific recall of its

contents. If not memorable, and perhaps not even significantly influential, I did find the book's contents to be illustrative of the kinds of values my parents constantly tried to reinforce for me and my siblings. A scan of the table of contents revealed a series of very brief Christian devotional stories with titles such as, "The Way to Love Everyone;" "The Fun of Being Kind;" "Do You Love All People?;" "How to Walk in Love;" "How to Treat Others;" "Try to Get Along with Others;" and "What Love Does" (Jahsmann & Simon, 1957, pp. ix - xi).

There was, therefore, a mutually reinforced socialization impact of both parent modeling and religious teachings on my inclination to be active in response to my concerns about racism later in life. My mother spoke of this dual impact of family and religious teachings in our interview.

I don't know if, if some folks, you know, just have that feeling for anybody, it doesn't matter if you're Black or White, if you're, if you're hurting and your skin is, you know, or if people are mistreating you, you just can't stand it! So, either you cry or wail or say, "Stop it," or, or do someth- You act. You have to act -- if you're able. And, ah, so I'm sure that that kind of thing just, you know, if it's in a family, it's in a family. So, then you add to that the teachings of Christ...

Early Messages about Race

Positive messages. Prior to my dissertation research, my memories of early childhood messages I was receiving that were specifically about race were predominantly positive. Most of the few encounters with People of Color in the communities in which I lived were recalled as having been positive or neutral. Some

of these encounters are referenced later in this chapter. There are, at least, two exceptions. Early experiences linking People of Color with needs for emergency assistance and a visit to a migrant workers' camp undoubtedly linked race to poverty in a stigmatizing way in my childhood mind. In both of these cases, however, I witnessed my parents treating People of Color with the same levels of respect that they exhibited with any other person.

Interviews and examination of archival documents provided more illustrations of positive influences relating to human differences of color, race and ethnicity. They also, however, provided evidence that I was receiving, accepting and internalizing negative associations with People of Color, and that I was being socialized into a paradigm of White superiority.

Among the additional positive influences was a song we sang in church and at home:

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Red and Yellow, Black and White,
They are precious in His sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Concerning those lyrics, my mother said in her interview, "And, I think if you grow up with that, it's very hard to imagine a time when you didn't feel that all children are loved, don't ya think?" My father remembered church school curricular materials that often featured illustrations of People of Color, and even informational literature that specifically addressed issues relating to race relations.

At home I was being exposed to comedy record albums by African American comedian Bill Cosby, and Jewish comedic lyricist Allan Sherman. I was singing along with a 78-rpm record titled *Spirituals*, featuring “The Harmonaires Male Quartet” (n.d.). Caught up in the energy, harmonization and vocal agility of the singers, I do not believe I attributed any special meaning to their African American identity, nor did I understand the cultural significance of the music. To this day I can approach a sibling and begin reciting, verbatim, a Cosby comedy monologue or singing the Harmonaires’ rendition of “Deep River,” “Sweet Kentucky Babe,” or “Runnin’ Wild,” and my brother or sister will join right in.

Negative messages. Interviews and examination of archival documents also provided evidence of negative messaging I was receiving that related to People of Color. In the *Little Visits with God* (Jahsmann & Simon, 1957) book I referred to above, I found a devotional message that likely provided subliminal messages about White superiority. Here are a few lines from the devotional titled, “How to Get Clean Inside:”

When we are naughty, we sin. Sin is like a black spot on a clean white sheet. God wants His children to be clean on the inside. And we want to be clean and white for God on the inside. (p. 11)

The illustrations in the book, as with all childhood books, were agents of socialization as well. In *Little Visits with God*, every person depicted appeared to be White, middle class and part of a nuclear family. Over the title to a devotional, “Your Wonderful Body,” is an illustration of a White boy at a sink (Jahsmann & Simon, 1957, p. 101). What message would I have received if the illustration over “Your

Wonderful Body” would have been an African American or Asian-American boy? Illustrations also reflected and affirmed the gender socialization patterns of the times. There is a picture of a boy on a bike appearing very independent and active (p. 126). There is a picture of a girl at her mother’s elbow, watching her clean dishes (p. 108).

There is other, more overt evidence that I was receiving and accepting very negative messages about People of Color as a young child. At the candy store I asked the clerk for “nigger babies,” a favorite licorice penny candy. When choosing who would be “it” for a game of tag or “Hide and Seek,” I remember chanting:

Eenee, meenee, mainee, mo,
Catch a nigger by the toe;
If he hollers let him go,
Eenee, Meenee. Mainee, Mo.

And you are it!

I recall adapting the second line of this verse to “Catch a monkey by the toe” on occasions when I was unsure as to whether the word “nigger” would offend anyone. Daniel Boone was a heroic character that I could relate to as a young child. After all, his name was Daniel and my name was Daniel. I had Katharine Wilkie’s (1964) book, *Daniel Boone: Taming the Wilds*, and I enjoyed the *Daniel Boone* television series that aired from 1964 – 1970 when I was between the ages of 7 and 13. Daniel Boone’s rugged independence, “taming of the frontier,” clever problem-solving skill, and use of violence to resolve conflicts were all socializing me into race, gender and the core values of United States society. Here is an excerpt from Matson’s (1964) lyrics for the opening theme song for the television series:

From the coonskin cap on the top of ol' Dan
To the heel of his rawhide shoe;
The rippin'est, roarin'est, fightin'est man
The frontier ever knew!
Daniel Boone was a man,
Yes, a big man!
And he fought for America
To make all Americans free!
What a Boone! What a doer!
What a dream come-er-true-er was he!

Daniel Boone's Native American friend, Mingo, and the other Native Americans depicted in the television series were evidently not among "all Americans" for whose freedom Daniel was fighting.

At some point in my young life I heard and began repeating a revised version of the Daniel Boone television series theme song. Singing this revised version with gusto was a sure way of getting laughs from my peers. The revised lyrics were:

Daniel Boone was a man,
Yes a big man,
But the bear was bigger,
So he ran like a nigger,
Through the woods.

As a very young child I loved the story and book titled *Little Black Sambo* (Bannerman, 1961), which opened:

“Once upon a time there was a small boy who was called Little Black Sambo. His mother was called Black Mumbo and his father was called Black Jumbo. They all lived together in a little house in the great green jungle.” (p. 2)

I have now researched the book’s origins. The setting of the book’s story is in India. In the edition I read as a child, Little Black Sambo and his parents have a light, copper skin tone. In my cherished “Baby Book,” an illustrated photo album that my mother assembled with love for each of her children, there is an illustration of Little Black Sambo in which Sambo appears as a classic, exaggerated caricature of an African or African American boy, i.e., with very dark, black skin; thin, boney legs; and extremely thick and bright red lips.

Some additional media I was exposed to at an early age that provided messages about People of Color included a recording of Gilbert and Sullivan’s “The Mikado;” a recording of the story and songs from the 1967 Walt Disney animated film of Kipling’s story, *The Jungle Book*, as well as the film itself; and the children’s book titled *The Five Chinese Brothers* (Bishop, 1965). The song “Three Little Maids from School” provided ideas about young Japanese women; the primary character in “The Jungle Book” film, Mowgli, had an African-sounding name and had been born in a “man village” in a jungle, yet his skin color was very similar to mine; and the title characters of *The Five Chinese Brothers* are introduced in the first sentence of the story as brothers who “all look exactly alike” (p. 1) and, in the book’s illustrations, they did.

New Agents of Socialization and Resocialization

As with every young child, the relative influence of various agents of socialization on me began to change as I moved beyond the primary group of family to peer groups and institutional settings such as schools.

My mother, Ruth, tells a story about me when I was in Kindergarten in a public elementary school (See Appendix G, “Dear Little Daniel”). The story is an account of my socialization into gender, and it defines a moment at which my mother realized that she was beginning to relinquish her role as my significant other in the socialization process. My mother went home after a meeting with the Kindergarten teacher and shed a few tears. “Dear little Daniel,” whom she was nurturing to be loving and involved with the care of others, was now also going to be shaped by teachers, peers, educational systems and the cultural values of a small, rural town in Central Pennsylvania in the 1960s.

I attended the local public schools in the small Pennsylvania towns in which I lived. As I grew older, the influence of pedagogy and curriculum in these schools began to crystalize a view of People of Color as “others.” For a writing assignment in what I have determined was likely the 5th Grade, I wrote, “The problems the settlers had at Jamestown were Indians, swampy soil, unpureafide [sic] water, food, homesickness.” By framing Indians as a “problem” I was learning to view history through an ethnocentric, White supremacy lens.

I remember enjoying the mastery of information presented to me in classes I took in the 9th and 10th grades called World Cultures I and World Cultures II. I was particularly committed to performing well in these classes by memorizing historical

details, geography, and information about the religions, art, and histories of people in China, India, Japan, Africa and Southeast Asia. In one respect, this may have been an influence that contributed to my later interests in relationships and experiences with people across racial and cultural boundaries. In other respects, it was providing the foundation of an ideology of innate human differences and White supremacy.

Among my earliest notes for my 9th Grade World Cultures I class in 1971 was a list under the heading “Early Man,” which began, “1. Zinganthropes – Oldest of all early men found; means East African Man; . . . ; man with least brain capacity.” The list continues for other forms of “early man” discovered, with most of the list items numbered 2 through 7 indicating only “Located in Europe.” Then there is item number 8:

8. Cro-magnon [sic] – Located in Europe; only direct ancestor [sic] to modern man; more intelligent [sic] than any other early men, responsible for cave paintings in Europe; invented the bow and arrow; thought of to have destroyed Neandertal [sic] man

I later received a perfect grade on a quiz on this unit plus 10 “Bonus Points,” some of which were for my accurate recollection of the description of Zinjanthropus, which I provided in this way: “Oldest man found; discovered by Dr. Leakey; early man with the least brain capacity found in East Africa; (the name Zinjanthropus means East African Man).” As I review these documents now I see, first, the patriarchal use of the term “man” to refer to all human beings. Secondly, I see how I was learning to associate the “Early Man” of Africa with the “lowest brain capacity,”

and the “Early Man” of Europe with intelligence, artistic proficiency, inventiveness, and use of lethal violence.

Shortly after this listing of “Early Man,” the definition of race appears in my notes. I was being taught, here, that categories of race were perhaps the most important way to begin addressing human group differentiation. This is an irony for a course on culture. The definition of race in my notes reads, “A group of human beings showing a certain set of physical [sic] traits which are passed on biologically from generation to generation.” The next information to appear in my notes was under the heading “Human Races and their Characteristics.”

Mongoloid – Yellow, thin, skin, epicanthic [sic] fold over the eye, straight [sic] hair, long nose

Negroid – Continuous curly hair, dark, thick, skin, flat nose, turned up lips

Caucasoid – White, medium width, skin, usually wavy hair, (may vary)

The eyes of all races are placed in the eye socket the same way.

Caucasoid – greatest variety

Race should not be confused with religion, nation, language.

As I examine these notes today, I see the implication that, because the Caucasoid racial category contains qualifiers (e.g., “usually” and “may vary”) and is indicated as the category with the “greatest variety,” the other two categories could be presumed to have relatively less variety within them, which would certainly be an affirmation of a young person’s notion that people who are not White are much more homogeneous and “all look alike.”

Although not fully abandoning the values into which I had been socialized at an early age, as I grew older I was soon more fully embracing the dominant cultural values of United States society and those of the small town communities in which I lived. Ideal values of independence, individualism, competition and self-determination were lived out and strongly reinforced in the educational system, on the playgrounds and basketball courts, through the heroic characters of television shows, and in board games like “Monopoly.”

My socialization into statuses of privilege was well underway. Despite relatively modest income for people in their generation with college degrees, my parents had sufficient financial resources to attend to their seven children’s medical, dental, educational, nutritional, housing and social needs. There were summer family vacations to a remote cabin in Ontario, Canada. There was an unquestioned expectation that all seven children would attend college, and they did. My parents and, by extension, my entire family enjoyed the high level of prestige and influence associated with my father’s occupation as a United Methodist pastor.

In addition to these benefits associated with social class I was, of course, also internalizing expectations of privilege associated with being White, male, heterosexual and Christian. If some of the most familiar literature on White privilege is correct, the most significant element of privilege may have been my profound lack of awareness of the privileges that had been conferred upon me, and their implications for me and others (McIntosh, 1990). Within the social context of my immediate family, I continued to be exposed to values such as altruistic love, deep respect for human dignity and social justice that were counter to those of the

dominant societal and community culture around me. Socialization into multiple statuses of privilege, however, clearly competed with the influence of the values into which my parents had socialized me.

Racially Isolated Home Communities, Yet Encounters Across the Color Line

My socialization into the normativeness of Whiteness was, in part, a product of the communities in which I lived as a young person. In my childhood and teenage years I lived in the small towns in Central Pennsylvania to which a United Methodist Bishop appointed my father to serve. Very few People of Color lived in these communities. In the town of Lock Haven, where I lived from 1961 until 1967 at the ages of 4- through 10-years-old, there were only 18 “non-White” people recorded in the 1960 United States (U. S.) Census (U. S. Census Bureau, 1960). The percentage of the town’s population that was White was 99.85. In the town of Milton, where I lived the next 6 years of my life, White people made up 98.8 percent of the population in 1960. In the town of Roaring Spring, where I lived for two years before graduating from high school, 100% of the population of 2,811 in 1970 was White (U. S. Census Bureau, 1970). Roaring Spring was situated in a county of 135,356 people, of whom 99.1 percent were White (U. S. Census Bureau, 1970).

Despite this racial isolation, I encountered some People of Color in my childhood. In Lock Haven, Mr. William Raymond sang in the church choir. When Mr. Raymond died in 1966, an article with his photograph appeared at the top of the front page of the local newspaper. Mr. Raymond had been born in Lock Haven in 1892. The article began, “The powerful baritone voice and one of Lock Haven’s most interesting residents, William “Bill” Raymond, was silenced by cancer today....

Mr. Raymond, one of the city's few Negro citizens, had been in failing health for some time." ("William Raymond," 1966, p. 1). After describing a singing and theater career in New York City, including performing at the Metropolitan Opera House, the article continued,

The popular singer, who gave freely of his talents to those who appreciated classical music, enjoyed his life in Lock Haven where, he once said, he never was exposed to the shame, abuse and humiliation he experienced as a Negro in other sectors where he had resided.

He was disturbed by the racial troubles of the nation, particularly in the south, and felt that education was the answer to these problems. ("William Raymond," 1966, p. 1)

In Milton, my father took me to the residential camps in the tomato fields outside of the town, where he and other pastors had organized a clothing bank and other services for migrant agricultural workers, the majority of whom were People of Color. There were a few African American students in my school in Milton, and some were my teammates on the basketball team. I remember, and my parents confirmed in interviews, that People of Color were among those who periodically found their way to our home, the church parsonage, to ask for emergency assistance. I believe I remember one such African American man spending the night at our home and talking with me at breakfast the following day. My father also had a colleague and friend in Milton, Rev. Ernest Jones, who was an African American pastor.

In Roaring Spring, where 100% of the residents participating in the 1970 U. S. Census were White (U. S. Census Bureau, 1970), I had Vietnamese refugees living in

my home for two years. Members of a Vietnamese refugee family that our church was sponsoring in town were regular visitors in our home as well. My father had Person of Color as a close friend and colleague in the area. This friend was, like my father, a United Methodist pastor. This pastor and his wife had a dark-skinned young man living with them for a year who was the only Black student in the local high school. Although I do not recall meeting this young man, my sister accepted his invitation to accompany him to the high school prom.

Social and Historical Context

Understanding the degree to which the communities I lived in were racially isolated and understanding the types of social encounters I nonetheless had with People of Color provides a more complete sense of the socialization I experienced relative to race. To fully understand the impact of socialization on the early formation of my racialized identity and my early understanding of race, I also examined the broader social and historical context in which my socialization occurred.

As indicated in the “Methods” chapter of this dissertation, I assembled two timelines to track the social/historical context within which my socialization occurred. One timeline documents the “macro” context of world and nation, and the other documents the “mezzo” context of the communities in which I lived.

I was born on the cusp of significant social change in the United States (U.S.) with respect to what would have been called at that time “race relations.” The landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* U. S. Supreme Court case was decided in 1954, three years before my birth. At the time of my birth, that decision was slowly

finding some implementation in various forms of public school desegregation plans. Some of the earliest laws forbidding racial discrimination in employment were being enacted. I was seven years old when Dr. King made his “I Have a Dream” speech, and eight years old when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted. At the age of 10, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that statutes then banning interracial marriage in 16 states were unconstitutional. One month before my eleventh birthday, shots rang out in a Memphis sky and Dr. King was dead.

I learned about the mezzo-level social/historical context of the communities in which my family lived primarily from the interviews I conducted with my parents. I also carried out some limited archival research guided by what my parents reported. Although the depth of this research was limited, I was able to find very helpful indicators of the social context of these communities relating to the ways in which my parents’ values, attitudes, beliefs and actions contrasted with those of the people around us. I’ll provide several illustrations here.

On the editorial page of the local Lock Haven newspaper on April 20, 1967, the headline for the “Letters to the Editor” section reads, “Citizen Hails Dam Success; Mr. Welliver Endorses King Stand on Vietnam” (A. Welliver, 1967). My father had written in reaction to the editorial of an Associated Press news analyst, which had been printed in the paper three days earlier (Marlow, 1967). That editorial had heavily criticized a recent speech by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the speech, Dr. King called for massive action to “awaken the conscience of the nation” and presented a five-point, unilateral proposal for the United States to end war in Vietnam (“King Calls,” 1967). My father wrote, “In essence, he [King] wants his country to

take upon itself the calculated risk of trading some of its prestige for the moral power than [sic] can make a peace initiative possible” (Welliver, 1967, p.2). After summarizing King’s five-point proposal, my father wrote: “this is the initiative that Dr. King is seeking. It is better that it be taken now rather than after further tragic waste and exhaustion of moral power” (p. 2). In my interview with my father he said about his decision to write this letter to the editor,

So, I realized that there were a disproportionate number of Black soldiers in Vietnam. And, I was myself opposed to the war, so I took issue and wrote a letter to the editor of the paper. And, when I did that, I felt it was risky business because people in my congregation would read that, and they would read it through the lens of their attitudes on race and war. And, I knew that, you know, I’d have a division of opinion. But, I was very happily surprised that two or three people came to me with positive reinforcing, and I had no negative thing expressed to me, although I’m sure there were people who didn’t understand, and so on.

Perhaps, then, the degree to which my parents’ values were counter to those of our church congregation and community in Lock Haven was somewhat ambiguous. According to the accounts provided by my parents, there was no such ambiguity in the next town in which we lived. In Milton, Pennsylvania the arrival of our family was news on the front page of the June 30, 1967 edition of *The Milton Standard* newspaper (“Rev. Welliver,” 1967). Under a head shot photograph of my father is an article titled, “Rev. Welliver To Preach First Sermon Sunday,” in which my father’s biography was summarized, my mother was introduced, and the names of the children

in our family were listed. The only other front page photograph, and the larger of the two, depicted a White, helmeted police officer with a nightstick and with his arm locked around an African American man's neck. The caption read:

RIOTING CONTINUES – A helmeted policeman collars a Negro during second straight day of trouble in Buffalo's east side ghetto. Sniper fire wounded a Negro woman and two Negro boys. More than 1,000 Negro youngsters staged sporadic bottle and rock throwing raids on some 400 policemen in the predominantly Negro section of the northern city. ("Rioting Continues," 1967, p. 1)

Elsewhere on the front page was the related article titled, "Third Night of Violence Rocks Buffalo Ghetto," which included an account by a wounded, "15-year-old Negro boy" who "told police he was shot in the back while sitting in a doorstep...." and that "the shot was fired by two white men in a passing station wagon" ("Third Night," 1967, p. 1). Another section of the article read, "Police received other reports of white troublemakers moving into the area wracked by three nights of shooting, looting and burning. In one instance, two White men drove up to a stop sign. One pointed a shotgun from the car window and said "get the ----- niggers." (p. 1).

This article, I believe, is indicative of both the macro and mezzo social and historical context. This was certainly national news, but its prominent and graphic presence on the front page of a local newspaper in a small town in rural Pennsylvania with a population that was 98.8 percent White is also an indicator of the interests of that small community (U. S. Census Bureau, 1960). I noticed several curious elements in the content of the article. First, the word "Negro" was used at times as an

adjective and at times as a noun. The words “Negro” and “Negroes” were always capitalized. The word “White,” however, was used only as an adjective and was never capitalized. Second, the community in which the violence took place was referred to as a “Negro ghetto.” Third, the article related accounts of sniper fire and “White troublemakers” with shotguns, and it indicated that there were at least 7 people treated for “buckshot wounds,” yet the large, front-page photograph was of a White police officer subduing a young African American man. Fourth, the paper deferred from printing the expletive that accompanied the word “niggers” as shouted by the White man who pointed a shotgun from a car window, yet the word “niggers” itself was printed.

Nine months after my family’s arrival in Milton and after this front page coverage of the rioting in Buffalo, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis. My father, Allyn, said in our interview:

. . . when Martin Luther King was assassinated, I took the – and you might even remember this – I took the step of hanging a black ribbon on the top of the American flag in the church. And, there were some people who did vocally object to that. They didn’t, they didn’t see how that was something that should be a national time of mourning in any way. . . . So, we had a rather conservative congregation there, and I can understand that. But I was somewhat criticized for that. But that was all sort of part of preachin’.

In this interview with my father, I confirmed a vivid recollection I had of a picture of Dr. King that hung above my father’s desk in the office he had in our home.

In my interview with my mother, she recalled this same time period and the degree to which the values and attitudes of many people in the Milton community seemed so counter to her own:

That November we must have been voting or something. I remember the way people felt about us, that when we -- where did we go to vote there? I have a feeling it was a court house, but I'm not sure. Or maybe a church, I don't know, don't remember. But, I remember walkin' in and I said to Allyn, 'I wouldn't be surprised if somebody shot us in the back.' That was the feeling I had because of the stance we had taken both against the war and, and the way we were feeling the grief of, of King killed. And, and the little understanding of the, you know so many people.

I offer these illustrative stories neither to criticize nor to venerate my parents. I offer them to demonstrate the values my parents held and actively worked to instill in me, and to contrast those values with the values of many of the people in the communities in which we lived. These stories are also significant in the way that they document the clear, courageous, principled stands that my parents were willing to take. Although, as a child, I had limited awareness and understanding of the meaning of my parents' actions within the social context of our home towns, I am convinced that I was influenced by the consistency and integrity with which professed values aligned with the daily lives my parents lived. If there was ever a White person with a social location like mine who had the potential to develop an antiracist character, it would seem that my parents had provided me with an opportunity to be such a person.

Key Finding Relating to Socialization

Yet my key finding concerning socialization, considering the full body of data I subjected to inductive analysis, is that the influence of my parents, while profound and lasting, was threatened and eroded by the simultaneous socialization and resocialization I experienced throughout my early life. This was the unquestioned, unexamined, ubiquitous socialization into the multi-dimensional privilege that accompanied my social location. It is very clear that socialization played a central role in structuring both possibilities and obstacles for White, antiracist character formation. I found that for me and, I suspect, for many others with a social location similar to mine, socialization processes created more obstacles than possibilities. I have come to view the fact that, at the age of 53, I remain disquieted about my own identity with respect to antiracist character is both a testament to the strong and enduring influence of my parents as agents of socialization in my life, as well as evidence of the power of my resocialization into multi-dimensional privilege.

What I learned through analyses of interviews with people who witnessed me later in life, and from daily journaling and field notes concerning my life experiences for a two-month period in 2008 at the age of 51, is that it was not early exposure to negative messages about People of Color that presented obstacles to the emergence of antiracist character formation in me. It was not offensively-named penny candy, distorted Daniel Boone lyrics, or the way I and my friends would choose someone to be “it” for a game of tag. It was, instead, socialization into the multi-dimensional privilege of race, gender, social class and others dimensions of my social location that created the most formidable obstacles.

It was this latter socialization that most profoundly determined my identity, expectations for my behavior, my deepest desires and fears, and the motivations for the decisions I have made and continue to make each day. It was also this socialization that structured and, to a large degree, predetermined the nature of my relationships with others, including People of Color. It was this socialization that spawned issues of control that later thwarted antiracist character development and, my research has revealed, prevented me from embracing the spiritual dimension of my life that is my most important resource for White, antiracist character formation and sustenance. I turn now to these research finding themes of identity, relationships, control and spirituality.

Theme #2: Image-Building

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I presented a story to illustrate what I called the “source of my disquiet” that precipitated my research questions. The story was about making a new African American acquaintance who had heard from a friend that I was a “White guy who really gets it.” The “it” here is racism. The encounter made me feel like I was being successful in projecting the kind of identity I wanted to project for African Americans, and yet I also felt “sleazy,” as I was convinced that projecting this identity was, in part, deceitful.

Particularly in my analysis of journaling and field note data, the significance of what I will refer to as an ongoing “image-building project” emerged as a meaningful finding. This image-building project has numerous facets of relevance for my research. I can trace my intensive, antiracist image management activity back to the earliest days of my active work with others around racism, which was in the early 1990s. The fact that it

appears so prominent in daily journaling and field notes generated 18 years later attests to its persistence and centrality to my story of struggle to develop a White, antiracist character.

Early Antiracist Image-Building

In the early 1990s, I was in my mid-30s in age and I was deepening my involvement and commitment to the Uptown neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where I lived, worked, worshipped and played. One friend called me “Mr. Neighborhood.” The neighborhood was diverse in many ways. There was public housing within blocks of both upper-middle class homes and historic mansions along the Susquehanna River. There seemed to be an overabundance of both bars and places of worship. There was diversity among the people in terms of social class, religion, race and ethnicity. United States Census data for the City of Harrisburg indicate that, of a total population of 52,376, 42.6% were “White,” 50.6% were “Black,” and 7.7 % were “Hispanic of any race” (U. S. Census Bureau, 1990).

I was a full participant in the neighborhood, interacting with neighborhood families, working as Executive Director of the local, United Methodist-related community center, and worshipping at a United Methodist church that had formed from the recent merger of an “all-White” church and an “all-Black” church. My social location, my credentials within the United Methodist corporate hierarchy, and some limited life experiences in urban settings had prepared me to feel comfortable and confident in my role as a young, White, middle-class, male Executive Director of the Neighborhood Center, even though the staff members and clientele of that community center were predominantly African American, female and working class or working poor.

I learned from interviews with people who observed me closely during this time that I was fairly naïve, but that I was learning lessons quickly about all of the implications of race, gender and social class that were in play as I used my own ethnocentric judgment to lead the community center.

A consumer and user of antiracist ideas. I certainly had multiple motivations for engaging in my earliest, deliberate antiracism work. The remnants of deeply rooted values into which my parents had socialized me certainly inclined me toward efforts that I associated with basic principles of social justice and human dignity. While there were elements of altruism and principled commitment, however, I was also clearly motivated by the utilitarian value this work would have for me. I wanted the practical benefit of being fluent in an antiracist vocabulary and in command of an antiracist way of responding to situations. I wanted to both strengthen my competency and convince others that I was, indeed, competent as I navigated the multi-racial and multi-cultural settings of my daily life. I believed that developing this kind of competency was crucial for me in the community I was living in. It seemed even more crucial for my occupational role, which was the role I had been socialized to believe was the paramount dimension of my identity. I wanted to be able to use the new vocabulary, awareness and understanding as a resource to both “credential” me with People of Color and, on occasion, to project a kind of righteous superiority with respect to less equipped White peers.

I was also longing for acceptance in a world of people I had been socialized to view as “others.” I was trying to project an image of identity that would be of interest to others and that would distinguish me in some way. I wanted to be seen by the power

structure of the United Methodist Church as doing a good job as an administrator. I wanted to be loved and accepted by the African American people whom I supervised and served, despite the immense privilege and power inequalities that, to a great extent, prefabricated our relationships.

It was at this time that I began meeting with members of the People Against Racism (PAR) group. The group was steeped in the ideologies of a New Orleans-based organization, “People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond,” which had recently conducted an intensive workshop in Harrisburg that the founding members of PAR had attended.

A White woman in PAR who personified antiracist character for me at this time shared in my interview with her that her impression was that I was at PAR for what I could take of utilitarian value. She sensed, however, that there was something more in play:

So, I thought that you – so my recollection was that, ah, you came to PAR, People Against Racism, to get what you needed, in order to do something at the [Neighborhood] center. You came to PAR to get information, or resources, or whatever so that you could use that. And so, there was a consumer – that’s how I experienced this. That’s how I remember experiencing this. I told you it was like a consumer thing. But, knowing you then, I thought, there is a tender spot in this guy. And so, I was always like open to you. I don’t know if you experienced that. I was always open to you. But, I thought that you had the time – my memory is that you had a lot of White male stuff to work through, or White male enculturation that you received from the culture, and that I was uncertain what my role in that

process for/with you would be. And, I also recall that you didn't ask for any, much help about anything.

This interview participant recalled recognizing in me both a “tender spot” and a self-interested, utilitarian consumption of information. This, I believe, is indicative of the coexistence within my identity of both the values of altruistic love, human dignity and social justice into which my parents had socialized me, and the values of privilege into which I had been subsequently resocialized. In Chapter 6 I will discuss the dynamic tension that this coexistence creates, and its implications for nurturing and sustaining White, antiracist character.

Approval seeking. Review of documentation from early PAR meetings and interviews with members of PAR stimulated a significant memory for me. I remembered a meeting of PAR at which someone shared that White people can be motivated to do anti-racism work as a way of seeking the approval, congratulations and forgiveness of People of Color. This hit home for me at the time, because I now believe that this was a primary emotional allure for my participation in PAR. Later I incorporated this revelation into a more sophisticated manifestation of my antiracist image-building project. I surmised that, if I could acknowledge for people that I was once inappropriately motivated by the desire for approval and absolution from People of Color, perhaps I could convince them to believe that this was no longer a major motivation for my antiracist work, and that somehow I had matured past that developmental stage toward a more authentic antiracist identity. My analysis of the daily journaling that I did many years later indicates that I clearly did not, as there are numerous references to cases in which I continued to seek the approval of People of

Color. Longing for the acceptance and approval of People of Color remains a strong current in my interactions with them today.

Trying too hard. These early efforts to project an antiracist identity were seen by some, and particularly by People of Color, as “trying too hard.” One close, African American witness to this time in my life whom I interviewed said:

My earliest memories of you, ah, because you were a young White male who, ah, was comfortable in the Black setting and the Black neighborhood. . . . I never had any feeling that you were not genuine about, ah, as, as genuine as, as I would have known some people in the civil rights movement itself since I’m a product of that. Ah, so, so, ah, then, based on that it was easy to give you the, the benefit of the doubt, but, but, ah, ah, based on my experience as an African American, that I do, I do have clear memories of at times thinking that, ah, ah you were trying hard but you really didn’t know—and, and, ah, then I remember thinking, well in time he’ll, he’ll find, have to find out some things because there’s, ah, certain things that you, ah, you would just have to be naïve about, so that, so that you would have to, ah, learn – ah, on the job trainin’. You just have to learn those things, because, ah, there’s just no other way to git [sic] it. So, it won’t help for anybody to tell ya [sic]. What I remember doin’ is observing and watching you to the, to the degree of bein’ able to draw a conclusion whether or not this was authentic effort, or what could be perceived as some good doer, do gooder, do gooder thing. . . . And, then I used to remember thinkin’ at, at certain times, ah, I had concerns that -- don’t try too hard! ‘Cause that’s, that’s, ah, that’s always, ah -- that can become a liability. You know, you want to, you want to try, you, you want to be

– you didn’t want to be Black – you never, I never sensed that, but you wanted to be open, and, and you wanted to, ah, experience your own liberation through trying to make sure people who had been disenfranchised were liberated. But, but, but, and that’s noble, but there’s a potential liability if you try too hard, because Blacks in the community, if, if they, ah, are skeptical at, at any point, then, then it becomes a liability.

My encounters with scholarly literature, the interviews conducted for this research, and my own life experiences indicate that many African Americans have become adept at assessing the motivations and true identities of White people with whom they need to relate (Collins, 1986). My image-building project and my “trying too hard” were likely often counter-productive to my desire to be embraced and accepted by People of Color.

Some, who easily recognized my image-building efforts for what they were, used my efforts as a resource for themselves. I interviewed an African American staff member whom I supervised at the Neighborhood Center when I was Executive Director there. He often brought exciting, well-planned, but unconventional and potentially controversial programmatic proposals to me. He recalled how he made use of the racial dynamics as a resource of influence:

Participant: Because I knew, I knew, um, that by you bein’ White, right, you’re not going to shut everything down that I ask for. You’ll say um – and you might do it because, that you are White, and I am Black. So you know what, go ahead. I’m not sure, but you don’t want me to look at you as being this White guy—

Daniel: This White guy who's shuttin' down projects.

Participant: Shutting everything, yeah, so, you know

Daniel: You can play to that little thing

Participant: Yeah.

Daniel: So here's Dan, he seems to have a good heart. Maybe, maybe he's, he's gonna even be reluctant to say no to me because of the race thing.

Participant: Right! Right!

Daniel: Because he doesn't want to appear to be saying, you know, I'm gonna shut down this project.

Participant: Exactly! Exactly!

Same Project . . . New Motivations and Images

My inductive analysis of journaling and field note data, in particular, made it clear that the image-building project has remained a tenacious and persistent element of my ongoing quest for antiracist character formation. Most often, it seems to be an impediment. The tools of image-building and the façade of the image I tried to construct changed as I moved through different personal relationships and occupational roles in my life. I continued to learn more and more about Whiteness, White privilege, racism and sociological analysis through encounters with the scholarly literature reviewed for this dissertation, through the dissertation research itself, and through performing my duties in two new occupational roles that literally paid me to know something about race and racism. The first of these new occupational roles was as a division director and outreach worker for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, the civil rights law enforcement agency for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The second was as a

sociology faculty member at a small, liberal arts college in rural Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

The more I have learned, however, the sharper the contrast has felt between who I am and who I project myself to be. My usual response to these latest waves of disquietedness is to up the ante in the image-building work. I make new efforts to regain the appearance-of-authenticity ground in a way that convinces me enough to feel comfortable again, for a while.

I have also broadened my array of image-projection tactics in order to fit new kinds of situations. I incorporated my limited Spanish vocabulary and knowledge of Latino cultures when interacting with Latinos on assignment for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. I slip in just enough African American street vernacular and cadence or specialized cultural references at just the right point in a conversation to let the person I'm speaking with know that I have spent time with African Americans. I present to People of Color my observations concerning some shared experience we have had together through the lens that I believe they are most likely to be seeing it as a Person of Color. I put additional effort into relationship-building with People of Color, not only because I believe it is essential to supporting my accountability to antiracist character, but also so that I will be seen comfortably interacting with them in public and private spaces.

One of the ways that my inductive analysis led to my finding of the centrality of the image-building project is the way in which it exposed my motivations for engaging in antiracist action. For example, influenced by the Whiteness literature of the "New Abolitionists" that I reviewed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I sometimes adopt what I rationalize as "race traitor" tactics that I feel will serve to confuse others and undercut

their constructed understandings about race. With closer examination, however, I have learned that these interactions have been less motivated by any strategic or tactical decision to do something about race, and more motivated by my desire to build curiosity about me and to bring attention to me.

Reflections in journaling data revealed my primary motivations for action. They also exposed my tendency to only use my image projection resources to the minimal degree I deemed necessary to “get over” on a particular audience. For example, my role as professor grants me tremendous pedagogical latitude and power in the classroom. Periodically, teaching and learning objectives relate directly to race, ethnicity, gender or social class. If my motivation for antiracist work was primarily a desire to liberate and heal myself and others from the impact of racism, one would suspect that I would use these opportunities and this power to the fullest. Although I believe that my overall commitment to teaching excellence is sound, I have sometimes done less than thorough preparation on a day that race would be a topic in the classroom, presuming that I know so much more than the students about race that I will be able to “get by.” This is a serious indictment of my motives. My image as an excellent teacher who seems particularly knowledgeable and fluent about issues of race remains intact, yet I have forfeited a profound opportunity to maximize my influence on students’ understandings.

Another illustration of the continuing grip that the image-building project has on me can be seen in the following transcription of an audio-recorded journal entry. In this journal entry I reflect on the manipulative ways in which I sometimes decide whether or not to provide people with information or explanation as to how it is that my wife, Roxanne, and I are parenting an African American teenage girl, Destiny:

How people learn about us. Um, when do I choose to share it? Why? Um. What initiative does Roxanne or Destiny take in sharing it or explaining it? What hesitations do we have about bringing it up, etc.? I often time kinda take some pleasure in the, guarding the mystery of it all (laughter). Um, having people just encounter us and observe us and letting them wonder. Um, I'm, I guess I'm thinking that, uh, not having an explanation, um, might create the kind of dissonance, cognitive dissonance that opens them up to curiosity and thought and pondering about how this could be. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe it's a good thing. Being able to explain it right way immediately puts Roxanne and I into this, um, "You are the wonderful saviors" kind of box and, um, sympathy for Destiny, and "aren't we wonderful," etc. So maybe just leaving it open-ended has a, a more beneficial impact in terms of, um, privilege awareness and pondering issues of race.

Although the last few sentences of this journal entry seem to indicate that there may be strategic purpose behind a decision to withhold information from others, it is very telling that this pondering on strategic rationale follows my admission, "I often time kinda take some pleasure in the, guarding the mystery of it all," after which there is some audible laughter on the recording. Subsequent reflection on this journal entry yielded an honest acceptance that motivations for my apparent antiracist commitment are often selfish, albeit artfully disguised.

The Consequences and Products of the Image-Building Project

The importance of detailing the dynamics of the image-building project as a research finding is to demonstrate the strength and the variety of ways it was represented

in interviews, journaling and field notes. The significance of the phenomenon itself for the development and sustenance of White, antiracist character lies in the consequences of this perpetual concern for and engagement in image projection work. My research exposed a number of consequences of image-building activity, some of which may have facilitated my growth into antiracist character, but others clearly thwarted that growth.

“Act as if” and “Fake it ‘til you make it.” “Act as if” and “Fake it ‘til you make it” are most recognized as mantras of the 12-Step Recovery process of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and other 12-Step Recovery groups. The notion is that pretending to be the person you desire to become can be helpful in processes of behavioral change that are needed to become that person (Cavanaugh, 1998). Just as it can be difficult for an actress to step out of the character she is portraying, a person recovering from addiction may be able to resist relapse into addiction if they are “acting as if” their addiction no longer drives their behavior.

I have benefited in this way from my antiracist image-building work. Although I may experience image-building as a somewhat deceptive, disingenuous attempt to manipulate others’ assessments of me as a person, at times my image-building demands that I put myself into a situation, build a relationship, or respond to the behaviors of others in a way that is consistent with the image I am trying to create, lest I “blow my cover” or “step out of character.” Deception for reasons of self-interest and self-benefit has led me into situations in which I then must act in a way that relinquishes such interests and benefits and is congruent with an antiracist character. The most poignant example of this in my life is the way in which a long series of decisions and circumstances, all related to my continual image-building

project, eventually led to my current relationship with my African American goddaughter, Destiny, and all that this relationship has entailed. I will provide details on the implications of my relationship with Destiny later in this chapter.

As my image-building work has led me deeper and deeper into my “character,” the “role research” I have had to conduct has become more and more sophisticated and inadvertently insightful for me. One result has been my commitment to this dissertation, which has become an opportunity for rigorous and honest self-examination, and for opening a vision of the paradoxically simple path that is before me.

The lenses of race and privilege-cognizance. Another consequence of my ongoing image-building work is that I see People of Color, and that I increasingly interpret life experiences through a lens that I share with them. A report I have heard from People of Color is that they are often made to feel “invisible.” My interview, journaling and field note data indicated that People of Color are seldom invisible to me. Here are just a few of many accounts of rather mundane encounters with People of Color that impressed me sufficiently to include them in daily audio-recorded journal entries:

Yesterday, September 30th, on way home on lunch break between two sections of Sociology 101, I came across on 17th Street, took a left onto Washington and immediately on the right there is a fairly large residential building, and there were 3 African American men examining and working on the building. One man was on the street looking up at the building. He had a big pot belly. It’s interesting that my dissertation and/or my past experience

mean that when I see a Person of Color it registers. No matter what, I take note.

I saw an African American man this past Sunday at the Sheetz store and he was very well dressed. It was a Sunday and he was very well dressed. I assumed he was going to church or traveling through town. I had not seen him before. He was tall and professional-looking. Whenever I see a dark-skinned person at Juniata [College] I take a second look and register their presence. In yoga class, around the campus. I have written notes to make audio journal entries on the presidential debates. An African American man was in the room when the debate concluded, sitting in a seat. These people I definitely notice.

My growing commitment to an antiracist image has also intensified my sensitivity to the impact of social interactions and institutional racism on People of Color. If others have sought “colorblindness” as an ideal, I have not. My concern has been that I see color and strive to understand its implications.

Courageous action. On occasion, my image-building project has led me into situations in which I have exhibited what others have interpreted to be courageous action. In settings in which one would think that my socialization into multi-dimensional privilege would make me very cautious about speaking or acting in a way that challenges other privilege holders, I have nonetheless done so. At times this has occurred unexpectedly for me. I may be sitting in a room with a large group of privileged peers. A group decision is imminent or something is said, and I experience a fearful welling up

of emotion as I realize I must speak. I struggle to suppress the emotions enough to formulate the words I will use.

At other times, what has appeared to other people to be courageous action has been, for me, a required extension of a string of decisions and behaviors that all began with somewhat disingenuous, antiracist, image-building work. For example, when I was active with the People Against Racism (PAR) antiracism group, periodically the members of PAR decided that our presence and/or action was needed in response to some development in the community that we had determined to be a clear manifestation of racism. After attending PAR meetings in which these situations were discussed and action was planned, it was very difficult for me to imagine then opting out of participation. This was particularly the case for me and others in PAR who held multi-dimensional privilege, because PAR members felt that such persons could often be the best messengers for the people of privilege in the community whom we believed needed to hear what PAR had to say.

Ironically, I believe it is a strong element of socialization into multi-dimensional privilege that prevented me from opting out of some fearful situations. A part of socialization into privilege is the premium placed on consistency of behavior. While this may be characterized as “reliability” or “integrity,” I believe it also functions as a powerful force of social control to prevent people of privilege from deviating from expected behavioral and attitudinal patterns. Yet in the case of PAR actions, it was this strong value for “integrity” that prevented me from excusing myself from participation in actions that would place me in front of privileged people to voice concerns that are often taboo to speak or even think about among the privileged.

One White member of PAR remembered an occasion when I stood up in a room of bankers, housing developers and government and community leaders to point out that the way in which they were making decisions for a new housing development corporation was racist:

. . . I didn't know whether to trust you or not, because, were you serious about this, or were you curious? You're curious and this will give you access to the community. So, uh, then I remembered that, um, you spoke up at the housing thing, wasn't it a housing meeting? . . . and, I felt in my gut, and I shoulda asked you, but you were like scared shitless. . . . And I just thought that when you stood up then that was enormous courage. And, I would say that it was a time of – you probably may have not even have named it that, but that, you know, you put your White privilege aside, 'cause your White privilege is security. So, when you risk you've puttin' away, puttin' aside that.

On another occasion, my “integrity” led me to the county courthouse in support of a group that was seeking a declaratory judgment against a then powerful, local public official. In my interview with an African American friend who was plaintiff in the court action, my friend shared this account:

But then on the other hand, on the other hand – ah, ah -- your, your, your, your courage spoke for itself. I, I remember, I remember, um, when we were goin' to court, ah, . . . and, ah, ah, ah the bailiff, or somebody was comin' to look for me . . . and my name was on the top of the suit, so, so then it was [Interviewee's name vs. Public official's name] . . . and, and, and a bailiff or somebody came in lookin' for [me] and, and assumed that you were [me]

because they could not imagine that it was somebody Black. I remember that very well. . . . There were several of us who were there. And, and ah, we didn't have a lawyer because we didn't have any money. And, they had two lawyers. And, and ah, I remember that, that very well 'cause I, I remember, I remember that, that, that you brought the man to me. And, I, and I remember, what I really remember more than anything else is -- you told me the story that I'm now tellin' -- that he thought you were [me], and you perceived that as racist. But see, you see, but that's a different, that's a whole -- when, when, when you did, when you were involved in things like that, when you were involved in things like that, ah, then, then, ah, there's no, there was no question, there was no skepticism, there was no skepticism.

My response to this statement by my friend in our interview foreshadowed the results of my research analysis. I said to him:

Well, it's interesting that you say that 'cause, 'cause I think that's when I lose my skepticism about myself -- is when I kind of let go and I'm, and I know this is something to be involved in, and it's the right thing to be involved in, and there's clarity for me and I feel, at home. [Interviewee interjects: Well you were!] Because there are other situations where I'm fronting, or I'm building this image, or I'm trying hard, or whatever. And, I know when those moments are, and they don't feel good to me.

Negative consequences. The positive effects that can flow from “acting as if;” the sharpening of my vision through the lens of race and cognizance of privilege; and the occasional moments of courage I can exhibit are all positive consequences of

my antiracist image-building project. There are negative consequences as well. Some of these I have already alluded to. Feeling as though I am involved in a sophisticated deception does not feel good. The transparency of my motives to myself and, especially to People of Color, has kept me from meaningful relationships, some of which could be relationships across race or with White people who could support me in a more authentic quest for antiracist character.

Another negative consequence of my constant image-building activity is the immobilization that I most often experience in life situations in which racism comes into play. When I hear a racist comment, see indications of racist attitudes, or see evidence of institutionalized racism my most common response is to do nothing. A close second is to use some kind of social skill at my disposal to avoid confrontation or meaningful engagement about the situation. I tend to take note, withdraw, and then find someone “safe” with whom I can share my observation and my over-analytical assessment of the situation, *ad nauseum*. One of my mentors from the People Against Racism group called this my tendency for “mental masturbation.”

The person who most often serves as my safe listener is my wife, Roxanne. No other person knows better how often I “talk the talk” but fail to “walk the walk.” Anticipating my eventual interview of her for this research, Roxanne would warn that she could not wait to make it part of my formal research record just how often I failed to use all of my knowledge, experience and purported concern in situations where the chips were down. Immobilization even occurs in situations in which little seems to be at risk other than some mild, interpersonal tension that a difficult conversation might bring. One such immobilization episode occurred in December of 2007 when

my African American goddaughter, Destiny, and I were visiting my parents' home. Here is my written journal entry, edited only for spelling and typographical errors, describing that situation:

We wanted to select a movie appropriate for all of us, including Destiny, to watch together. We ruled out "Saving Grace." Dad, especially, was concerned that it may not be appropriate for all of us. He meant Destiny, and was careful to speak in a way that tried to hide that fact, so Destiny would not feel excluded, perhaps. Both mom and dad were pleased and excited to show us, instead, "You Can't Take It with You," a [1938] Jimmy Stewart film. The film had a great central message, and lots of funny characters and situations. HOWEVER, two Black people in the film were highly caricatured. The woman was the cook, and the man was her friend/husband, always with her in the kitchen. [There was always an] exaggerated, fearful expression on [the] Black woman's face when she answered the door. [The] Black man [was] always making reference to being on relief. [He was] willing to move to a new home or town as long as they had relief there. No one else in the household had an identifiable source of income. Although all characters were exaggerations, Black people were classic caricatures of the era. My parents chose this film as appropriate for Destiny. I did not say a word to them about how disturbed I was about this; mainly because I didn't want to hurt them...hurt THEM. A couple days later I did talk with Destiny about the film. I wanted her to know that I noticed, and I put it into some historical context and pointed out that everyone was depicted in a silly way. Destiny said that

people were nice to the Black people in the movie. There is a lot here to process. Most importantly, my feelings and lack of response and challenge to my parents.

I imagine, but cannot be certain, that my parents were aware as we watched this film that the depiction of African Americans was problematic. They, like me, most likely tempered their concern with rationalizations relating to the historical context when the film was produced; the fact that White characters were also portrayed in comical and less than flattering ways; and the redeeming value of some of the other messages the film conveyed. Nonetheless, the potential harm this film could cause to Destiny's spirit and self-concept was either not perceived or, at least, not discussed. If I could be immobilized this way with my parents, with whom loving relationships are firmly cemented, it is no surprise to me that this immobilization occurs with others.

Often I have tried to rationalize my inaction in these situations both to myself and to others, like my wife Roxanne, who later hear my accounts. My most common rationalization is my argument that directly confronting a person in the moment does little more than alienate the person and create an air of self-righteousness for myself. It is, I argue, a less effective transformational strategy than a longer-term strategy of maintaining and nurturing a relationship with the person first, and then looking for opportunities to explore concerns together and challenge ourselves to grow. While I sincerely believe that this is often the most effective approach, my daily journaling and field note data indicate that this belief is rarely the *primary* reason that I avoid engaging with someone when a seed of potential conflict relating to race has been planted. What I have found is that it is more likely my strong socialization into the

value of conflict avoidance that is in play. It is not a sincere decision to build relationship with a person who has just indicated to me in some way that our values, attitudes and/or behaviors around race are at odds. I will revisit this phenomenon of immobilization more fully in a section that appears later in this chapter addressing issues of control.

Am I Being Too Hard on Myself?

In the process of conducting inductive analysis I did consider an alternative interpretation of for the data, i.e., what qualitative researchers call the “negative case.” More than one interview participant expressed that, in essence, I seemed to be too hard on myself and that I needed to take some credit for the courageous nature of my quest for White, antiracist character. I was asked by a peer reviewer to consider alternatives to framing my struggles solely as a deceptive image-building project rather than, for example, an ongoing struggle to bring my behavior into congruence with my most cherished values; to bring my head and my hands into alignment with my heart and my soul.

I have been encouraged to examine the risks I have been willing to take and some of the unnecessary burdens I have been willing to accept. After all, I could have channeled my opportunity privileges into professional career paths that would have been much more financially lucrative and much less challenging in terms of learning about cultural differences and the social dynamics of race and racism. People I interviewed brought tears to my eyes when they characterized their perceptions of my relationships with my fictive, African American son, Victor; my fictive, African American sister, Lisa; and my fictive, African American daughter,

Destiny. These tears, I believe, are an expression of the deep gratitude for the emotional bonds that I have developed with these loved ones despite the many obstacles that preclude such relationships from ever forming.

Another possibility I had to consider was that my willingness to hold myself up for criticism, and my willingness to even facilitate that criticism, could be yet another layer of my image-building enterprise. This dissertation is the most elaborate illustration to date of the degree to which I am willing to facilitate self-criticism and criticism by others. I anticipate that many people will view this as a selfless act of courage and as a personal act of sacrifice in the service of building the kind of understanding of White privilege that is needed to more effectively challenge racism. Although I do not reject this characterization outright, it is not an accurate portrayal of the way that I experience my own self-disclosure activities. My experience is that my self-deprecating criticism is, to a large degree, yet another tactical tool of image-building and projection. By engaging in this kind of self-deprecating critique, I present an image -- real or imagined or constructed -- of someone who has come so far, someone who is committed so deeply, that he is willing to subject himself to such unrelenting scrutiny. It seems likely, given the totality of my inductive analysis, that my motivations are quite mixed.

The fact that my image-building project has both positive and negative consequences for the nurturance of a White, antiracist character makes it clear that there is not an all-or-nothing, this-or-that determination that can be made about how best to frame the phenomenon. As I consider, however, the entirety of my data analysis, I cannot conclude that my image-building project, despite its inadvertent benefits for the development of antiracist character, has been a net asset in my quest.

It seems to have most often precluded me from opportunities for growth and from experiencing liberation for myself and others from systems of racial oppression and the damage they do.

Most significantly, my image-building work has robbed me of the quality of relationships in my life that could facilitate my growth into antiracist character. I turn my attention now to my research findings relating to relationships.

Theme #3: Relationships

The theme that I have named “Relationships” is a complex one with many subthemes. I have chosen to present the subthemes relating to relationships in two categories. The first category includes subthemes pertaining to relationships with and among White people. The second category examines subthemes relating to relationships between White people in the quest for antiracist character and People of Color, which I will refer to as “relationships across the color line” (Rush, 2000).

Relationships With and Among White People

White people struggling to relate. Earlier in this chapter I shared findings relating to my earliest efforts to project an antiracist image. I named among the utilitarian benefits of those efforts the development of an aura of self-righteousness relative to other White people who were less equipped with the vocabulary and ideas of antiracism. I also shared that, when faced with White people who are exhibiting overt racist behaviors or speech, I am gripped with a kind of fearful, social immobilization. I try to rationalize these experiences of immobilization as strategic decisions. I claim in my head, and to the few people I feel safe rationalizing to out loud, that I strategically choose not to engage people in the moment, for fear that they

will be able to too easily reject what I offer. I claim that I look instead to build trust and relationship with White folks in order to set the stage for influence and mutual growth in the future. However, there are no instances that I could find in my journaling and field note data that indicated that I made significant, deliberate efforts to nurture relationships with White people who had immobilized me in a moment of racist words or behaviors. Self-righteousness and social immobilization do nothing to build meaningful relationships with other White people.

Even among White people who purport and demonstrate some commitment to developing antiracist character, meaningful relationships seem difficult to nurture. In the years that I participated in the People Against Racism (PAR) group, the re-education work that we were doing included examination of European American cultural patterns, the nature of White privilege, and what these meant for relationships. This was not only studied through shared readings and discussions, but often there were observations and comments made in the midst of group discussion concerning the quality of our own relationships. People of Color often observed that the White members of PAR never seemed to get together for the purpose of just being together. There always seemed to be a meeting agenda or some sort of PAR “business” that brought the White folks together. By way of contrast, People of Color in PAR often came together for a meal or a personal or social visit.

At times, the People of Color in PAR would issue an “assignment” for the European Americans to explore what relationship and/or “community” meant to them, as they felt that European American ideas about relationships were an impediment to the essential development of community within PAR. Reflecting on differing cultural

attributes given to the idea of time and its implications for relationships, one White person and former member of PAR said in an interview:

Yeah. And that whole issue of time, and I think at the very beginning in PAR we talked a lot about the time, the time, the time, the time. And, I know when I go out with [an African American friend of mine who is in a professional career], I, I always know, whatever time we decide to meet she's gonna be late, I know that. (Laughs) Given! But, whenever we happen upon each other, like out and about and we, we hook up and we just start doin' somethin', I know why [she's] always late. It's not that she starts out late, but she always runs into somebody. And, it's much more important for her to stop and chat with a person, 'cause that relationship's important, than it is to be on time. . . . And, we [European Americans] have time as this crucial, you know, we're just, you know it's like you have to be on time for an interview, you have to be on time for a job, you have to. . . . And, then we like to say it is disrespectful if you keep me waiting. . . . Well, no it's disrespectful when you see a friend and you can't . . . yeah. That's disrespectful.

Members of PAR whom I interviewed, now many years later, referred back to these themes of relationship and community. The PAR group has slowly disintegrated over the past decade due, primarily, to the geographic dispersion of its members without the building of a larger, sustained group. Former members who had once spent hours and sometimes days together every week, now share only sporadic, brief email messages and rare telephone calls. Yet when members do reconnect in person, as I did with some in order to conduct my dissertation interviews, we

comment on how easily we are able to pick up where we left off. Discussion then turns to questions like, “Why have we not stayed in touch?” and the answer to such questions is often that we have chosen to exercise our White privilege and submit to our cultural inclination to dispose of relationships that are no longer seen as convenient or of utilitarian value.

Communities of accountability and support. One former PAR member, a European American woman whom I interviewed, strongly lamented the disbanding of the group. In particular she misses the group as a resource for consultation and support when she knows she is making a decision with implications relating to race and racism. Here is an excerpt from her comments in our interview:

. . . just a place to go so that you are more effective and, um, I don’t know. Like, ‘cause I know just in my own personal life, you know, I don’t like this, you know kinda, grabbin’ whoever I can find. Because usually (laughs) you know, you’re just kind of out there. You’re hoping you’re, you know, you’re thinkin’ things through but, uh, you know, four heads are much better than one. And, ah – I feel very abandoned, you know. . . . And the fact that we just, just disbanded, you know. It’s like, you know, OK, 20 years. O.K. Yeah, it’s just like, O.K., well, we’re gone. We’re done.

I slowly distanced myself over time from the relationships I had been nurturing with PAR members, the very people who had brought me the furthest in my quest for White, antiracist character. These were the White people and the People of Color who had loved me enough and were committed to “healing the wounds of racism” enough to tolerate my mixed motives; my tendencies to escape into the

mental masturbation of never-ending cerebral analysis; and my failure to fully commit to building a supportive PAR “community.” Here was a cloud of witnesses who were beginning to see through my image-building gymnastics and were encouraging a deeper spirit to emerge. Here was a potential social network of both support and accountability for what I knew could be meaningful, transformative growth. Gradually, over a period of years, I was neglecting and disposing of these relationships.

Relationships Across the Color Line

Close personal relationships with people across race may be crucial for people of multi-dimensional privilege pursuing the quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. Before I present evidence that this has been the case for me, I will address several impediments to such relationships that emerged from my research data.

Impediment #1: The image-building obsession. As I documented previously in this chapter, my earliest efforts to project an antiracist identity were recognized by some people, and particularly People of Color, for what they were. Some observed that I was “trying too hard,” and some even used my efforts as a resource for themselves. Ironically, the efforts I was making reduced, rather than enhanced, the likelihood that my longing for meaningful relationships with People of Color would be fulfilled. My identity-building activity engendered skepticism as much or more than it encouraged trust. It projected a desire to control the terms of relationships more than it convinced anyone that I was ready for a relationship across the color line on truly equal terms.

In response to my section on “Control,” a peer debriefer for my research observed that “Whiteness frames relationships as a part of what Whiteness is.” By this I believe she meant that the structure of Whiteness, its superiority ideology and its presumptions of control and power relative to all others, all work together to establish the nature of relationships that will be formed and the limitations of those relationships.

Impediment #2: Failure to share stories. My inductive analysis suggests that honest self-disclosure, primarily through storytelling, may be a key resource for nurturing relationships across the color line. It is a resource that I failed to recognize or utilize in my earliest incarnations of antiracist identity-building, even though it would have served my self-centered, utilitarian purposes well. My failure to share my life stories with People of Color with whom I had opportunity to develop meaningful relationships was a major impediment to nurturing those relationships. An African American work colleague at Neighborhood Center shared this in an interview:

. . . you grew up in a different environment. And, I think that’s what we didn’t understand, ‘cause we didn’t know or hear about your environment. You very rarely talked about your environment—how you grew up, whether you had brothers and sisters. You, you were very thin in doin’ that. . . . no one knew who you really were because you didn’t share a lot of who you were in story form. And, then when we met your mom, she was just so loving, and remember a couple of times, she’d come -- love everybody! And, that was just so different. . . . a Black person can come and sit down and we share

everything—even to strangers. But, then in White privilege community, you're very, umm, oriented about what is to be shared. You know, you limit that sharing. Maybe you say it's not anybody's business, but it tells who you are as a person.

My failure to tell stories fragmented the kind of free-flowing self-revelation that builds the requisite trust for authentic, loving relationships across the color line and across other dimensions of privilege.

Impediment #3: Stories I was denied. The other way that storytelling emerged as a subtheme in my research was through the way in which the interviews I conducted were received by respondents as invitations to share stories about race and racism from their own lives. It was very common for interview participants to shift the focus of interview discussions from their recollections as witnesses of my life to stories from their own lives. This often occurred relatively early in the interview encounter.

In some cases the stories shared were stories of childhood experiences that had brought meanings of race into clarity for the first time or in a particularly unforgettable fashion. In some cases the stories that were shared had not been shared before. It was as though the fact that we were meeting for an interview about race and racism was the first opportunity that some respondents had ever had in which they felt secure in sharing stories about the meaning of race in their lives.

One example of the way in which my research prompted this kind of storytelling occurred at the conclusion of the interview I conducted with my mother. My mother suggested we place a telephone call to her sister, whom my mother knew

had a childhood story to tell. The story my maternal aunt shared with me appears in Appendix G. That story deeply enriched my understanding of the origins and depths of the values of human dignity, caring and love into which I had been socialized by my parents. Yet this story was a story that I would likely never have heard had I not interviewed my mother for my dissertation research.

The most poignant and meaningful story that I heard was my mother's own story. She had never before shared this story with anyone, she said. It was a story that was set in a Crownsville, Maryland mental hospital in 1949. My mother moved me to tears as she sang gospel songs that she remembered young African American women residents of the hospital singing almost 60 years ago as they scrubbed a concrete floor on their knees. She recalled how her inclination to form relationships with these women was thwarted by a White hospital supervisor who tried to frighten her from befriending them.

I became fascinated with the Crownsville story and conducted a significant amount of background research relating to it. I later interpreted my strong desire to pour myself into research relating to this story as an attempt to reclaim an important story that connected my mother's spirit to my own. This is a story that has helped to affirm my quest for antiracist character and to define the person I want to become. It is a story that, without my dissertation research, I likely never would have heard.

The Crownsville story is the centerpiece of a work of creative writing that I composed in order to provide a more expressive representation of some of my research findings. This piece of writing is a fictional conversation that is tightly connected to interview transcripts, field notes, and the subsequent research I did

relating to the Crownsville story. It is provided in Appendix H. The salient point here is that dynamics of racism seem to bury some of the most meaningful stories that White people could share about race, and the loss of these stories seems to be a loss of a critical resource of inspiration and understanding that could help White people to build relationships on both sides of the color line.

Common place and common space. Despite the formidable impediments detailed above, I do have deep, meaningful, loving and abiding relationships across the color line. A subtheme that emerged from my research may help to explain how this unlikely fortune was possible for a person of multi-dimensional privilege. I call this subtheme “Common Place and Common Space.” It refers to the venues in which I was given opportunities to initiate and nurture relationships with People of Color that began to inform, re-educate and offer social and emotional resources for my antiracism quest.

The Uptown neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in which I was fully immersed for 15 years beginning in 1984, was the incubator for much of my learning and growth. It is a neighborhood of diversity on many dimensions, including race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and social class. My life in that neighborhood provided with me with a continuous flow of opportunities to build relationships across race and other dimensions of privilege. Within this community context, experiences at my Neighborhood Center workplace and in my multi-racial church congregation were the most profound.

Earlier in this chapter I described in detail some of the ways in which my self-centered image-building activities and the structural realities of privilege-based power

inequalities limited my ability to develop genuine, meaningful relationships across race at my Neighborhood Center workplace. Nonetheless, the fact that this workplace connected me in significant ways with children, youth and families in my neighborhood placed me in situations in which relationships across color were inevitable, albeit laden with extreme power and privilege differentials.

“Church” was another venue of opportunity for relationships across the color line. Early in this chapter I made reference to the significance of church as an early agent of socialization for me. Throughout my life, church was also profoundly significant as a conduit for White privilege and for privilege associated with social class. I am referring here to the way in which the United Methodist Church was an institutional source of wealth, power and prestige through multiple generations of my family. My paternal grandfather had been a seminary president, district superintendent, and member of the prestigious judicial board of the corporate church. My father was a local pastor. I was likely hired as Executive Director of the Neighborhood Center due, in part, to my familial credentials within the United Methodist Church. Neighborhood Center is a “mission agency” closely related to the United Methodist Church.

The church also provided me with some of the clearest illustrations and lessons concerning the way in which racism can be embedded institutionally. The structures and practices of the corporate church, the use of power within it, and the distribution of resources through it often exemplified institutional racism in very clear ways. In several interviews, respondents recalled with me the details of a situation in which the Bishop of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist

Church formed alliance with a real estate developer in Harrisburg and supported proposals that the People Against Racism group that I was a part of deemed to be a racist and classist assault on residents of the “Lotsville” neighborhood of Harrisburg.

The significance of church for my quest for White, antiracist character, however, may have been most profound as a common space and common place for relationship-building opportunities. The multi-racial congregation, of which I was an active part for many of the 15 years I lived in Harrisburg’s Uptown neighborhood, allowed me to develop relationships across the color line that were less intensely predetermined by inequalities of power and privilege. Worshipping, singing in the church choirs, teaching at Vacation Church School and being an active part of organized activities allowed me to simply be and do with People of Color, to grow relationships, and to feel deep social, emotional and spiritual connection.

One member of our church, an African American friend and interview respondent, reflected on my role within the “Gospel Travellers.” This was a men’s a cappella group that specialized in old time gospel songs and traditional Negro spirituals. I was its only current White member. Singing with these men was one of the most cherished parts of my life. My friend recalled feeling very comfortable having me in the group, and expressed that he appreciated the way that I would make gentle suggestions that seemed to reduce tensions around occasional differences of opinion in the group:

You always seemed to be like, like maybe the peacemaker or something of that nature. . . . we’d be discussing some songs or something like that – that, that you’d maybe sometimes interject and say, “well, yeah that might be pretty

good if we do it at this spot here.” Help making a selection maybe for songs -- a little tidbit . . . we’d have a discussion or something like that, then you say, “Well, maybe let’s just try both of them, and see which one we can, you know, sounds the best, or we can fit in this particular spot.

Although there were other roles that I sometimes played within this church congregation for which I sensed that my racial and privileged identity more heavily influenced interactions, this quote from my friend in the men’s choir best characterizes the ease that I felt and that I sensed others felt as I participated in the life of this congregation.

Loving Relationships Across the Color Line in Spite of My Self -- and My Self-Construction

Deep, loving, committed relationships with People of Color have taken root in my life despite my self-centeredness; my past relative oblivion to the influences of power in relationships with People of Color; and my obsession with image-building enterprises. To some degree this may be attributable to the inadvertent, positive consequences of antiracist image-building. As I indicated earlier in this chapter, image-building work that may have been originally motivated by utilitarian self-interest has often led me, through a string of events, to situations in which I then felt impelled to act in a way that relinquished such interests and was congruent with an antiracist character. It was a long series of decisions and circumstances, all related to my continual image-building, that eventually led to my relationship with my African American, fictive sister, Lisa.

Lisa: Bonds of respect and emotional investment. Multiple iterations of reflection on the initial results of my inductive analysis revealed another subtheme finding relating to my relationships across the color line. Personal relationships across the color line seem to require sufficient levels of respect and emotional commitment if I am to gain and retain adequate levels of privilege cognizance and emotional resources to resist inclinations to ignore, dismiss, discount or deny the damage that racism does to People of Color. As a way to convey the emergence of this realization from my data analysis I will briefly describe my most significant relationships across the color line.

My relationship with Lisa grew from a seed of mutual respect. Lisa, I believe, respected the way in which I related to her and to other neighbors, despite my status as Executive Director of the Neighborhood Center. I knew much of Lisa's life story and how much she had struggled and persevered through circumstances that, I could only imagine, would have annihilated my own spirit and my own will to pursue life goals. Lisa's dedication to excellence in all that she did and, in particular, all that she did for young people quickly earned my deepest admiration. When she was in a leadership role with a group of children or with a team of adults, she projected a high level of confidence, joy, enthusiasm and competence. She welcomed new ideas without compromising standards of excellence or compromising the essence of a group's mission. She always seemed meticulously prepared. She was clearly most personally committed to the welfare of young people in our city's schools. I marveled at Lisa's spirit and capabilities. Although, clearly, part of Lisa's drive was

in pursuit of personal financial and career success, she personified for many an ideal of principled, servant leadership.

Perhaps the most important testament to the depth of my relationship with Lisa was that I eventually knew her well enough to know some of her weaknesses and flaws, her fears and pain. I deeply loved her in the way that I deeply love all of my six biological siblings.

My relationship with Lisa may have cemented, in part, because it was reinforced in all of the three critical venues of opportunity for relationship building that I discussed earlier in this chapter. We lived in the same neighborhood, we worked together at the Neighborhood Center, and we were both very active in our church. My relationship with Lisa grew even deeper when she asked my wife, Roxanne, and I to be the godparents for her daughter, Destiny. Roxanne, in essence, co-parented Destiny with Lisa for years. This was at a time in Lisa's life when she was ascending to leadership roles within the Harrisburg School District. She quickly moved from the role of classroom teacher to assistant principal to founder and director of the school district's new Science and Technology High School. Lisa was also pursuing her doctoral degree in education administration, so she highly valued the child care and support she received from me and, especially, from Roxanne.

When Lisa was diagnosed with uterine cancer that later metastasized to her lungs, she asked Roxanne and I to care for Destiny in the event that she died from the cancer. On Valentine's Day in 2007 my sister, Lisa, died with Roxanne and Destiny at her side. The depth of my grief left little doubt in my heart that my emotional bond with Lisa was deep and real.

Life's Destiny. "I was the first person to visit you and your mom in the hospital on the day you were born," I often remind my now 14-year-old, African American god-daughter, Destiny. Since the day of Lisa's death, Roxanne and I have been parenting Destiny full-time. Accounts of experiences involving Destiny are prominent throughout my journaling and field notes. This is the case, in part, because my relationship with Destiny is now the most significant relationship across race in my life.

On the most common, mundane levels of everyday life, simply being with Destiny in our small town community of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, where over 96% of the nearly 7,000 residents are White, gives me plenty to ponder (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Here are two illustrations. The first is from a written journal entry, edited only for spelling and typographical errors. It is a reflection on a visit that Destiny and I made to a Christmas Craft Fair at the Huntingdon Community Center:

Destiny and I walking through the place felt so normal. I continue to "notice" and be aware that she is the only Person of Color in many settings. I don't usually notice any reactions out of the ordinary, but how/why would I? People check their public behaviors and demeanors, and I don't know [these people] well enough to know if their responses to her are typical for them or not. I think about the fact that it soon becomes clear to people that Destiny and I are together. The White male takes some kind of sting away from the interaction, perhaps, because I am an unknown quantity, no doubt with some kind of authority that they can fear. Last night, though, I was in jeans and a ball cap. People at the college had quipped that I looked like I was a hunter. So that could have been a very

significant image projection at the community center, given what a hunter looks like and what such an appearance may mean in Huntingdon. Does this mean that I should/could make use of this as an antiracist strategy – a la race traitor?

The second illustration is transcribed from an audio journal entry. It is a reflection on what I was thinking when Destiny and I were walking away from a community picnic that we had attended:

When it was getting close to the end of the event, it occurred to me that walking, just walking away from the event with Destiny and, interacting naturally as I do with Destiny, was going to be witnessed by the African American woman with her baby carriage there, ‘cause we walked, in essence, right in front of her. And I was somewhat, or I was very self-conscious—almost as though I wanted to enact something in front of her with Destiny, so that she would know that I was an OK person or what have you. So this kind of longing on my part, or desire on my part, to make sure People of Color around me know that I’m a different kind of White person was coming out in yet another way and somewhat uningenuous [sic] way. Um, something that needs to, to be looked at and examined.

My current role as a parent for Destiny means that she is almost constantly at the center of my thoughts and cares. Every decision I make in relation to Destiny is one that I can examine as a decision enmeshed not only in the dynamics of a parent-child relationship, but in the peculiar dynamics of a relationship between a White, male parent and an African American, female child. It is daily life experiences with Destiny that are among my most meaningful opportunities for me to consider the

implications of race and to consider my responses to situations encumbered by the implications of race.

Some of the most enlightening insights and provocative questions that appear in journaling and field notes contain references to Destiny. Here is one example from a written journal entry, edited only for spelling and typographical errors:

Ponder this: How do I intensify my role in this kind of work while NOT becoming the racism crusader? How do I ensure that I am fully human, vulnerable, connected with White folks, yet that I hold this other priority for who and how I am? Destiny in my life gives people a way to dismiss that part of me: “He’s trying to be Black enough for the sake of his child.” “He cares about his child, so he falls for the racism bullshit.” “He is a flaming liberal anti-racism nut, so he has found a way to have a Black child as a status symbol.” WHOAA! This is new, intense, exciting territory to explore.

There are other People of Color with whom I have had relationships across race. I played basketball in school with African American teammates; South Vietnamese refugees lived in my home for the last two years that I lived with my parents before heading to college; at the age of 18, I developed a brief friendship and unspoken, romantic infatuation with a young African American woman; for an entire summer, I lived with a family that included a bi-racial girl whom I came to interact with in much the same way I interacted with my younger sisters; and my best friend and roommate in college was a student from Hong Kong. When I moved into the Uptown neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in the mid-1980s to live, work, worship and play, I formed meaningful relationships with families, coworkers, church

members, community activists and neighbors. One of these neighbors, a young African American teenager named Victor, moved into our home and lived with us for several years. Today Victor refers to me as “dad” and to my wife, Roxanne, as “mom.” It was also at this time in my life that I met and developed a very close relationship with Destiny’s mother, Lisa.

None of these relationships, however, have influenced me as profoundly as my relationship with Destiny. Destiny’s centrality to my life and to my interest in antiracist character formation was often brought to my attention by interview participants. Seldom did I ask a question or make an unsolicited comment about Destiny in the interviews. Nonetheless, interview participants often commented on how the circumstances through which Destiny came to be in our care were immensely pivotal in how I was viewed as a person, not only with respect to race, but with respect to living out many of the values that I purported to champion. It was through my relationship with Destiny that people were convinced that I was “walking the talk” when, in my own mind and image-building efforts, Destiny seemed to be a small player.

I share these descriptions of relationships with Lisa and Destiny to give emphasis to my finding that close personal relationships with people across race, relationships that are based on respect and profound emotional connection, may be a critical ingredient for people of multi-dimensional privilege who engage in the quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. There are many references in my research journaling and field notes to experiences involving Destiny. There are many references to experiences involving People of Color with whom I am only now

beginning to build meaningful relationships. Such relationships may be crucial to prevent inclinations that I and other White people have to ignore, discount, dismiss, deny or simply not see or feel the lived realities of People of Color.

The circumstances of Destiny coming into my life in a major way were very sad circumstances, but ones that seemed to flow naturally. Perhaps my failure to comprehend, at the initiation of my research, Destiny's centrality to my quest indicates that I did not want to attribute the most profound impact on my antiracist character quest to circumstances that were not the object of my own creation and control. Destiny is central to my life as the result of loving relationships that grew naturally over time with Destiny's mother, Lisa, and with Destiny herself. This was not my doing. Clearly I still cherish and defend self-centered delusions of control.

Theme #4: Control

It was only after multiple iterations of analysis and a peer debriefing session that I began to realize the strength of issues of control as a theme in my data. Issues relating to power and control were seldom acknowledged directly in interviews, journaling or field notes. Yet clearly control, delusions of control, and/or fear of loss of control seem to be among the most potent barriers to nurturing White, antiracist character that I am now able to identify. Reflection on themes and subthemes presented earlier in this chapter bring the theme related to issues of control into focus.

Socialization into Ideologies of Control

It seems reasonable to postulate that socialization into multi-dimensional privilege within the context of United States society likely includes socialization into ideologies that attribute life outcomes more to individual competency, effort and

merit than to social structural determinants like structural inequality or systems of ascribed privilege. Thus, people socialized into statuses of privilege may be conditioned to believe that they exert control over certain circumstances and life outcomes. This idea certainly seems to resonate with my own experience.

Immobilization as Fear of Loss of Control

Earlier in this chapter I provided illustrations of the many accounts in my daily journaling and field note data of what I call immobilization in the moment. By this I mean that I often hesitate and/or fail to act or react in a situation involving some overt offense of behavior or speech relating to race or racism. In my experience, this has been, in part, a result of a fear of the loss of social acceptance and belonging. It may be even more about a fear of a loss of control.

My intense engagement in impression management suggests a desire to control images of self, including images of self that may depart from those that conform to expectations for someone of my social location. My conjuring of images of self as a “different kind of White guy” intimates that I seek to control my own identity, certainly more so than is evidenced by someone who is a social conformist. This would seem to be yet another manifestation of White and, especially, multi-dimensional privilege, i.e., the privilege to use one’s accumulated social capital to create non-conforming images of oneself.

Some of the most persistent evidence of my addiction to control relates back to my socialization and to the image-building projects that I discussed earlier. I have always been keenly aware of social expectations for self-control. Here I use the idea of self-control in two ways. First, there is an expectation that I control my emotional

demeanor in public spaces. Secondly, I have been taught the advantage of controlling the image of self that others will see. It is this latter notion that I found to be most significant and problematic with respect to antiracist character formation. Deceiving myself that I can control who I am for myself and others is an ultimate manifestation of my addiction to control.

Controlling the Use of Privilege, for Liberation

One constructive application of control in a quest for White, antiracist character might be to develop control over the ways in which one deliberately uses privilege for agendas that challenge racism. I did discover in my inquiry that there were instances when I seemed to be able to successfully use my privilege as a resource for antiracist action. Earlier in this chapter, in a sub-section titled “Courageous Action,” I shared a couple examples of situations in which my privilege was leveraged with the resources of others in efforts to expose and confront racism.

Specific, privilege-provided life experiences and educational opportunities taught me power analysis and community organizing skills which I have been able to use and to offer to others throughout my life. The relevance of power analysis here relates to the way in which it can elucidate dynamics power and racism, especially as they are manifest within institutions.

In an interview with a former member of the People Against Racism (PAR) group of which I was a participant, the interview respondent and I recalled and reconstructed some of the story of a real estate developer and a United Methodist bishop in the Harrisburg area. These two men collaborated in making plans for neighborhood redevelopment that excluded the voices and consent of neighbors who

would be most affected. It had been the perception of some that I had been complicit with or, at least, weak in my response to this situation. This former PAR member remembered, though, that I had provided access or, as she described it, a “bridge” for her and another community advocate to meet with the United Methodist bishop. She indicated that she felt this was an act of courage for me, given the power of that bishop relative to my role at that time as director of the United Methodist Neighborhood Center. In our interview, I confessed that the level of risk I was taking was carefully “measured.” I said:

But I really appreciate that story because I think, too, sometimes I think I’m being courageous and, I get nervous and scared and yet I do it anyway, and it kinda feels, good. But, I know exactly what you’re talkin’ about, about the, how far one goes with that, you know. And why isn’t that good feeling that I’m doin’ what’s right? And yet, it’s part of what we talked about earlier. I’m frozen between the White privilege stuff and the, the tug of God to, you know, go out and seek justice. . . . So, I couldn’t quite go there. . . . but something about well-meaning White folks, if you think of us as, you know, the typical liberal, kind of, I want to help, and I want to be a different kinda, uh, you know, person, um. Measuring – measuring the, the nature of the risk, almost so that I can tell a story later about how I took a risk, rather than doing it for the reasons it needs to be done.

The interview participant replied:

Exactly. And, and that’s interesting that you say measuring the level of the risk, um, because then the next question I want to ask you is, um. Are you doing this for your own liberation and for your own healing? Or are you doing this because

it will yield Ph.D. in the long run, which will open more White privilege doors for you, which pulls you yet further into this corporate, absorbing self, you know, power kinda thing. And are you doing this because you know your soul, because of your spirit liberation, in a sense, you know. Or is it because you think you're gonna to be doing some good stuff with People of Color? You know, so that.

What is the real, core motive for all of this?

Paradoxically, "controlling" my use of White and other forms of privilege may often best be accomplished by surrendering my willful intent and relying, instead, on a spiritually-based trust that I will respond in loving ways that transcend my privileged statuses. One peer debriefer, as we reviewed some of my preliminary findings together, suggested that I may need to risk this kind of "letting go" of control to find glimpses of how my love, skills, knowledge and use of privilege can flow into a situation.

This same peer debriefer encouraged me to reflect more on my socialized tendency toward cognitive, over-analysis and the immobilization that can result from it. Rather than framing this tendency as some kind of character flaw, failure, or indication of manipulation or malevolence on my part, perhaps I could frame it as an indicator that I am trying to "create a safer space" within which I can "let go." This reasoning suggests that over-analysis and immobilization may be beneficial coping mechanisms that I have learned to use in fearful situations. Perhaps, my peer debriefer suggested, I can transform these coping mechanisms into something like "red flag" signals that prompt me to question what I am fearful of and to appropriately "let go" of my desire to control situations.

**Theme #5: The Unavoidable Spiritual Dimension
and My Consistent Attempts to Avoid It**

The final theme that resonated throughout many interviews, journal entries and archival data was a theme of spirituality. Several interview respondents characterized the quest for antiracist character as a spiritual quest in which one works constantly to reclaim one's humanity. Others framed the requisite spirituality for an antiracism quest with theological frames from their particular faith traditions.

I had to consider that this theme may have emerged because of the specific nature of my experiences and the criteria I used for my purposeful sampling of interview participants. My parents, selected for their knowledge of my early life, have drawn both vocation and profound meaning from their spiritual lives. I intentionally selected participants who had been witnesses to my life within the context of my church community and within the context of the church-related community center where I worked. Many of the members of the People Against Racism group that I selected interview participants from were brought to their antiracism work, in large part, through experiences within their religious denominations.

Yet, it was in an interview with a participant whom I had never encountered in a religious setting and with whom I had never before had a discussion about religion or spirituality that I heard a clear description of the centrality of spirituality as I understand it. This African American man stated that he had been a serious student of African culture and early African civilization for over 35 years. On a trip to the Nile Valley in Egypt he saw artifacts, stories written in stone, and places that he had

only previously read about. He said that on this trip he had an “AH HA” experience. He realized he was seeing the elements of “a spiritual system.” These elements predated and were replicated in all of the world’s religions that followed, he said. The core of this spiritual system was the expectation that one continually work on one’s own humanity through self-discipline:

. . . not a power from without, but a power from within, that had to be refined and worked on constantly in order to be worthy of this existence. . . . And, this was not a religion. It was an actual attempt that persons were making . . . working on self-regulation, as opposed to being regulated, in this pursuit of just being worthy of occupying the space that you’re taking up on the planet. The privilege that you had of bein’ born. . . . But, the essence of it is what still is in the essence of each different form of spirituality. I’m not talking about religions, but the spiritual essence within them.

This interview participant made it clear that he was not referring to a particular religious dogma or faith tradition. He was asserting that the kind of spirituality that commits people to a life-long quest for full humanity is the essence of all faith traditions. The notion that this kind of spirituality entails a lifelong commitment for refining who we are also resonates with the way that Aristotle defined “character.” It was this idea of character that I adopted for this research when referring to White, antiracist character.

Elsewhere in this chapter I referred to the significant socialization influence that the Christian religion and my involvement in the United Methodist Church had on the values I incorporated into my identity early in my life. The church was an

agent of socialization in my life both directly through my own involvement and indirectly through its influence on my parents. This influence was then reinforced as I witnessed my parents' active engagement in the church as an institution, social network and community of people. Because of my particular social location, the church was the institution that provided me with privileged access to occupational opportunity. For me, the church has been the organizational context that has been most fruitful for the kind of power analysis that exposes White privilege and institutional racism. I have also identified church as one of the most important places where I was able to build relationships with People of Color that were not as fully prefabricated by inequalities of power and privilege. It was through my experiences of and in church that I was given some of the most enlightening windows into the implications of my multi-dimensional privilege. Through the church it was conveyed, exposed and, at times, confronted.

Unconditional Love of my Flawed Self

Interview respondents and a peer reviewer indicated that finding my way to an unconditional love of my flawed self may be the key to liberation from obsessions with image-building projects and other self-delusions of control. One interview participant, a Lutheran pastor, quoted Martin Luther in explaining this point about accepting one's own shortcomings, yet lovingly embracing one's potential for ongoing transformation:

simul iustus et peccator ... simultaneously a sinner, but also in the process of being saved. Simultaneously justified by Christ, but also, sinner – *peccator*.
Iustus et peccator in the Latin. And, the more I'm able to continually

appropriate that for myself, the more I am able to, ah, see in myself, and only in myself, these breakdowns in my communication with other people, the disappointments I have caused other people, or the hurts. Um, not to say that I accept them and will sweep them under the counter, but it gives me an opportunity to be able to own it and where necessary to confess it, and being open to critique from other people, without—because I’m a sinner -- *peccator* – it’s like yeah, this hurts to know this, it’s true – what you’re telling me about how I disappointed you or hurt you. But at the same time I take a deep breath, I can hear that and listen to it because, because of what God has done for me in Christ, I’m also *iustus*, I am also being in the process of being redeemed from even that last minute—that most recent infraction of you, or the community or whatever.

Although this interview participant’s description is imbued with the specific language and religious tenets of his faith tradition, the core message is that one must let go of fear, lovingly embrace one’s imperfect self, and be open to new realizations and transformations.

The most elegant expression of this idea was encountered in a very serendipitous way during the course of my research. One of my interview participants suggested two books for me to read relating to White privilege and spirituality. One of the recommendations she made was the critically acclaimed novel by Nigerian author Achebe titled *Things Fall Apart*, which features the impact of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on Nigerian village culture in the

late 1800s (Achebe, 1994). I mistakenly wrote down the title as *When Things Fall Apart*, and I acquired the wrong book and began to read it.

The “wrong” book I was reading seemed to me to be the exact book I needed to be reading. *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*, is a book by Chödrön (2000), who leads a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Canada. Chödrön shared a series of Buddhist principles, the common thread of which seems to be that, by letting go, by allowing things to fall apart, and even by “running toward” our fears, we lose our arrogance and we find our heart. “Fear,” Chödrön (2000) wrote, “is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth” (p.1). Chödrön (2000) also stated:

What we are talking about is getting to know fear, becoming familiar with fear, looking it right in the eye—not as a way to solve problems, but as a complete undoing of old ways of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and thinking. The truth is that when we really begin to do this, we’re going to be continually humbled. There’s not going to be much room for the arrogance that holding onto ideals can bring. The arrogance that inevitably does arise is going to be continually shot down by our courage to step forward a little further. (pp. 2-3) . . .

When things fall apart and we’re on the verge of we know not what, the test of each of us is to stay on that brink and not concretize. The spiritual journey is not about heaven and finally getting to a place that’s really swell. (p. 6)

...being right on the spot nails us. It nails us right to the point of time and space that we are in. When we stop there and don’t act out, don’t repress,

don't blame it on anyone else, and also don't blame it on ourselves, then we meet with an open-ended question that has no conceptual answer. We also encounter our heart. As one student so eloquently put it, 'Buddha nature, cleverly disguised as fear, kicks our ass into being receptive.' (p. 3.)

I quote Chödrön (2000) at length here quite deliberately. I consider these quotes as data collected in the process of my research, rather than as a part of a review of literature. These quotes comprise the most elegant, prescriptive suggestion I have encountered in my research, albeit by sublime happenstance, for me and for any person whose quest, story, social location and/or struggles resonate with my own.

My Consistent Attempts to Avoid Spirituality

I did not initially intend to deeply explore the role of spirituality in the quest for White, antiracist character, although I anticipated it would emerge as a theme. In fact, all evidence suggests that I have avoided or resisted acknowledging my quest as a spiritual one. This avoidance is apparent and persistent from the earliest days that I purported to be concerned about racism. The avoidance is apparent to me despite the fact that I have spoken eloquently and often about the spiritual dimension of antiracism, both in conversations with interview participants and in many conversations with others over the years. Some of these conversations were with people I consider to be my best models and mentors, not only for antiracist character formation, but for learning to be the person I long to be. Here is one of many examples of an interview respondent sharing this kind of message with me:

. . . what holds us together in this walk, this social justice walk, what holds us together is the conviction of our spiritual relationship with God. And, if we

have that conviction from the spiritual walk with God, and we really look at the radial life that Jesus Christ lived, um, we will always self-analyze: I mean, am I doing this because it, it merits me for the position of my dreams, or because I'm really representing what Jesus Christ died for? If you lose that walk, if you don't connect that spiritual walk, ah, then, again you're, you're gonna be capitalizing on your White privilege. I mean, it's just the nature of the beast.

My consistent dismissal or, at least, diminishment of the notion that my spiritual life is the key to realizing my desire to fully embody an antiracist character was evident in my reluctance to incorporate attention to spirituality in my doctoral dissertation. In this transcription of an audio journal entry, it is clear that I was aware of this reluctance and the reasons for it:

But this spiritual plane of, of, um, trying to awake who I am and center myself spiritually is something I keep compartmentalizing in my mind, um, as related to this dissertation work. But almost feeling as though, um, going there may discredit the academic rigor, or perceived academic rigor of what I'm doing, um, and I think that needs to be examined. As to why that whole realm is – I still view as separate, and I fear that others will view as a place I shouldn't go unless, perhaps, I'm a religion doctoral candidate, or, um, maybe they'll view my work as too, uh, pop, self-helpish. Um, so, maybe that's just an invitation to face that fear, that anxiety, and run towards it, like this book's author [Chödrön] said

Signs of spiritual danger. A final subtheme relating to the theme of spirituality relates to recurring, cautionary messages that a number of interview participants shared that might best be characterized as warnings of spiritual danger. These warnings took four forms. First, some felt that the autoethnographic methodology of my dissertation research encouraged the kind of self-absorption and intensive self-examination that can separate people from their spirituality. Second, there was concern that my dissertation journey was one of relative isolation, as I was disconnected from any significant community of support or accountability, and that it was only through community that one stays spiritually connected. Third, people expressed concern that my dissertation research is itself a manifestation of privilege and that completion of my dissertation would embed me even more deeply into systems of multi-dimensional privilege. Finally, one interview participant warned of spiritual danger when she heard me make reference to my “feelings of self-loathing.” As I shared in the in the first chapter of this dissertation, I felt such feelings in response to my apparently successful deception of others when I believed I was “passing” as the “White guy who really gets it.” The warning that the interview respondent issued was this:

I’d be so bold as to say self-loathing is a White privilege, because it has me centering on myself. And, it also has us distanced from our spiritual center, because, God created you. So, if God’s not loathing you, then who the hell do you think you are loathing yourself?

Returning to the Two Essential Findings

I began this chapter by indicating that the themes and subthemes that emerged from inductive analysis support two essential findings. The first is that there may be particularly virulent and insidious obstacles to realizing White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character for people who, like me, are conferred with multiple dimensions of privilege. The second essential finding is that the quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character takes meaningful form only as a part of a larger, holistic humanistic or spiritual quest for transformational love, social justice, and full human liberation.

It is my contention that the details I have provided in this chapter make these two essential themes the self-evident results of my research. I will not reiterate the obstacles that people with multi-dimensional privilege face, nor will I reiterate the evidence of the centrality and import of the spiritual dimension.

What I will offer, here, however, is a more expressive representation of some of the themes and subthemes presented in this chapter on research results. The theoretical framing for my dissertation research included references to the value of such expression. This alternate representation of some of my research findings is in the form of a piece of creative writing I have titled “The Crownsville Conversation,” and it can be found in Appendix H. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the centerpiece of this work is the Crownsville story that my mother shared with me when I interviewed her. This piece of writing is a fictional conversation that is tightly connected to interview transcripts and field notes.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The two essential findings of my research were in some respects anticipated, while in other ways quite unanticipated. My results both share strong commonalities with existing literature on White, antiracist character, yet seem to offer some new insights as well.

I anticipated, for example, my finding that people conferred with multiple dimensions of privilege experience many obstacles to realizing White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. I indicated this expectation when, in the second chapter of this dissertation, I endorsed West's (1999) "neo-Gramscian" theoretical assertion that racism is not only embedded within economic structures, but also within the hegemonic cultural domain. People with multiple dimensions privilege are highly invested in both economic and cultural hegemony, so they can clearly be expected to face a variety of impediments when they commit themselves to challenging manifestations of racism within themselves and others, and within institutional structures.

What I did not foresee concerning this finding, however, were some of the particular forms that these impediments take. Nor did I anticipate the persistent, insidious ways in which I, myself, am complicit in creating and maintaining these impediments. My own participation became a form of self-sabotage, as I unwittingly frustrated my own sincere aspirations to nurture and sustain antiracist character. The clearest example of this kind of self-sabotage is the antiracist image-building enterprise that I described in the previous chapter. This enterprise constantly evolved as I adapted to each threat of identity exposure. As I grew in my understanding of the variety of

manifestations of White privilege, for example, I transformed new insights and new levels of awareness not only into fuel for antiracist character development, but also into tools for constructing an increasingly sophisticated, but partially disingenuous antiracist identity to present to others. This struggle persists with me to this day, but my dissertation research has helped me to expose the workings of these processes in a way that I hope enables me and others to confront and challenge them.

Perhaps I should have anticipated the second essential finding as well. For many years, my most cherished and respected antiracism mentors challenged me to consider and accept that my spiritual life must be at the core of an authentic quest for antiracist character. What was unforeseen at the commencement of my research was just how strongly and frequently this theme would emerge in all forms of data collected from all time periods of my lifespan. Spiritual resources could be the most potent resources with which to overcome the obstacles I have faced and continue to face. My interpretation of my research results is that resistance to embracing this possibility has, itself, been yet another manifestation of the impact of my socialization into multi-dimensional privilege.

In this final chapter of my dissertation, I will expound on these two essential themes by presenting discussion on the specific ways in which my research findings relate to existing literature on White, antiracist character formation. I reviewed some of this literature in Chapter 3, and I encountered or sought out additional literature as the results of data analysis began to emerge. I will next present a discussion of the contributions my research makes to the body of knowledge concerning the nurturance and sustenance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character and the implications my findings seem to suggest for people who aspire to nurture and sustain an authentic

White, antiracist character. I will end the chapter and the dissertation with a discussion of the limitations of my research, suggestions for future inquiry, and an invitation for discourse.

Connections with Existing Literature

Connections with the Initial Literature Review

Socialization into values of privilege. One key finding suggests that socialization into core, hegemonic cultural values and into multi-dimensional privilege eventually challenged and perhaps even trumped strong counter influences from my parents and various media content to which I was exposed in early life. In my literature review of some of the earliest sociological theorizing concerning race, I presented Ward's (1906, 1968) theoretical contention that, although people of all races share equally in their capacity to make use of the social inheritance, people are not given equal opportunity to receive this inheritance. This is at the core of the dominance that multidimensional privilege confers upon those who possess it.

I do not wish to discount or diminish values and beliefs relating to universal human worth and respect, justice and injustice, and personal responsibility for love, concern and action on behalf of suffering people. These values into which my parents socialized me were clearly not totally displaced by socialization into privilege. Evidence of that is my remaining disquietedness, my dissatisfaction with my own character, and the dedication of this dissertation to my continuing personal quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. My research results, however, provide evidence that socialization into multidimensional privilege resulted in at least a substantial subordination of these values to core cultural values such as

independence, individualism, competition, control and White supremacy.

Socialization into these values occurred within social contexts of peers, school workplace, and community.

The status set that comprises social location (sex, race, ethnicity, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) for a person of multi-dimensional privilege like me is coupled with socialization into independence, individualism, competition, control and White supremacy. These cultural values are reinforced in macro-, mezzo-, and micro-social contexts. In my case, and in the lives of many others, this socialization may be mitigated by secular or religious reeducation or through the modeling of significant others that includes counter-hegemonic values of justice, equality, altruism and collective endeavor.

Part of socialization into Whiteness also includes enforcement of norms that discourages cognizance and examination of White privilege itself and of institutional forms of racism. This unique package of socialization presents uniquely intensive challenges to the development of White, antiracist character.

In particular, the value of individualism exacerbated my struggles to nurture antiracist character by limiting my competencies for building relationships that could have supported my development of antiracist character. Individualism and desires for control also contributed to my inclination to engage in the image-building that thwarted my embodiment of a more authentic antiracist character. The centrality of this value of individualism was one that appeared in the initial literature review that I provided in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. For example, Croteau's (1999) first-person narrative chronicled his own emergent realization that racism is, in part, manifest in

him and in many White people as individualism. For Croteau, individualism permitted him to abdicate responsibility by placing the locus for racism in the moral or psychological failures of individual White people from whom he could dissociate.

The blessing and the curse of the fluidity of whiteness. In the literature review in Chapter 3, I referred to Bonnett's (1996) interest in "the multiple and shifting boundaries of 'whiteness'" and the "hybrid nature of 'racial' subjectivities" (p. 105). Bonnett rejected antiracist discourse that presents Whiteness as fixed and difficult to change. She contended, instead, that Whiteness is temporal, fluid and/or contingent on social context. Bonnett's mission to promote a more complex, multifaceted and fluid conceptualization of Whiteness would seem to be the prerequisite to any contention that a White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character can, indeed, be nurtured and sustained.

While reification of Whiteness as immutable would seem to serve the perpetuation of White privilege and racism, its fluidity can be received as a blessing or a curse with respect to White, antiracist character formation. White people must embrace that we can change, yet my autoethnography has also revealed ways in which fluid dynamics of Whiteness can also frustrate desires to change. The continually evolving nature of my image-building project is a case in point. I consistently used new information and insights to build more sophisticated antiracist imagery of myself. For example, I once shared my new understanding that antiracist speech and action can be motivated by one's desired approval, acceptance and forgiveness from People of Color in an attempt to build an impression of myself that

my own antiracist action was no longer primarily motivated by these desires. It still was and is.

Feeling stuck, but acknowledging and embracing dynamic tension. In Chapter 3, I summarized Helms' (1993) developmental stages of racial identity together with the body of research now based on her model. My autoethnography would seem to place me somewhere between the two final stages of Helms' model, between the stage she calls "Immersion/Emersion" and the stage she calls "Autonomy." Helms characterizes the Immersion/Emersion stage as "attempts to redefine one's own Whiteness from a non-racist perspective and to reeducate other Whites in a similar vein." The Autonomy stage involves the "internalization of a non-racist White perspective coupled with a willingness to eschew the benefits of racism as well as to avoid assuming that the sociopolitical experiences of Whites in this country necessarily apply to all other racial groups." (Helms, 1993, pp. 241-242).

In light of my contention of the importance of the cultural value of independence in frustrating the development of White, antiracist character, it seems ironic that Helms would choose the word "autonomy" to refer to the apex of her developmental model of White racial identity. One way to characterize the "source of my disquiet" that I described in Chapter 1 and which led to the research question for my dissertation research is that it represents a feeling of being stuck in my attempt to move from Immersion/Emersion to Autonomy. While some aspects of my life indicate a measured willingness to eschew some of the benefits of racism and my multidimensional privilege, a fully genuine internalization of a non-racist, White

perspective has eluded me. One interview participant characterized this tension as a “flirtatious relationship with White privilege. She said:

I know that you haven’t given up on [your African American fictive son] Victor, and I know that your investment with [your African American fictive daughter, Destiny] is real, it’s not fake. Ah, but, it, it’s got to be, almost like a conflict inside of you, because here you live in a world that says ‘that is not the best way to go.’ Um, and yet you’re going that way and then you still kinda flirt with access and White privileges. You know what I’m saying? You have this flirtatious relationship with White privilege.

In my initial literature review, I made a brief reference to O’Brien’s (2001) field research on pathways to antiracist action for White people. O’Brien’s inquiry provided illustrations of alternative ideological models of White anti-racism, accounts of individual antiracist strategies, and some of the ways to sustain personal struggles associated with White antiracism. Referring to Helms’ developmental model O’Brien (2001) wrote:

It will become evident that indeed being “stuck” in any of these positions does interfere with effective antiracism, and achieving what Helms has labeled as Autonomy would seem to be a necessary precondition for antiracism. Yet the emotional-psychological struggles do not end there. Even Autonomous white antiracists are persistently tested by criticism from both whites and people of color, and the tenacity of their commitment is challenged on many levels. In particular, gaining the respect and trust of people of color.... (p. 107)

O'Brien (2001) asserted that her research revealed two main barriers in establishing such trust. These barriers she calls "(1) lack of true *empathy* and (2) lack of openness to criticism and willingness to admit mistakes – what one activist of color referred to as *humility*." (p. 107). O'Brien elaborated by referring to a concept coined by Delgado (1996) called "false empathy." False empathy is founded on paternalistic assumptions by White people about what People of Color want or need.

O'Brien's work relates to my research findings in a number of ways. Journaling and field note data revealed to me that I continue to exhibit a persistent and significant dose of false empathy in my interactions with People of Color. My primary resource for transcending false empathy came from relationships across race that were steeped in deep mutual respect and in a measure of love and emotional investment that is more typical of close family relationships. These relationships brought me more directly into the hurt and pain of racism and into an ongoing way of processing my social reality that continually included an assessment of the consequences of race, racism and privilege.

One of my faults in efforts to nurture and sustain antiracist character is the cerebral, over-analytical "mental masturbation" that I engage in. I have, however, also developed an ability and desire to be open to criticism. This kind of openness is one of the components of the kind of humility O'Brien (2001) found to be essential if Whites are to form trusting relationships with People of Color. This dissertation may be the best illustration of my openness to criticism. Yet, in another respect, choosing an autoethnographic dissertation as the vehicle for disclosure is choosing to disclose while maintaining a tremendous amount of control. Also, as I shared in the previous

chapter, I have experienced my past self-disclosure activity as having multiple motivations. At times it seems to be an ingredient of my increasingly sophisticated image-building enterprises. At other times it has felt like open confession springing from the kind of humility O'Brien referred to.

Clearly a dynamic tension is evident with respect to my quest to nurture and sustain a White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character. The tension appears as competing socialization influences in my early life. It appears as disquietedness and as my mixed motivations for deepening my understanding of privilege and racism. It appears as a flirtation with White privilege. It appears as a sensation of developmental motion and, at other times, as feeling "stuck." Perhaps, in a paradoxical way, my struggles with this dynamic tension comprise the strongest evidence that I embody some modicum of White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character. Given my Aristotelian conceptualization of character as a continual process rather than a static state, I should, with humility, celebrate and embrace the dynamic tension, the paradox and the ambiguity. Perhaps what I should fear is the day that I sincerely believe that I have "arrived" as a White antiracist.

Relationships. O'Brien's (2001) work is strongly connected to my research findings in one more significant way. O'Brien contrasted the ideologies of two antiracist organizations as a way of demonstrating that there are multiple pathways to and forms of antiracism. The two organizations she compares are Anti-Racist Action and the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. Coincidentally, the latter of these two organizations played a significant role in framing the ideology for the People Against Racism (PAR) group that was so influential in my earliest examination of

racism and White privilege. Members of PAR are among the people I purposefully selected to interview for dissertation research. This may account for the strong alignment I found between my findings with themes that O'Brien highlighted in her work. One of these aligned themes is what O'Brien called moving beyond "pseudo-independence" by maintaining relationships. In the previous chapter of this dissertation, I provided evidence for subthemes concerning my propensity to dissociate or avoid connection with White people who exhibited less understanding or concern about racism than I did. I also presented evidence of the difficulty I experienced in maintaining relationships with other White antiracists. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond and People Against Racism share a key ideological tenet for organizing to combat racism. That tenet is to build communities of accountability and support by maintaining authentic relationships across race and with antiracists of one's own racial identity. My research results relating to relationships helped to document just how difficult this can be.

Connections with other autobiographical narratives. In my literature review in Chapter 3, I reviewed several illustrations of work that could be considered autoethnography or approximations thereof. The stigma reported by White men who have adopted "traitorous identities" (Thompson, Schaefer, & Brod, 2003; Wise, 2005) was not a strong theme in my own research. My supposition as to why this is the case is that my hesitancy to fully integrate antiracism into my identity, coupled with the dynamics of what I called "immobilization in the moment," has prevented me from engaging in many of the kinds of confrontations that could have resulted in such a stigma. Furthermore, my field note and journaling data strongly reflected my daily

experiences in my current occupational setting, which is a small, liberal arts college. Juniata College is historically related to the Church of the Brethren, a Christian denomination with a strong social justice theological emphasis. In such settings, the voicing of justice concerns of any kind, including criticism of institutionalized manifestations of racism and privilege, are tolerated and even expected from faculty and, particularly, from sociology faculty. It would seem that fairly extreme expressions, criticisms or demands would need to be made before significant negative sanctions and stigmatization occur.

The autobiographical storytelling by Kendall (2006) and Wise (2005) reviewed in Chapter 3 illustrate dynamics of White privilege, institutional racism and hegemonic White supremacy. Kendall (2006) concluded with prescriptions for White people intent on becoming cognizant of White privilege and acting in antiracist ways. These prescriptions include “the importance of doing our personal work,” “overcoming barriers to clarity,” “becoming an ally and building authentic relationships across race,” and “the challenge and necessity of making race our issue” (p. vii). These prescriptions, although general in nature, appear to be somewhat responsive to the obstacles to White, antiracist character I identified in my research. My research itself has been “personal work” that has helped me to gain clarity. My findings relating to relationships connect to Kendall’s prescription for building authentic relationships across race, and my eventual recognition of the centrality of spirituality to my quest for White, antiracist character is an acknowledgement that antiracism is an “issue” that needs to be claimed by me and by all White people concerned with their own humanity.

Finally, I see strong connections to a narrative written by Wise (2005) that was included in my literature review. Wise organizes his storytelling around six major themes he identified in the process of becoming a White antiracist. These themes are belonging, privilege, resistance, collaboration, loss and redemption. Although Wise used slightly different vocabulary, emphases and organization, all of his themes are reflective of the themes that emerged from my own autoethnographic research. In particular, Wise presented his themes in an order that suggests a developmental process. The first several themes depict socialization into privilege and early recognition of the need to reject that socialization and channel privilege in a way that challenges racism. I would situate myself in what Wise would characterize as a period of “loss.” Wise ends his narrative with a spiritual theme of redemption that resonates with my own essential theme relating to spirituality.

Connections with Literature Encountered Subsequent to Initial Analysis

During the phases of my research in which I was collecting data and subjecting it to multiple iterations of inductive analysis, I sought out or encountered relevant literature that I had not included in my initial literature review. Rather than revising my literature review, I made a decision to present this newly found literature in this chapter. I made this choice because this new literature came to my attention and captured my interest only because of the research results that were emerging. These few additional literature sources relate very tightly to my research results.

Additional insight on image-building. What I have referred to as the self-image building project has been perhaps the most insidious, obstructive force preventing me from more fully realizing White, antiracist character. When, through

my inductive analysis, I began to grasp the profound importance of this as a research finding, I sought out some additional literature that might sharpen my understanding of this phenomenon.

Image-building and dramaturgical improvisation. The dynamics of what I call an image-building project have been recognized and examined within sociology and social psychology literature as a ubiquitous phenomenon referred to as self-presentation or impression management. Goffman, in his seminal work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), presented impression management as one component of dramaturgical sociological analysis. Goffman's work laid the groundwork for a rich body of research literature that details self-presentation as a process through which people seek to influence perceptions of their image, often by manipulating information in social interactions (Schlenker, 1980).

In dramaturgical analysis terms, my experience of the image-building process might best be described as a series of improvisational enactments. I had very few role models and no prepared script to enact. My self-presentation as a White antiracist was a series of one-act improvisational performances that varied with the sophistication of my character development and the particular audience for whom I was performing. What I learned from each performance became material that I could draw on for subsequent performances. If my audience was a group of White people whom I presumed were less rehearsed in the enactment of antiracism, I might present a self-assured, even self-righteous demeanor. If I was performing for People of Color who were members of the People Against Racism group, I would present a self-deprecating, vulnerable, eager-to-learn and humble deportment.

Image-building and window pains. One of the peer debriefers for my research reminded me of a heuristic device that I had encountered many years ago. The analytical device was developed by Luft and Ingham (1955) and it is called the Johari Window. The Johari Window is a two-by-two matrix of four “window panes.” Pane 1 is the part of ourselves that both we and others see called “the arena.” Pane 2, the “blind spot,” is the part of ourselves others see, but that we are not aware of. Pane 3 is “the unknown” realm that contains the unconscious or subconscious aspects of self that are seen by neither us nor others. Pane 4 is called “the façade,” and refers to our private space, which we know but keep from others. Presumably, as the scope of any one of these panes expands, others contract, and vice versa. For example, increasing the information about oneself that is shared with others simultaneously expands the arena pane while reducing the façade pane.

As I considered the ways in which my image-building activity evolved in pursuit of White antiracist character, I found the Johari Window to be a helpful organizational and analytical device. For example, my reluctance to engage in self-disclosure storytelling with African American co-workers at the Neighborhood Center prevented the kind of expansion of the arena pane that could have engendered more trusting relationships with those co-workers. In this same period of my life, African Americans seemed to be seeing aspects of my identity that I was not seeing myself. The blind spot pane of the Johari Window prevented me from realizing that my attempts to project an image as a different kind of White person were recognized as such by others. This blind naiveté was even exploited as a resource by some of my

co-workers. The blind spot pane of the Johari Window also includes my oblivion to the “trying too hard” quality of my identity that others were seeing.

When I shared with a peer debriefer some of the insights that the Johari Window provided for me, she saw analogy to the recurring use of “the veil” as a metaphor in African American literature (Du Bois, 2003). One use of this metaphor refers to those occasions when African Americans have disclosed those aspects of their identity that Whites have seldom seen, considered or examined. Perhaps my dissertation represents an analogous lifting of a veil that has hidden some aspects of the identity of aspiring White antiracists with multidimensional privilege. These hidden aspects of identity are likely less hidden from People of Color than they are from other White people. In my chapter on research results, I provided evidence of the perceptiveness of People of Color of various aspects of White identity that may be hidden from others. This was a theme I presented in the “African American Literary Expression of Race and Racism” section of my Chapter 3 literature review as well (Roediger, 1998). If this dissertation represents the lifting of a veil, it is a veil that has hidden some of the limitations and inadequacies of White antiracist identities from the people who purport to have those identities and from other White people. These are aspects of White antiracist identity that, for many, reside in the Johari Window pane of the unknown.

One aspect of my identity that the Johari Window does not seem to account for is the part of my image-building and self-presentation that has been deliberately deceptive. It is as though I have, at times, lifted a veil in order to reveal a masked face to others. Perhaps the process of moving toward an authentic, White, antiracist

character involves intentional efforts to expand the arena pane, to minimize the scope of the other three panes, and to remove the mask that lies behind the lifted veil.

Image-building and conspicuous authenticity. In searching for pathways to nurturing and sustaining White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character for people with multiple dimensions of privilege, I became very interested in exploring motivations I and others have had for engaging in the social deviance of self-presenting as active, White antiracists. For some, the deviance may be an altruistic expression of commitment to social justice. I believe that has been a part of my own motivation, primarily rooted in the enduring impact of the socialization influences of my parents. For others, engaging in the social deviance of a White antiracist identity could be a deliberate strategic decision to resist and confront racism, such as that exhibited by members of the “New Abolitionist Movement” that I highlighted in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. In Chapter 5, I presented that seeking the approval, love, forgiveness and acceptance of others, and especially of People of Color, can be a major motivational component. Another motivation could be a sincere desire to embody antiracist character and reclaim one’s humanity as a person who exhibits and lives out counter-hegemonic values through a spiritual commitment to transformational love, which is a vision of movement to authentic White antiracist character that I will address later in this discussion.

In the midst of the data analysis phase of my research, I serendipitously encountered the ideas of journalist and writer Potter (2010). Potter provided an elegant description and analytical critique of what he refers to as the post-modern quest for authenticity. Potter argued that the notion of finding or forging one’s true,

distinctive, authentic identity has been a response to a malaise of post-modern alienation. Potter went so far as to draw an analogy to the recognized sociological concept of conspicuous consumption, by which people seek status by consuming and conspicuously displaying material symbols of a desired status. Potter's notion of conspicuous authenticity refers to status seeking through conspicuous pursuits of alternative consumption choices (e.g. buying green; living simply; driving alternative energy vehicles; consuming locally grown foods; and vacations of eco-tourism, community service, or home stays with struggling families in struggling communities around the world).

Potter (2010) wrote:

. . . the search for the authentic is positioned as the most pressing quest of our age, satisfying at the same time the individual need for meaning and self-fulfillment and a progressive economic and political agenda that is sustainable, egalitarian and environmentally friendly.

. . . authenticity is none of these things. Instead, I argue that the whole authenticity project that has occupied us moderns for the past two hundred and fifty years is a hoax. It has never delivered on its promise, and it never will.

. . . Rather, . . . there really is no such thing as authenticity, not in the way it needs to exist for the widespread search to make sense. Authenticity is a way of talking about things in the world, a way of making judgments, staking claims and expressing preferences about our relationships to one another, to the world, and to things. But those judgments, claims, or preferences don't pick out real properties in the world. . . .

We are caught in the grip of an ideology about what it means to be an authentic self, to lead an authentic life, and to have authentic experiences. At its core is a form of individualism that privileges self-fulfillment and self-discovery, and while there is something clearly worthwhile in this, the dark side is the inherently antisocial, nonconformist, and competitive dimension to the quest. . . . competitive pressures to constantly run away from the masses and their conformist, homogenized lives. . . . a disguised form of status-seeking, the principal effect of which is to generate resentment among others. (pp. 13-15)

My intense engagement in impression management suggests a desire to control images of self, including images that may depart from those that conform to expectations for someone of my social location. My conjuring of images of self as a “different kind of White guy,” intimates that I seek to control my own identity, certainly more so than is evidenced by someone who is a social conformist. These efforts can be likened to Potter’s notion of conspicuous authenticity insofar as they may represent a novel form of status seeking by forging a nonconformist, individualistic identity that is contrary to the kind of transcendence of self-interest and communal identity that may be essential to eschewing privilege and confronting racism. My White, antiracist identity-building may be best understood as an illusionary pursuit of authenticity that is yet another manifestation of White and, especially, multi-dimensional privilege. In this case, privilege takes the form of using one’s accumulated social capital and privilege to create non-conforming images of

one's self, perhaps motivated by a desire to gain even higher levels of social status within privileged groups.

The nexus of image-building and addiction to control. Before leaving the topic of image-building and its connection to the extant literature, I will comment on the nexus between image-building and control. Control was another theme that emerged in my research. Issues of control, delusions of control, and/or fear of loss of control seem to be central barriers to nurturing White, antiracist character. With privilege comes the perception and expectation that one can exercise significant control over one's life, primarily through the use of power, wealth and opportunity.

Some of the most persistent evidence of my addiction to control relates to my socialization into privilege. I have always been keenly aware of social expectations for self-control. Here I use the idea of self-control in two ways. First, I have always perceived, yet at times successfully resisted, an expectation that I control my emotional demeanor in public spaces. Secondly, I have been taught that it is to my advantage to tightly control the image of self that others will see. It is this latter notion that links issues of control to image-building in a way that is profoundly problematic for antiracist character formation. Deceiving myself that I can control who I am for myself and others is an indicator of that part of my socialization into privilege that includes socialization into an expectation that I am a holder of power and control.

I do not wish to convey that I am little more than a deceptive control monger whose antiracist demeanor is entirely self-serving. As I indicated previously, my persisting disquietedness is evidence of the persisting strength of the values into

which my parents socialized me. Also, my continuing enactment of an antiracist identity, irrespective of my motivations, has deepened my insight and my participation in justice-seeking action. Finally, relationships across race that have been based on deep levels of both mutual respect and emotional commitment have profoundly enhanced my desire and willingness to act for liberation and social justice. I feel I must be careful, however, not to overemphasize these aspects of my research findings. Doing so, I believe, obfuscates the more helpful insights that my research provides, which relate to the impediments to my realization of White, antiracist character and the possibilities for overcoming those impediments. One of those possibilities lies in the promise of transformational love.

Transformational love. I came upon a conceptualization of transformational love in another salient source that I encountered only after my research results began to take form. That source was a book by Rush (2000) titled, *Loving Across the Color Line: A White Adoptive Mother Learns About Race*. When I shared some of my biographical background and the purposes of my dissertation research with one of my peer debriefers, she recommended Rush's book to me. Rush's book is an account of her own reeducation concerning race, which took place primarily through experiences relating to her relationship with her adopted African American child. Rush, who is White, told stories that resonated with some of my own experiences helping to parent my fictive, African American son, Victor and, now, my fictive African American daughter, Destiny.

One direct connection of Rush's story with my autoethnography is her characterization of those situations in which some decision must be made as to whether or not to directly confront another White person who has revealed racial

prejudice through some offensive, bigoted remark or deed. In my chapter on research results I referred to the immobilization that I often feel in these circumstances.

Rush (2000) shared an illustrative story about a friend of her parents who used the word “nigger” at the dinner table in Rush’s own home and in the presence of her parents. Rush explained that she chose not to confront the offender but, instead, to leave the room. According to her account, though, she was not experiencing the immobilization that I so often experience. She explained that her parents cannot hear well and that, if she would have confronted the offender, she would have likely had to scream out the nature of the offense several times in order for her parents to understand what had happened. Rush realized later that she had inadvertently helped the offending person to save face with her parents and maintain their friendship. Rush received a Christmas card months later in which the offender apologized and expressed remorse. Reflecting on this experience, Rush surmised that immediate, self-righteous confrontation and condemnation may not allow for the kind of personal transformation that can occur when displeasure is communicated, but relationships are maintained.

In my chapter on research results I shared that, although I believe that relationships with offending White people must be maintained if there is to be hope for personal transformation and liberation from racism, I have also found it very difficult to enact this belief in daily practice. My decision to avoid confrontation has been less about preserving relationships than about socialization into privilege that includes conflict avoidance with other people of privilege. It would seem that antiracist character must include a love of White folks, whether they are naive,

ignorant, offensive and/or, like me, purporting to pursue transformation. This love must be strong enough to motivate me to lovingly confront them so that their humanity and mine can be salvaged.

Crediting an essay that she co-wrote and published with Johnson and Feagin (2000), Rush (2000) articulated a construct she calls “transformational love.” She contrasts her idea of transformational love with both empathic love and parental love in this way:

Transformational love, as I mean it here, differs from my empathetic feelings for Blacks or even for my daughter. It also is different from the “typical” motherly love I have for my daughter. Instead, transformational love combines my empathy for all Blacks with my motherly love for my daughter. ...empathic pain develops *only because someone else is hurt* [emphasis in the original] and witnessing the harm triggers the emotional response.

Transformative love, in contrast, moves beyond racial empathy because it does not depend on Whites’ imaginations. A person who experiences transformative love literally *feels* some of the direct pain caused by racism.... Importantly, I am not saying that I *know* what Blacks feel when racism hits them; I don’t and I never will. I am saying that I used to think empathy was as close as one could get to understanding another’s pain. Loving across the color line, I am feeling something that is deeper and more personal than empathic pain. Ironically, this new feeling, although situated in feeling the pain of racial injustice, is more empowering than empathy when it is mixed with love.

Thus, in addition to my racial empathy, my love for my daughter also was essential for me to feel transformational love. (Rush, 2000, pp. 168-169)

Transformational love, as Rush has conceptualized it, would seem to be an ideal prescription for overcoming some of the unique barriers to realizing White antiracist character that were exposed through my research. Furthermore, transformational love is empowered by two resources that I have already begun to develop, those being empathic love for People of Color harmed by racism, and familial love for my fictive African American children Victor and Destiny, and for my fictive African American sister, Lisa. This love must now especially be extended to White people and people of multidimensional privilege who, I know, are dehumanized by the consequences of their privilege.

James Baldwin: Love takes off the masks. In my literature review in Chapter 3, I provided a very cursory reference to the significance of the body of literary work by African American intellectuals that I found relevant to my research. After composing much of the discussion of my research results, I saw direct connections to a number of contributions from this body of literature. Most notably, I found resonance with Johnson's (1960) point that "colored people of this country know and understand the white people better than the white people know and understand them," (Roediger, 1998 p. 5).

Johnson's point rings loud and clear for me now, especially in light of a passage that I found in Baldwin's writings of the early 1960s. In this brief passage, Baldwin articulates what could serve as an executive summary of my research results. Here is the passage:

Therefore, a vast amount of the energy that goes into what we call the Negro problem is produced by the White man's profound desire not to be judged by those who are not white, not to be seen as he is, and at the same time a vast amount of the white anguish is rooted in the white man's equally profound need to be seen as he is, to be released from the tyranny of his mirror. All of us know, whether or not we are able to admit it, that mirrors can only lie, that death by drowning is all that awaits one there. It is for this reason that love is so desperately sought and so cunningly avoided. Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within. I use the word "love" here not merely in the personal sense but as a state of being, or a state of grace—not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth. (Baldwin, 1962, p. 128)

In this one passage, written when I was about 3 years old, Baldwin demonstrated the lucidity of his understanding of the life quest that lay before me; a quest that I am only now beginning to understand. He understood the anguish rooted in my desire to control or avoid the judgments of others and especially those of People of Color. He understood the contradictions of my profound desires to both mask my identity and to liberate myself from the "death by drowning" that self-deceiving, narcissistic mirroring brings. He recognized, as I have only begun to, that transformational love must provide the hope and the courage for my continuing quest to remove "the masks that [I] fear [I] cannot live without and know [I] cannot live within." (Baldwin, 1962, p. 128).

It's a spiritual journey. Rush's (2000) writing is strongly connected with my autoethnography in one more profound way. Rush concluded that the struggle against racism is a spiritual quest. Rush (2000) ended her book with a section titled "IT'S A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, MOM," featuring a writing by her then 9-year-old daughter (pp. 172-174).

In Chapter 5, I shared my encounter with writings by Chödrön (2000), who suggested that by letting go, by allowing things to fall apart, and even by running toward our fears, we lose our arrogance and we find our heart.

Foregoing my use of White and other forms of privilege may best be accomplished by surrendering my willful intent and relying, instead, on a spiritually-based trust that I will respond in loving ways that transcend my privileged statuses. One peer debriefer, as we reviewed some of my preliminary findings concerning spirituality, suggested that I may need to risk this kind of "letting go" of control to find glimpses of how my love, skills, knowledge and use of privilege can flow into a situation or relationship. She also encouraged me to reflect more on my socialized tendency toward cognitive over-analysis and the immobilization that often results. She suggested that, rather than framing this tendency as some kind of character flaw, failure, or manipulative malevolence on my part, perhaps I could frame it as an indicator that I am trying to "create a safer space" within which I can "let go." This reasoning implies that over-analysis and immobilization may be beneficial coping mechanisms that I have learned to use in fearful situations. Perhaps, my peer debriefer suggested, I can transform these coping mechanisms into something like

“red flag” signals that prompt me to question what I am fearful of and prompt me to appropriately let go of my desire to control or avoid people or situations.

Given the tremendous perceived benefits of White and multi-dimensional privilege, there is a lot to let go of. If power, control, resources, opportunities, prestige and all the other trappings of privileged social locations are to be released, it is clear that one’s values, motivations and desires must transcend self-interest, insecurity and fear. Even the kind of caring and concern that is empathic or that is based on intimate relationship seems insufficient. It would appear that only unconditional, transformational love for self and others will suffice if people with multi-dimensional privilege are to be successful in letting go.

Finally, spirituality also relates to the idea of character as I have constructed it for my research. In Chapter 5, I shared the account from an interview participant who, in a visit to the Nile Valley, had an epiphany. He saw evidence of a system of spirituality that he said predated, highly influenced, and yet transcended today’s world religions. He asserted that this system of spirituality was fully integrated within Egyptian culture, and that it committed people to a life-long quest for full humanity.

Although I did not choose to do the kind of extensive research that would be needed to more fully confirm and understand the spiritual system to which this interview respondent referred, his characterization of spirituality in this way resonates with what I have come to discern to be a critical ingredient for a quest for White, antiracist character. A spirituality that entails a lifelong commitment to constantly refining who we are echoes Aristotle’s conceptualization of “character,” one of the

key components of Bailey's (1998) construct of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character that I adopted for my research.

Alternative Analytical Lenses

Given the original formulation of my research question, the primary analytical lens that I used for inductive analysis of my collected data was a lens of race. As I consider the thematic patterns that came into focus using the lens of race, I see patterns that suggest that the application of other analytical lenses would provide a more complete spectrum of understandings that are inextricably connected to those made evident through the race lens. Alternative lenses could include those based on other dimensions of privilege such as those associated with gender, age, social class, sexual orientation, religion or citizenship. Additional analytical lenses that seem salient to the particular data set I collected are lenses relating to silence, power, shame, guilt or fear. In order to illustrate the potential of applying alternative analytical lenses, I provide two examples here.

Visions Through a Gender Lens

In Chapter 5, some of the earliest results that I presented related to my socialization into multi-dimensional privilege. My subsequent, nearly exclusive reference to multi-dimensional privilege rather than White privilege in my dissertation writing was a reflection of the realization in my own life story of a theoretical assertion that I had encountered in the scholarly literature. That assertion is that one's racial identity and racially-based privilege cannot be understood in isolation from other dimensions of identity and privilege.

Gender is one such dimension of identity and privilege. I made minor, periodic references to the significance of gender throughout my reporting of results in Chapter 5. Gender stereotyping was evident in the stories and illustrations of childhood books and record albums. Socialization into gender was the central theme of a story that appears in Appendix G of this dissertation. In this story my mother recounted how, during my Kindergarten years, she began to relinquish her standing as the most influential socialization agent in my life. Notes I had taken in public school courses recorded the normative use of the term “man” to refer to all human beings.

If I had composed my dissertation research question, sensitizing concepts, interview questions and data sampling criteria to solicit data and insights through a lens of gender, I no doubt would have found patterns that paralleled those I found using the lens of race. I believe I would have also seen evidence of the ways in which race and gender combine, intersect and interact to compound the challenges for realizing human healing and liberation.

As I reflect on these possibilities now, I see many ways in which gender is woven into my autobiographical story and into the mezzo- and macro-social contexts of my life. One archival document that was part of my research data set was a handwritten letter that I wrote as a college freshman to my mother. In the letter I lamented that I had tried out for a play that was cancelled for lack of a sufficient number of male actors, and that many women had been losing acting opportunities at my college for this reason. I wrote to my mother that I was considering writing a play with an all-women cast. In the same letter, I informed my mother that a female student with four years of firefighting experience had been denied membership in the local fire

company, one of the most important socio-political institutions in the town. I indicated to my mother that I was going to be supporting this woman at a local meeting to explore possible litigation. For a research project in a college sociology course I conducted a study of sex role stereotyping in children's literature, drawing a sample of children's books from the local town library. Clearly, at this time of transitional adulthood, I was beginning to understand socialization into gender and I was taking an active interest in addressing gender-based discrimination.

I also shared in Chapter 5 the recollection provided by an interview participant who had been a member with me in the People Against Racism (PAR) group. Her memory was that, during my involvement with PAR, I had "a lot of White male stuff to work through . . . White male enculturation that you received."

The people of PAR sometimes met as a full body of its members but, more often, met in two, separate "caucuses;" a "People of Color Caucus" and a "European American Caucus." The decision to meet in these caucuses was based on the recognition that people in the two groups had separate challenges and roles in dismantling racism. European Americans needed to wrestle with issues related to White privilege and to their complicity with oppression and ideologies of White supremacy. People of Color needed to wrestle with issues relating to internalized oppression. Meeting in separate caucuses was also intended to reduce the likelihood of the kind of harm that White people inflicted on People of Color, even within an organization purposed with dismantling racism. Too often, when meeting as a full body of PAR members, White people were called to account for the hurt and harm they were causing in discussions and interactions with People of Color.

I remember a time when the women in the European American caucus decided to meet as a “European American Women’s Caucus” and directed the European American men to meet as a separate caucus as well. The White women of PAR had experienced harmful interactions with White men in the group. When White men met as a separate caucus, I remember hearing complaints of consternation and frustration from some of the men. We were clearly not seeing the parallels or the intersections of race and gender in the healing and liberation work that PAR purported to be pursuing. Despite evidence that I was cognizant of gender privilege, discrimination and sexism as a young person, years later I was clearly not seeing the full implications of gender for antiracism work, nor for my even broader concern for human healing and liberation.

These are only a few of the insights made visible through the analytical lens of gender. Perhaps even more significant for an extension of my dissertation work in the future will be analysis, reflection and dialogue with others about the ways in which gender may have influenced my experiences and my interpretations of those experiences relating to my quest for White, antiracist character.

The Deafening Silence

A second example of an alternative analytical lens is inspired by a theme that I recognized only after concluding what I thought would be my last iteration of inductive analysis. It is a lens of White silence. This White silence lens certainly resonates with literature on Whiteness written by African Americans, which reveals a long-standing recognition by African Americans that White people do not talk about race or its impact on their lives or the lives of others. Tatum (1997), through her

analysis of the content of journals of White students, concluded that the root of this silence, for White people, is fear. She wrote:

Fear is a powerful emotion, one that immobilizes, traps words in our throats, and stills our tongues. . . .

What do we fear? Isolation from friends and family, ostracism for speaking of things that generate discomfort, rejection by those who may be offended by what we have to say, the loss of privilege or status for speaking in support of those who have been marginalized by society, physical harm caused by the irrational wrath of those who disagree with your stance? (p. 194)

Tatum also detailed the psychological costs of silence. Not only does silence ensure that institutional racism will not be challenged nor its injuries prevented or mitigated, but there are damaging consequences for Whites, including the way in which silence disconnects White people from their experiences. Tatum (1997) wrote:

When White children make racial observations, they are often silenced by their parents, who feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to respond. With time the observed contradictions between parental attitudes and behaviors, or between societal messages about meritocracy and visible inequities, become difficult to process in a culture of silence. In order to prevent discomfort, Whites may learn not to notice. (p. 201)

Applying the analytical lens of silence to my findings deepens my exploration of the phenomenon I referred to as “immobilization” in life situations in which racism comes into play. Immobilization and its accompanying silence are my first

inclinations and my responses of choice when I hear a racist comment, see indications of racist attitudes, or see evidence of institutionalized racism. Findings shared in Chapter 5 attribute this silence to the veneration of confrontation avoidance among those with privileged statuses and/or to rationalizations that confrontation may be counterproductive for building awareness or facilitating transformation, as it threatens to sever relationships that make such awareness and transformation a possibility.

The silence seems enforced, however, even in situations in which there is little apparent risk of severed relationships and even in situations for which the silence itself may endanger those relationships. In Chapter 5, I shared a story of a deafening silence that occurred when my African American goddaughter, Destiny, and I watched a film with my parents that caricatured African Americans in ways that are extremely offensive. These are the parents who were primary agents of my socialization into values of altruistic love, human dignity and social justice. There was little risk of endangering our relationships, yet the silence was deep, and the silence itself may have held the most potential for harm.

Silence as an alternative lens for analysis could also apply to the silencing of communication that maintains and strengthens relationships. In Chapter 5, I shared how former members of the People Against Racism group allowed contact and communication to erode. The result, for some, was a feeling of abandonment.

I also shared findings relating to the silencing of stories. My failure to share my own life stories with People of Color with whom I had opportunity to develop meaningful relationships was a major impediment to nurturing those relationships. This silencing of my own stories fragmented the kind of free-flowing self-revelation

that is a foundation for authentic, loving relationships across the color line and across other dimensions of privilege.

The other indication of silenced stories was the way in which the interviews I conducted seemed to provide a kind of permission for interview participants to unlock meaningful stories about race that had been held silently in their hearts and minds for many years. My aunt's account of a childhood encounter with an African American man is provided in Appendix F. My mother's story about experiences at the Crownsville, Maryland mental hospital in 1949 is the centerpiece of the creative writing composition that I provide in Appendix H.

Finally, and perhaps most destructive to my quest for healing and liberation, there is the self-enforced silencing of the voice that I call my spiritual voice. My discounting and compartmentalizing of the spiritual dimension of my life separated me from what is, for me, the crucial resource for transformation.

Contributions to Knowledge Construction

One of the ways in which my autoethnography contributes to understanding how White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character can be nurtured and sustained is through its affirmation and confirmation of the work of others in this arena of knowledge construction. In particular, my research reinforces the work of O'Brien (2001) and Rush (2000) that I have just discussed. O'Brien's conclusions were drawn from field research and interviews with antiracist activists connected with two organizational networks. Rush's conclusions were drawn from an analysis of her own life story as a White mother of an adoptive African American child. It may be that the mutual affirmation of my work with that of O'Brien and Rush is due to the

fact that the biographical experiences that form the foundation of my autoethnographic inquiry have intersected with similar antiracist organizations and parent/child relationships across race that are the bases of O'Brien's and Rush's work.

Another contribution my research appears to make is the identification and description of dynamic impediments that may be unique to a White person of multidimensional privilege who perceives herself/himself to be frustrated or stuck in the developmental process leading to a more complete embodiment of antiracist character. Revelations concerning socialization into the values of privilege, image-building, relationships, control and the centrality of spirituality emerged from reiterative processes of inductive analysis and reflection intended to discern those elements that might be best recognized and explicated by a person with a privileged standpoint. Whether the results of my autoethnography and my interpretations of those results are transferrable to others who may share dimensions of my social location, life experiences, and similar micro-, mezzo- and macro-social contexts will depend on the adequacy of the thickness of my description and any dialogue that may be subsequently sparked between us.

Other Contributions

I believe that my dissertation may occupy several additional currently uninhabited niches within the landscape of literature that I have summarized both in my original literature review in Chapter 3 and previously in this chapter. First, the fact that I located my research squarely within the autoethnographic genre of inquiry and the fact that I focused specifically on nurturing White, privilege-cognizant,

antiracist character locates it with very few inquiries of its kind. In addition to the resulting contributions to knowledge construction detailed above, my research is a contribution to the autoethnographic genre of inquiry, to qualitative research generally and to research firmly situated within the constructivist paradigm.

Although, as I indicate elsewhere in this dissertation, my research is unconventional in a number of ways, I have applied a number of conventional, rigorous methodological approaches for data collection and data analysis that are a part of the body of recognized qualitative methodologies for social science. This distinguishes my work from literary and other genres of inquiry and knowledge construction, including the autobiographical narratives that I have referenced.

Like many others writing in the autoethnographic genre, I have presented at least some of my research findings in creative writing forms that seek to evoke the engagement and reactions of others. This kind of aesthetic and expressive presentational modality holds the promise of new insights into the ways in which research like mine could be a catalyst for the kind of communicative action articulated by Habermas (1984) and discussed in the Chapter 2 of this dissertation. The aesthetic and expressive presentational modality may provoke the kinds of exchanges that contribute to personal transformation for me and for others.

To the extent that my research exposes in more detail or with enhanced clarity the operative dynamics of racism and privilege, it holds the potential of merging with that wide body of research, thought and literary expression that forms a crack in the façade of hegemonic ideologies of White supremacy.

Finally, I began this dissertation by characterizing it as an episode in my own, personal ongoing quest for self-understanding and transformation, and for embodiment of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. I believe that my simultaneous engagement as researcher and subject in this episode of my quest that is doctoral dissertation has opened new pathways for personal growth, transformation and liberation.

Limitations

The Impact of Limited Time and Ambitious Research Design

The primary resource that limited the scope of this dissertation research was time. The impact of limited time for research was exacerbated by a fairly ambitious research design. In consultation with other scholars as I formulated my plans to sample data from three separate temporal frames of my life, I was encouraged to carefully consider limiting my research to only two of the three temporal frames, and to place significant limits on the number of people I would interview. I felt strongly, however, that early life socialization processes would be significant to document. I wanted multiple standpoints represented by interview participants from each of four venues of my life. I also felt that a fairly rich description of my social location and of the social contexts in my early life would be important in satisfying trustworthiness criteria and for the potential transferability of my research results. Thus I resisted restricting my original design.

The resulting quantity of data, which is summarized at the end of Chapter 4, presented a challenge for analysis. Multiple reviews of data, extended engagement

with the data, multiple iterations of inductive analysis, and consultations with peer debriefers extended analysis over a lengthy period of time.

Problems of Independent Individualism

The process of dissertation in higher education is highly structured to give supremacy to notions of individual endeavor and accomplishment. My research was no exception. This is problematic for an inquiry of White, antiracist character formation that identifies socialization into the value of individualism as an impediment to such character formation. Furthermore, in the case of my research, selecting autoethnography as the methodological genre for inquiry intensified the individualistic structure of the research enterprise. Dissertation empowers the individual researcher to control both the design of the inquiry and the means to interpret and present its significance. Although I tried to build peer debriefer consultation into my research process, a weakness in the performance of my research was the limited consultation I had with these debriefers.

The dissertation process can be viewed as performing a gatekeeping function or as an initiation rite in which one must demonstrate her/his independent mastery of the knowledge and competencies of conducting research in accordance with the conventions of the academy. Although there is guidance by dissertation committee members and, in the case of my research some limited consultation with peer debriefers, the expectation is that the conferring of the degree signals an individual accomplishment and a certification of individual competencies.

I considered implementing a methodological strategy that might mitigate the implicit veneration of individualism in my dissertation research. The strategy was to

convene a two-day “accountability conference” at which I would share the results of my earliest iterations of data analysis with interview participants and peer debriefers. Participants and debriefers would confer and present their interpretive input. Limitations of time to meet and to carefully capture and integrate this input into my analysis discouraged me from implementing this strategy.

Dissertation is clearly a manifestation of privilege and, in the way that I have characterized spirituality, dissertation is contrary to a spiritually-centered endeavor. In the particular case of my dissertation, however, the research process may have also been a pathway for me to reclaim spirituality as a resource for continued personal growth into antiracist character.

Inadequately Addressed Ethical Concerns

I ended the first chapter of this dissertation with a discussion of ethical concerns relating to my research. Although cognizant of these concerns, I believe that I did little to directly address them, other than attempting to be as honest and rigorous as possible in the conduct of my research and in the representation of its results. I identified some of these ethical concerns through literature review and others through processes of reflection. They include the danger of reifying Whiteness and my particular manifestation of it; considering whether my use of the storytelling of autoethnography constitutes a cultural appropriation of a primary means of expression that has been used by marginalized and oppressed people; bringing Whiteness to the center of attention; and recasting the White experience as one of victimization, albeit self-inflicted victimization.

I believe that the most profound ethical concerns relating to my research spring from my particular social location within structures of power and privilege. As a 53-year-old, White, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian Protestant man with United States citizenship working within higher educational institutions both as a vocation and as a doctoral candidate, I am firmly positioned within systems of conferred dominance and privilege. Although this is precisely what provides me with the standpoint from which some of the contributions I enumerated earlier in this chapter are derived, it is problematic from the Gramscian perspective I reviewed early in this dissertation. From a Gramscian perspective, research involves manipulation of resources to the end of constructing and legitimating knowledge that will either reinforce or challenge hegemonic ideologies. Research therefore plays a significant role in the maintenance and enforcement of hegemonic cultural, social and economic ideologies and structures.

Representation of Results

A final limitation relates to the representation of research results. In addition to conventional, scholarly, third-person presentational form, autoethnographic research has often employed alternative modes for representing research results, including first-person narrative, poetic, visual art, literary and dramatic forms. The use of such alternative modes would align well with a dissertation that seeks to challenge structures of privilege, including privileged forms of communication and expression.

I present my research results in Chapter 5 of this dissertation in a rather conventional, scholarly narrative form. A few exceptions appear as appendixes to the dissertation. In particular, “The Crownsville Conversation,” which is Appendix H,

presents some themes and subthemes in the context of a fictional conversation that is tightly based on interview transcripts and journaling and field note entries.

In the theoretical framing of my research enterprise I referenced Habermas' (1984) subjective realm of aesthetic-expressive rationality. Dramaturgical action, for Habermas, involves acts of expressive speech relating to what one feels, wishes or experiences for the purpose of self-representation. The action orientation of dramaturgical action is to reach understanding through authentic expression for which validity claims are based on the criterion of "truthfulness" and one's orientation is to a "subjective world" (Habermas, 1984, p. 329). By foregoing the opportunity to use more expressive forms of representing research results, I have forfeited some of the potential for evoking dialogue and engagement with the audience for my dissertation in a way that could lead to what Habermas would call "communicative action." Communicative action postulates that certain processes of rational dialogue, discourse and argumentation can liberate ideas into the wider, public sphere for the purposes of constructing social knowledge as well as for informing and stimulating collective action (Sitton, 2003).

Suggestions for Future Research

I suggest that there are three aspects of my research findings that warrant further research and exploration. First, my findings concerning image-building exposed the way in which my enactment of White, antiracist character mutated and evolved over time to forms of increasing complexity, sophistication and, in some cases, deception. Interview, survey and/or focus group research with people who have a similar status set and social location to my own and who purport to be actively

pursuing White, antiracist character formation could help to determine the degree to which these image-building dynamics may be a reflection of my own relatively isolated experience versus an experience shared by similarly situated people. The particular dynamics of image-building that I experienced do not seem to appear in the research literature or in other personal narratives of White, antiracist character formation. If this phenomenon can be confirmed to be a commonly shared impediment for aspirant White antiracists, rather than a more isolated experience, exploration of specific strategies for exposing and overcoming it may hold significant promise.

A second potential area for future inquiry is more instrumental and pragmatic in nature. In essence, this research would seek to provide specific tactical and strategic practices for aspiring, White antiracist who feel stuck precisely at that point in the developmental process at which privilege-cognizance is well developed, recognition of racism in all of its forms is strong, desire for healing and wholeness is potent, and yet transformation is stifled by the vestiges of socialization into privilege and expectations of control, power and wealth accumulation.

One of my findings, and a finding of others, is that the quest to reclaim one's humanity is, at its root and heart, a quest that transcends self-interest. Based on the role of religion as an agent of socialization in my own life, I characterized this transcendence as "spiritual." It need not be characterized in this way for everyone aspiring to antiracist character. Research that specifically documents stories of deepening humanistic or spiritual awareness and being seems to be needed. How have people with multidimensional privilege learned to let go of the wreckage of their

former identity and to enter an uncertain ocean of transformational possibility in relationship with others? How does one practice the art of running toward fear? How does one transcend self-interest while remaining solidly rooted in the relationships of daily living?

Finally, I believe, and my research suggests, that there could be tremendous value in inquiry into White, antiracist character formation that is conducted with a much more collaborative research process. Collective inquiry, collective discovery, and collective and expressive sharing of constructed knowledge holds promise for building intentional communities of support and accountability that may be able to counter individual relapse into identities of privilege.

Cautions, Conclusions and an Invitation for Dialogue

As I consider the possible implications of my research findings for people engaging in similar quests for White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character, I feel compelled to issue some notes of caution. It would be tragic for people to read about what I have characterized as virulent and insidious obstacles in my own quest and, based on that characterization, adopt an attitude of resignation and hopelessness for their own. Hope lies, I believe, in a realization that the kind of character that can lead to healing and liberation is a character that will embrace dynamic tensions and celebrate those tensions as indicators of courageous striving, growth and humility.

Likewise, it would be tragic if people concluded that the essential resource that I see for my continuing quest is the same essential ingredient for their own. While I have concluded that some kind of holistic life orientation that transcends self-

interest may be essential, that orientation need not be understood as a spiritual orientation.

I entered my dissertation journey with a variety of motivations and purposes. In addition to envisioning a possible contribution to knowledge construction concerning the nurturance and sustenance of White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character, I saw autoethnographic dissertation as a potential accelerant for my own, personal transformation into a more complete embodiment of antiracist character. Character, as I have conceptualized it for this dissertation, is not an attribute or a state of being that a person finally attains, but an ongoing process of cultivating virtue and embracing the tensions that accompany healing and growth. My experience of autoethnography for this dissertation has been an experience of dynamic process and discovery guided by a sincere longing for truth that will lead to transformation and liberation. As such, dissertation has been, for me, a strong and moving current of unfolding character.

What I have learned in this process is that the impediments I face as a person of multidimensional privilege seeking to reclaim my humanity are elusively fluid and undoubtedly formidable. I have also learned that relationships rooted in transformational love and fed by the full embrace of my spiritual core will help me to run toward my fears, release my arrogance, forfeit my control and find my heart.

Perhaps power, control and other resources conferred to me by multidimensional privilege can be harnessed in the service of healing and liberation, not only by ceding privilege through acts rooted in transformational love, but also by using privilege as part of strategic action. This would seem to be a dangerous

endeavor, however, unless such action is informed and directed by people in intentional communities of accountability and support. I now invite you to join me in in such a community and in continuing dialogue about what is possible for us together.

For me, nothing short of a radical return to the love into which I was originally born holds promise for the release and transcendence of privilege that will help me to begin to reclaim humanity for myself and others. One passage of sacred scripture from my faith tradition teaches that “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” (Corinthians 13:7-8a Revised Standard Version). My mother Ruth’s biblical mantra, “Love never ends,” must inspire and guide me in the continuing quest.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide for Time Period #1 Interviews

(Italics = Scripted Statements and Questions)

Prior to turning on the audio recording device:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for this interview.

Here is the informed consent form that I am using to make sure people participating in my research are informed of the purposes for my research, and that they give their consent to participate. Will you please read the form and ask any questions that you have?

Are you willing to sign the form and to participate in my research?

If the form is not signed:

Thank you for your time today and for carefully considering participating in my research. If you have any questions in the future or if you would like to reconsider and possibly participate in the future, please get in touch with me. (Provide contact information and an unsigned copy of the Informed Consent Form.) End encounter.

If the form is signed, continue.

I would like to ask your permission for me to record our conversation on this audio recording device. I will be taking some notes as we talk, but I would also like to record our conversation so that I know that I have our exact words in case I want to use a quote. Also, recording our conversation will allow me to speak more freely with you and to ask clarifying questions, without being constantly concerned that I forgot to write something down.

May I record this interview?

If no: Do not record, and rely on note-taking.

If yes: I will indicate that you have signed the Informed Consent Form and I will ask you again about your permission to record our discussion when I turn on the audio recorder so that your permission is recorded as well.

I am going to test the recorder first and then we will get started with the interview.

State the name of the interview subject, the date, time and location of the interview. Indicate that the subject has signed an informed consent agreement, and ask the

subject to state verbally whether or not she/he agrees to the session being recorded. Replay this recording to ensure that the recorder is working properly.

I am in the process of collecting information, documentation, and people's memories and stories that will help me to better understand the life experiences and influences that have led me to be so interested and concerned about race and racism.

I have a list of questions and topics that I would like to talk with you about, but my interview is designed to be flexible so that we can explore a story or an issue in depth if we choose to. Are you ready to get started?

If no: Why not? Do you have a question or a concern?

If yes: Let's start with you telling me how you characterize our relationship. Please talk about how long you have known me, the nature of our relationship and how well you believe you know me.

Throughout the remainder of the interview, listen attentively for any information that relates to one or more of my research question, my research purposes or my sensitizing concepts. As appropriate, ask clarifying and/or probing questions concerning this information.

Research Question:

How is White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character nurtured and sustained?

Research Purposes:

1. Construct knowledge that is responsive to the research question
2. Learn something about the extent to which I, myself, have or have not nurtured and sustained White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.
3. Explore the degree to which autoethnographic inquiry and presentation may serve as a stimulus to nurture and sustain White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.
4. Contribute to the building of the body of autoethnographic research literature.
5. Make a contribution to an understanding of the way in which a number of threads of social theory can be woven together to more fully legitimate research that is embedded in a constructivist paradigm of inquiry and knowledge construction.
6. Invite and inspire White people to aspire to nurture and sustain White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

Sensitizing Concepts:

1. Nurture and Sustain
2. White
3. Privilege-cognizant
4. Antiracist and Antiracism
5. Character

What comes to mind first when I ask you to tell me what you believe influenced me to be interested in race and racism?

Please share a memory or a story that relates to my interest in race or racism.

Please share another memory or story.

Continue to request memories and stories until the respondent believes that she/he has shared them all, asking questions throughout to clarify factual details and/or to probe areas that relate to sensitizing concepts.

Please talk with me about any influence that YOU may have had on me with respect to my interest in race or racism.

At what point in my life do you believe I started to work intentionally on learning more about race or racism? Possible probing questions will be: Please describe your recollections of what was going on in my life at that time. How did you become aware that I was working to learn more about race and racism?

I believe that working to learn about race and racism is one thing, and taking deliberate action to challenge racism can be another thing. Please talk about any memories you have or tell any stories that relate to any way you believe I took some kind of action that challenged racism in some way. Possible probing questions will be: When did that occur? What were the circumstances? Why do you believe that I was challenging racism with my actions in this situation?

End each interview with this request: “Who are the two people that you believe I could learn the most from about the origins or development of my interest in race and racism?”

At this point in the interview I will ask the respondent to react to any specific memories or stories that I recall, but that the respondent has not yet mentioned. These memories or stories are likely to be part of the rationale that I had for purposefully selecting this person for an interview. Specific questions that I will ask will be designed for each respondent based on the specific memories or stories that I present to them, and based on related sensitizing concepts.

What else can you share with me that you believe will help me in my research?

What questions do you have for me?

Respond to questions, and continue to formulate questions and stimulate discussion relating to one or more of my research purposes, my research question or my sensitizing concepts.

I have a request. If you remember another incident, story or piece of information that you believe would be helpful, will you please contact me? Here is my contact information.

Provide contact information.

I want you to know that if I quote you directly in any writing or presentation, I will be coming to you first to let you know in advance how I will be quoting you, and I may ask for your permission to use the quote. I cannot guarantee your anonymity or even confidentiality, as I indicated in the informed consent form that you signed, but if you have concerns, I will do my very best to work with you to minimize the potential for any harm to you or others.

Thank you, again. This means a lot to me on a personal level as well as in my quest to get a doctoral degree. Thank you so much.

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Time Period #2 Interviews

(Italics = Scripted Statements and Questions)

Prior to turning on the audio recording device:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for this interview.

Here is the informed consent form that I am using to make sure people participating in my research are informed of the purposes for my research, and that they give their consent to participate. Will you please read the form and ask any questions that you have?

Are you willing to sign the form and to participate in my research?

If the form is not signed:

Thank you for your time today and for carefully considering participating in my research. If you have any questions in the future or if you would like to reconsider and possibly participate in the future, please get in touch with me. (Provide contact information and an unsigned copy of the Informed Consent Form.) End interview.

If the form is signed, continue.

I would like to ask your permission for me to record our conversation on this audio recording device. I will be taking some notes as we talk, but I would also like to record our conversation so that I know that I have our exact words in case I want to use a quote. Also, recording our conversation will allow me to speak more freely with you and to ask clarifying questions, without being constantly concerned that I forgot to write something down.

May I record this interview?

If no: Do not record, and rely on note-taking.

If yes: I will indicate that you have signed the Informed Consent Form and I will ask you again about your permission to record our discussion when I turn on the audio recorder so that your permission is recorded as well.

I am going to test the recorder first and then we will get started with the interview.

State the name of the interview subject, the date, time and location of the interview. Indicate that the subject has signed an informed consent agreement, and ask the

subject to state verbally whether or not they agree to the session being recorded. Replay this recording to ensure that the recorder is working properly.

As you read in the Informed Consent Form that you signed, I am studying how I can “nurture and sustain a privilege-cognizant, White, antiracist character.” My own life experiences and the scholarly literature about race and racism that I have read have led me to believe that White people in the United States have certain un-earned benefits or “privileges” because we are White, and that we are mostly unaware of the White privilege that we have. I want to learn how to remain aware of my privileged status in my daily life, and how to constantly work to challenge and eliminate racism.

I am interviewing you today because I believe that you may have some information, documentation, memories or stories that will help me to better understand my own life story relating to my awareness or obliviousness to my White privilege, and any actions I have taken that may have either helped or hurt the cause of eliminating racism.

I have a list of questions and topics that I would like to talk with you about, but my interview is designed to be flexible so that we can explore a story or an issue in depth if we choose to. Are you ready to get started?

If no: Why not? Do you have a question or a concern?

If yes: Let’s start with you telling me how you characterize our relationship. Please talk about how long you have known me, the nature of our relationship and how well you believe you know me.

Throughout the remainder of the interview, listen attentively for any information that relates to one or more of my research question, my research purposes or my sensitizing concepts. As appropriate, ask clarifying and/or probing questions concerning this information.

Research Question:

How is White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character nurtured and sustained?

Research Purposes:

1. Construct knowledge that is responsive to the research question
2. Learn something about the extent to which I, myself, have or have not nurtured and sustained White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.
3. Explore the degree to which autoethnographic inquiry and presentation may serve as a stimulus to nurture and sustain White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.
4. Contribute to the building of the body of autoethnographic research literature.

5. Make a contribution to an understanding of the way in which a number of threads of social theory can be woven together to more fully legitimate research that is embedded in a constructivist paradigm of inquiry and knowledge construction.
6. Invite and inspire White people to aspire to nurture and sustain White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character.

Sensitizing Concepts:

1. Nurture and Sustain
2. White
3. Privilege-cognizant
4. Antiracist and Antiracism
5. Character

What does White privilege mean to you?

Do you recall a situation in which it was apparent to you that I had some level of understanding about White privilege?

If yes: Please describe that situation.

Are there other situations you recall in which it was apparent to you that I had some level of understanding about White privilege?

If yes: Please describe that situation.

Continue asking this question until recollections of such situations are exhausted, asking questions throughout to clarify factual details and/or to probe areas that relate to sensitizing concepts.

At the first no response: Continue.

Do you recall a situation in which it was apparent to you that I was **unaware** of my own White privilege or that I disregarded the impact of my White privilege on others?

If yes: Please describe that situation.

Are there other situations you recall in which it was apparent to you that I was **unaware** of my own White privilege or that I disregarded the impact of my White privilege on others?

If yes: Please describe that situation.

Continue asking this question until recollections of such situations are exhausted, asking questions throughout to clarify factual details and/or to probe areas that relate to sensitizing concepts.

At the first no response: Continue.

Do you have a memory or a story that you can share in which you believe that I acted in an antiracist way, especially a situation where you believe that I made an active effort or perhaps even took some kind of risk to do so?

If yes: Please share that memory or story with me.

Do you have another memory or story in which you believe that I acted in an antiracist way, especially a situation where you believe that I made an active effort or perhaps even took some kind of risk to do so?

If yes: Please share that memory or story with me.

Continue asking this question until memories and stories are exhausted, asking questions throughout to clarify factual details and/or to probe areas that relate to sensitizing concepts.

At the first no response: Continue.

This next question that I will ask you may not be easy to answer because I am asking you to share a memory or story that may be very critical of me, with me sitting right here listening and even recording your response and taking notes. The question is this: Do you have a memory or a story that you can share in which you believe that I acted in a **racist** way.

Before you answer this question, I want to assure you that I will be very grateful for any response that you give, even if it is uncomfortable for me to hear. Hearing your memories and stories about how I acted in racist ways may be the most valuable resource that I have for my research.

If yes: Please share that memory or story with me.

Do you have another memory or story in which you believe that I acted in a racist way?

If yes: Please share that memory or story with me.

Continue asking this question until memories and stories are exhausted, asking questions throughout to clarify factual details and/or to probe areas that relate to sensitizing concepts.

At the first no response: Continue.

Before moving forward in the interview, have an open-ended discussion with the interviewee about our conceptions of racism and antiracism.

After having this discussion with me about our ideas about racism and antiracism, are there any more memories or stories that you would share to illustrate ways in which I have acted in either racist or antiracist ways?

At this point in the interview I will ask the respondent to react to any specific memories or stories that I recall, but that the respondent has not yet mentioned. These memories or stories are likely to be part of the rationale that I had for purposefully selecting this person for an interview. Specific questions that I will ask will be designed for each respondent based on the specific memories or stories that I present to them and related sensitizing concepts.

Is there anything more that you would like to share that you believe will help me in my research?

Do you have any questions?

I have a request. If you remember another incident, story or piece of information that you believe would be helpful, will you please contact me? Here is my contact information.

Provide contact information.

I want you to know that if I quote you directly in any writing or presentation, I will be coming to you first to let you know in advance how I will be quoting you, and I may ask for your permission to use the quote. I cannot guarantee your anonymity or even confidentiality, as I indicated in the informed consent form that you signed, but if you have concerns, I will do my best to work with you to minimize the potential for any harm to you or others.

Thank you, again. This means a lot to me on a personal level as well as in my quest to get a doctoral degree. Thank you so much.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

My name is Daniel Welliver, and I am inviting you to participate in my research. The research that I am doing is an important part of the requirements for receiving a Ph. D. degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). The research is also very important to me on a personal level. I believe that my work on this research will help me to become a better human being.

I am giving the following information to you in order to help you to make an informed decision as to whether or not you will choose to participate in my research. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me. I will do my best to answer them or to direct you to others who may be able to answer them. I am asking you to participate because I believe that you have information that will be helpful to me in accomplishing my purposes for this research.

My research is what is called an autoethnography. Like in the word “autobiography,” the prefix “auto” in “autoethnography” means that I will be studying and writing about myself. The “ethnography” in “autoethnography” means that I will be studying and writing about my own cultural story and cultural identity.

I am a White man in my early 50s in the United States, and my specific interest is in studying how I can “nurture and sustain a privilege-cognizant, White, antiracist character.” My own life experiences and the scholarly literature about race and racism that I have read have led me to believe that White people in the United States have certain un-earned benefits or “privileges” because we are White, and that we are mostly unaware of the White privilege that we have. I want to learn how to remain aware of my privileged status in my daily life, and to constantly work to challenge and eliminate racism. I believe this work is important work for me and for other White people to do for our own sakes as well as for the sakes of the many people we hurt if we choose not to do this work.

To compose my autoethnography, I will be collecting documents, interviewing people who have witnessed my life influences and experiences, writing stories based on my own memories, keeping a daily journal for at least a six month period, and keeping field notes on any experiences I have in my daily life that relate to the purposes of my research. I am asking you to participate in this research because I believe you have some information, memories or stories to tell that will be important for my research.

I certainly hope that if you choose to participate in my research that you will find it an enjoyable and interesting experience and that you will benefit in some way from your participation. I am conducting this research because I believe the research will help me and others to better understand how White people can develop and

maintain the kind of character that is needed to challenge and eliminate racism. Your participation may help to further this goal.

Your participation in my research is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me or with Indiana University of Pennsylvania. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying me or by contacting the faculty member who is the chairperson of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Susan Boser. You will find Dr. Boser's contact information below.

If you choose to participate, all information that you provide will be securely stored and held in confidence. Information will only be available to me, to members of my Dissertation Committee and to people who assist me in transcribing audio recordings. People who assist me in transcribing will sign a confidentiality agreement.

If I choose to use information or quotes that are directly attributable to you and/or that reveal your identity, I will consult with you in advance and make every effort to keep your identity confidential if that is your wish. Due to the nature of autoethnographic research and its focus on one person's lived experience, it can be difficult to conceal the identities of research participants, so I cannot pledge to you total and unconditional confidentiality or anonymity. The information obtained in my research may be written in my final dissertation and/or it may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings, but every effort will be made to keep your identity confidential if that is your wish.

If you are willing to participate in my research, please sign the statement below and return the form to me in person or by mail in the self-addressed stamped envelope that I am providing. Please keep the extra unsigned copy for your records. When I receive your signed form, I will sign it and see that you receive a copy of the form that is signed by both you and me.

If you are NOT willing to participate in my research, please clearly indicate that on the form and return the form to me in person or by mail in the self-addressed stamped envelope that I am providing. You may keep the extra unsigned copy for your records if you wish.

If you have questions or concerns that you would like to address to the faculty person who is Chairperson of my Dissertation Committee, you can contact her with this information:

Susan Boser, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Sociology and Assistant Dean
Department Affiliation
Campus Address
Indiana, PA 15705
Phone: 724/357-????

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects and questions can be directed to that Board by calling 724/357-7730.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT STATEMENT:

I have read and understand the information on this form and I consent to volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential to the highest degree possible, but that no guarantee of absolute confidentiality or anonymity is being given to me. I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession, and I understand that a signed copy will be provided to me if I request it.

Participant's Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Participant's Signature

Date

Phone number where you can be reached

Best days and times to reach you

Witness Signature

Date

OR

I do **NOT** give my consent and I do **NOT** choose to participate in this research.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Date

I certify that I have explained to the person who has signed above the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in my research, and have answered any questions that have been raised.

Investigator's Signature

Date

Appendix D

Chain Sample Cover Letter Template

Letterhead

Date

Name

Address

Address

Dear *Name*,

One or two paragraphs of informal greetings and/or personal news.

I am writing somewhat formally because it is time for me to move from round one to round two of my dissertation research interviewing. Today I completed the first round of interviews. These first round interviews were with people whom I, myself, selected to interview. Now I am ready to begin the second round of interviewing. These second round interviews will be with people suggested by you and others who were interviewed in the first round.

At the end of my interview with you on *Date*, I explained that I am inviting each person I chose to interview to suggest one additional person for me to interview. Since you have now experienced the interview, you now have a grasp of what I am trying to learn.

My research addresses the question: *How is White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character nurtured and sustained?* My inquiry involves an examination of my own life and the social and cultural context in which my life has been lived. I am inviting you to suggest a person who you believe can add to what I have already learned from you. This could be a person who you believe may confirm what you shared with me. It would also be very helpful if you choose to suggest a person who may bring a different perspective and/or different information than you provided.

Please fill out the enclosed “Interview Subject Suggestion Form” and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I have enclosed for you to use. Please return the form to me no later than Friday, January 30, 2009.

At the time of my interview with you on *Date*, you *did not have any immediate ideas for a person to suggest for an interview / suggested that I interview Name. If, after some time and consideration, you have decided to suggest someone, put that person’s name on the form.*

Name

Date

Page 2

You have the option on the “Interview Subject Suggestion Form” to indicate that you have decided to decline to make a suggestion. If this is your decision, please be assured that this will not be detrimental to my research and that I will not be disappointed. I do not want you to be uncomfortable with a suggestion that you make, nor do I want you to suggest someone who you believe will not be able to meaningfully contribute to my research. As you now know, the interview takes some time and effort, so I do not want to invite people to participate unless there appears to be some significant benefit. If it is your decision to decline to make a suggestion, please let me know by indicating that on the “Interview Subject Suggestion Form” and returning the form to me.

Please be aware that, if I invite a person you suggest to participate in an interview, I will be informing that person that it was you who made the suggestion. I will not, however, disclose any of the content of the interview that I conducted with you.

Finally, as I shared when we talked in *Month of Interview*, I would appreciate hearing from you at any time, now or in the future, if you think of anything that you believe may be of significance to share with me in relation to my research. The best way to contact me is by calling my cell phone at (717) 433-8450 or emailing me at Welliver@Juniata.edu.

Thanks again, *Name*, for participating in this research process.

Complimentary Close,

Daniel

Appendix E

Interview Subject Suggestion Form

Instructions: Please check one of the boxes below. If you have checked the second box, please provide the information requested. Sign and date the form. Return the form by Friday, January 30, 2009 in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

I have decided that I WILL NOT make a suggestion.

I have decided that I WILL make a suggestion.

My suggestion for an additional person for you to interview for your dissertation research is:

(Person's Name)

Here is the contact information I have for this person:

I understand that, if you contact this person, you will indicate that I am the person who suggested that you interview her/him, but that the content of the interview you have already conducted with me will remain confidential.

Signature

Date

Your Name (Printed)

Return No Later Than Friday, January 30, 2009

Daniel Welliver
1412 Washington Street
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Call with any Questions or Concerns
717-433-8450

Appendix F

A Less-than-Pleasant, Defining Moment

A Story Originally Told by Beth (Elizabeth) Glick-Rieman
Re-Told Here in Her Voice by her Nephew Daniel Mark Welliver*

When I was a child, there was a shack that adjoined the meadow on our family farm near Centerville, Rockingham County, Virginia. An old, African American man lived alone in the shack. This man's name was Mr. Charlie Pleasant.

One day my sister, Dawn, and I decided we would walk through the meadow and up to Mr. Pleasant's shack. We knew that venturing this far from our farmhouse was forbidden, and I remember feeling like we were bold explorers.

Approaching Mr. Pleasant's shack was exciting. When we drew close, Mr. Pleasant came out and waved to us.

I remember feeling sorry for Mr. Pleasant. He seemed to have so little and we understood, even as young children, that Mr. Pleasant was often hungry and alone. So my first associations with Mr. Pleasant were feelings of adventure, exploration and pity.

Mr. Pleasant would periodically come to the porch of our farmhouse and ask for my mother, whom he addressed as "Miss Effie." My mother would give food to Mr. Pleasant and he would express his gratitude.

I remember that, when I was a child, I would often hear adults talking about people, and referring to those people using both their first and last names. I believe I probably overheard people referring to Mr. Pleasant as "Charlie Pleasant," or perhaps even addressing him that way. For example, rather than addressing him as "Charlie" or as "Mr. Pleasant," one might say "Charlie Pleasant, you take care of yourself now, you hear?"

Well, one day Mr. Pleasant came to the porch of our home and asked for Miss Effie. I was a young child at the time, and I blurted out "Charlie Pleasant, why don't you come in the house?" My father overheard this and chastised me severely. "Elizabeth! You do not address adults using their first names. This is Mr. Pleasant."

Being chastised by my father was, for me, a devastating experience. As a child, I thought my father was God. I mean this literally. As a young child, I thought Daddy was God. And so this was a defining moment for me as a child. God was letting me know, in no uncertain terms, that Mr. Pleasant was deserving of every indication of respect that I knew I was to give to any adult.

I believe that I have remembered this moment for nearly 80 years because it has held such profound meaning for me. Perhaps it was clear to me on that day at our homestead, or perhaps the significance of the moment emerged over the years since. People of color are fully human and fully deserving of the respect and dignity that I must afford everyone whom I meet. My own soul and my humanity are jeopardized when I fail to live this out.

I am sure that adult African American men in Rockingham County, Virginia in the early decades of the 1900s were treated by many as though they were children. It would have been commonplace for people to refer to these men by their first name only, or as “boy,” or with any number of derogatory epithets. What was different in my parents that they rejected these codes of social conduct that surrounded them?

Well, my Daddy was a farmer, but he was also a minister in the Church of the Brethren. Both he and mama were highly revered in our community. They were ascribed a high level of moral authority and expected by many to set the standards for moral conduct. I know that Daddy was sometimes dispatched to resolve conflict or to bring the community’s concerns to a person or family. I remember people in the community learned that there was a man who was a wife-beater. On one occasion, when this man had severely beaten his wife, it was Daddy’s charge to confront him. The beating stopped.

And if my father was God, my mother was a saint. My mother cared for the entire community near our farm. If someone needed food, or if there was an illness or tragedy in any family, my mother was there. I remember a 2 year-old baby died in one family. My mother was there. I remember a suicide in the Hildebrand family. My mother was there. Later in life, when my parents moved off of the farm and into the nearby small town of Bridgewater, my mother fed her entire neighborhood from her garden.

In addition to their deep Christian commitment, what may have set my parents apart was their high level of education relative to others. I am certain they had a broader understanding of the world beyond Rockingham County, and that they had moved beyond the kind of myopic ethnocentrism that was all around them.

*NOTE: This is the re-telling of a story -- a very liberal paraphrase and reconstruction of a story – that was originally told by my Aunt Beth (Elizabeth) Glick-Rieman in a telephone conversation on 9/19/2008 in response to inquiries from me and from my mother, Ruth Glick Welliver. This reconstruction is based on notes taken during that telephone conversation.

Appendix G

Dear Little Daniel

My mother, Ruth, tells a story about me as a child. The story begins with a telephone call my mother received from my Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Probst, a teacher whom my mother highly respected. Mrs. Probst asked my mother if she could come to the school to have a talk. My mother asked what the talk would be about.

“Is Daniel still crying when he arrives in the morning?” my mother asked.

“No,” Mrs. Probst said, “but I need to meet with you.”

The meeting was arranged. My mother was anxious. What could be such a concern for Mrs. Probst that she would not discuss it over the phone, but insisted on meeting in person?

At the meeting, Mrs. Probst came right to the point. “Well.” She hesitated briefly. “Daniel seems to enjoy playing with the girls more than he does with the boys. When given a choice, he spends much more time with the girls in the homemaking area and playing with dolls than he does with the boys playing with the blocks and the trucks.

“That’s it?” my mother thought to herself.

My mother thanked Mrs. Probst for sharing her concern. Then she tried to explain. “Daniel is closest in age to his two younger sisters, so they play together at home quite a bit. I feel that this is very natural and I am actually quite pleased about it. I would like Daniel to grow up to be the kind of man who is involved in the care

of his home and, especially, a father who is loving and actively involved in the care of his children.”

“Of course,” Mrs. Probst replied, “but I hope you can see my concern here. If Daniel’s interests don’t change, if he doesn’t find some new kind of balance, he can expect quite a bit of teasing from the other boys as he gets older. I watch carefully for that sort of thing in my room. I believe that some of the boys are already beginning to make fun of Daniel.”

My mother tried to reassure Mrs. Probst that my interests were quite varied, and she gave a few examples. “Clearly,” she said, “there is a lot of boy in Daniel, too.”

My mother went home after the meeting and shed a few tears. Dear little Daniel, who she was nurturing to be loving and involved with the care of others, was now also going to be shaped by teachers, peers, educational systems and the cultural values of a small town in Central Pennsylvania in the 1960s.

Appendix H

The Crownsville Conversation

Setting: The living room in the home of Ruth and Allyn Welliver

Date: June, 2011

Those Present:

Daniel: White, European American Autoethnographic Researcher
Ruth: Daniel's White, European American Mother
Allyn: Daniel's White, European American Father

Composing the Conversation

The conversation that I present here is an imagined one taking place in the future. It is the kind of conversation I hope to have after the completion of my research with a number of interview subjects, with the "peer debriefers" with whom I consulted during my research, and with many others. One of the purposes of my dissertation research was to invoke this kind of ongoing dialogue.

Although this conversation never took place in the way in which I present it here, the dialogue is tightly based on the recordings and transcripts of the two separate, guided interviews I conducted with my mother and my father on September 19, 2008. I also integrated data that I gathered from an interview with another person and through archival sources collected after those interviews, primarily newspaper articles and both audio and video recordings.

At times, the dialogue is a nearly verbatim excerpt from recorded interviews. At other times it is a paraphrasing of the interviews. Some is fictitious dialogue I have composed to create needed segues or to integrate data from different sources.

A Note on Format:

In the pages that follow, the conversation appears ABOVE the row of asterisks on each page. BELOW the row of asterisks is a narrative commentary on the ways in which the conversation illustrates research findings and themes.

The Conversation Begins

Daniel: Well, Mom, Dad. First, I want to thank you for participating in my dissertation research. It's kinda hard to believe that it's all over. In a way it really isn't, though, and that's why I asked to get together with you today, to spend this time talking about some of what I've learned. I'm really looking forward to this, and I hope you are too. Since finishing my dissertation, I have been inviting people to continue the discussions that started with research interviews more than two years ago. It's so hard to believe that two, almost three years have passed since I interviewed you.

Ruth: Well, Daniel, I believe that the work you have been doing, really all of your adult life, is very important work ...and that it is a real expression of, of love...and that is, I believe, the most important calling that we have.

Daniel: Yeah. I do too. Um, I know it's been quite a while, but what do you remember about how you felt when I asked you for an interview or how you felt during our interview?

Allyn: Well, it's been a long time. I do remember that I wondered what I would really have to contribute. I knew you were interested in learning about racism in particular and how you had grown to be so concerned about it. My first reaction, I think, was "Well, given that we lived in small towns in Central Pennsylvania as Dan was growing up, well, we didn't encounter many people of different races." There were some exceptions, but not many. But then as I prepared for the interview I was quite amazed at what I was able to recall that you might want to hear about.

Ruth: That was true for me as well, Allyn.

Inviting People to Uncover the Meaning of Race in Their Lives

My father, Allyn's, point that our family had lived in communities that were racially isolated as I grew up and that he was having some initial difficulty discerning what it is that he could remember or share that was relevant to my inquiry is indicative of that component of White privilege that inclines White people to believe that if there are few or no people of color seen, experienced, or present within our particular spheres of life, then race and racism may not be very significant to our lived experience. I believe my father understands that this is not the case. Obviously my minimal contact with people of color as I grew up had a tremendous impact on my ability or inability to recognize my privileged status.

Allyn: I found myself thinking quite a bit about my own childhood experiences, and the kinds of things you may have observed me doing as your father and as a church pastor, as well as some of the things that I did relating to race relations that you probably did not know about. It was all a very rewarding experience for me, and I think it deepened our relationship as father and son a bit to explore this together.

Daniel: Mom? What do you remember?

Ruth: Well, now, I remember that I lost my notes I had written of things I wanted to remember to share. But I really didn't quite know what to expect. I remember thinking, when we sat down and you told me the kinds of questions you would be asking, "Why didn't you give me those questions ahead of time so that I could do some thinking about it?" I remember I was a bit nervous, because I wanted to be helpful to you. Oh, and I remember singing my songs for you, my songs from Crownsville.

Daniel: Well, that was one of the most, um, the most cherished moments in all of the interviews I conducted. Those songs and stories about Crownsville brought some very deep feelings and lessons home for me. That's a big part of why I wanted to talk more with you today. And I had many meaningful moments in my interviews -- some really amazing discussions. Kids today would say "This is really random," meaning that they are getting ready to change the subject, but let me give you just one example, OK?

Ruth: Sure.

Allyn: Sure, sure.

One of my early, tentative research finding themes that is illustrated by my parents here I labeled *Examining our Own Lives – Biographies through a Racialization Lens*. The invitation that I extended to my parents to participate in an interview about racism and White privilege in my life created a kind of *assignment*, a *project* for them to accomplish.

My father, in particular, took this assignment very seriously, typing out an outline of stories, memories and points he wanted to share in the interview. I believe my parents' desire to be helpful, honest and thorough in providing their assistance was motivated by a sincere sense of responsibility to support me. They knew this interview would help me to complete a doctoral dissertation that I had been working on for years, and they knew this was a heart-felt quest for me. This, I believe, created both an expectation and an invitation for them to carefully examine their own lives through a racial lens.

As interviews progressed, I witnessed all of my interview respondents recalling significant experiences, encounters and moments in their lives that shaped their own racialized identities.

Significance of Church

My father’s brief reference (on the previous page) to what I may have observed him doing in his role as a pastor is included in the conversation as a first reference to the enormous significance that the church had for me in terms of nurturing and maintaining White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character. The significance of the church was, I believe, profound. This was not, however, an anticipated finding when I initiated dissertation research.

As the child of a pastor, the church was not only a significant agent of socialization for me, but it was often a conduit for White privilege, as well as for privilege associated with social class and gender. Later in my life, the church provided me with *Common Places* (another early research results theme) where I could be with people of color, grow relationships, and feel deep social, emotional and spiritual connection. Finally, I found the church to be an excellent venue within which to explore institutional and systemic racism, relating it to yet another preliminary research results theme, *Cognitive Analysis of Organizational and Social Contexts for Racism*.

Daniel: I interviewed a woman whom I respect, maybe more than any other White person I know, for her spirituality, her spirit, and her clarity about racism. She has been so helpful to me, because she will tell it like it is. She has a way of showing how much she cares about me and what kind of person I will be, that she confronts me about things she observes in me, even if it risks hurting my feelings.

Well, in our interview she told me that she noticed that I was referring to myself as Daniel, and taking on that full name. You know, I have been using “Daniel” more now, when for so long I used “Dan.” She told me that she thought this was very positive. But then she started telling the biblical story of Daniel and she pointed out that when Daniel was in Babylon, where he didn’t really belong, God’s instruction was “Don’t eat the food.” “Don’t eat the food.”

She said she was concerned about me when she heard about my research. She said she was thinking, “Well, he’s in academia, and he’s eating the food.” She said to me, “I mean, when I first saw the description you had written about your dissertation project, I thought ‘He is eating the food!’ But then I heard you talking with other people about what your research really meant to you and I wondered, ‘Why don’t you write like THAT about your project?’”

So, moments like this kept coming up, really through all of my interviews.

Dare to be a Daniel

This interview participant had shared in her guided interview with me that she had noticed in recent written communications from me that I seemed to be reclaiming my full name “Daniel,” rather than continuing to use “Dan.” The reference here was to the story about the prophet Daniel of the Judaic Torah and the Christian Bible’s “Old Testament” (Daniel 1: 1-16). King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had invaded and taken Jerusalem. Daniel was among a number of young captives from the royal family and nobility in Jerusalem who were taken to Babylon and were to be groomed to serve the King there. Daniel demonstrates the power of his God by interpreting the king’s visions and dreams.

So although he is a cultural outsider with a very tenuous and conditional relationship with the power structure of the Babylonian society, Daniel refuses to relinquish faith in his God and he courageously holds on to his spiritual core. As one way to stay spiritually connected with God, Daniel declines the rich foods provided by the king.

When this interview participant read the Informed Consent Form and a two-page summary of my planned research, she read specialized language that seemed to remove me emotionally and spiritually from what she felt, and I have come to believe, should be a very emotional and spiritual project. She feared I was “eating the food” of academia, and perhaps losing connection with my spiritual core. This relates to two preliminary research finding themes of *Humanity and Spirituality* and *Emotional Connections*.

Allyn: Well, by the looks of your plate at lunch, you're still eating the food!

(Laughter.)

Allyn: No, no. I mean, that's an interesting kind of exchange. Did she think that the language and, I guess, the culture of the academy present a kind of temptation to abandon some of your values and beliefs?

Ruth: That could happen just about anywhere you are in today's world. What's important is that we know who we are and to whom we belong.

Daniel: Yeah.

(Silence.)

Daniel: Well, I wanted especially to talk about the Crownsville story today – the story Mom shared, and I guess Dad shared some of the details about that story in our interview as well. So, Mom, could you get us started by sharing that story again?

Ruth: Yes. (Pause.) And Allyn, you go ahead and chime in too, because some of this is your story.

Allyn: Well, you get it started. I'll add my two cents if I feel I need to at some point.

Ruth: Well, it was really one of the turning points in my life. It was the summer after my second year at Bridgewater College, which would have been, uh, 1949. A few of my Bridgewater friends and my sister, Effie Dawn, and I went to Crownsville, Maryland to work as attendants at the big state mental hospital there. The hospital there at Crownsville was the only mental hospital, public or private, for Black people in Maryland, and it was only for Black people. All of the patients were Black. All of the staff members were White.

Allyn: Well, Ruth, I remember one Black man who was perhaps an occupational therapist, I'm not sure. But he was the only Black person of all the doctors, nurses and attendants on the staff that I remember.

My mother is beginning to tell the story of her first significant contact and connection with people of color. She had grown up on a farm in the rural Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and had only bits of memories about a few African American people she had encountered until this point in her life. One was an older man who lived in a “shack” near the family farm when she was a young child. She had also seen one or two African Americans in her first two years at Bridgewater College, one being a cook in the dining hall. This relates to preliminary research finding themes of *Examining our Own Lives, Socialization's Influence on Nurturing Antiracist Character*, and *Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954)*.

Ruth: Well, we were in different areas of the hospital during the day. Allyn was with the men and I was with the women. OK. Where was I? Well, the Church of the Brethren had put out a call for people to work at the mental hospitals that summer. You know the war was just about to end, and the shortages in these hospitals were notorious because, you know, men were off to war.

Allyn: Yes. I was the lone Methodist in the group. I believe all the others had been recruited from the Church of the Brethren. I remember seeing some kind of an advertisement or notice and responding to it. My mother was somewhat distressed that I had signed up to go to a mental hospital to work. And, when she heard I was going to one with Black patients, she certainly didn't know what to make of it. She was used to Black people serving her. She couldn't quite understand that. In fact, halfway through the summer she said, "Why don't you quit that job and come up and go on vacation with us?" But, it had a happy result because I met your mother there. (Allyn laughs.)

Ruth: Yes. That's where I met Allyn. He was tall and handsome...and he still is!

(Laughter.)

Ruth: And we began our courtship there. At the end of our work day we would take long walks and at the end of the walk we would buy ice cream and share it.

Intra- and Inter-Generational Change

My father told me that the interview preparation process revealed to him the extent of intra- and inter-generational attitude change related to race, ethnicity and culture. He remembers feeling as though his parents, and particularly his mother, never changed fast enough. But as he now considers the historical and geographic context in which his mother's attitudes took shape, he sees that she changed quite significantly. He also saw remarkable development in himself within his own lifespan, and he is now getting a sense of his son's struggles to fully embrace his humanity relative to race and racism. This relates to preliminary research finding themes of *Examining our Own Lives – Biographies through a Racialization Lens* and *Socialization's Influence on Nurturing Antiracist Character*.

I find it noteworthy that my parents' romance blossomed in the horrific setting of the Crownsville State Mental Hospital. There is a parallel here to my own first immersion in an African American community when I was a teenager, and a romantic interest that developed for me in that context. Perhaps this is a reminder that social, emotional and sexual desires can relegate the suffering of others around us to secondary attention or concern, or perhaps even "medicate" us from the discomfort, dis-ease, or empathic pain that we may otherwise feel.

Daniel: As Dad talks, I'll pass around this letter Dad found for me. The letter is notifying Dad of his assignment to the hospital in Catonsville, Maryland. Obviously something changed and he was reassigned to the Crownsville hospital. And it's a good thing he was, or I would not have been born, right?

(Laughter.)

Allyn: Well, what happened was that *The Baltimore Sun* did an exposé earlier that year, and they showed pictures of these patients who were being locked into adult-size high chairs, like the ones you put a baby in. But they were locked into these chairs so they wouldn't move around. And they weren't allowed to go outdoors. There was just a sort of custodial approach for all the patients. The newspaper showed these dreadful pictures, and people were alarmed.

And so the church wondered "Well, what can we do?" And so they sent these groups in. The Church of the Brethren based this approach on their wartime experience, because they had organized these kinds of projects as alternative service projects for those who didn't want to serve in the military. They had units like this to work in hospitals and other kinds of institutions. At this time I believe mental patients were not well cared for, except in private hospitals. And because this was the only mental hospital for Black people in Maryland, they had everybody from developmental problems, to criminals, to people with every kind of psychiatric need.

All, or very nearly all, of the doctors, nurses, and attendants were White. They ran the place pretty much like a prison . . . partly because it was a small staff and they had a lot of people to take care of. The church recruited 20 of us to go in with the idea of improving the ratio of staff to patients so that we could serve the patients a little better. But we were also employed by the hospital, so we had to do it the way we were told to do it by our supervisors. Some of it – if I were asked to do that now, I would certainly rebel or go to a higher authority or something.

Daniel: Mom, before we get back to your story, could I read from this series of *Baltimore Sun* articles that Dad is talking about? I just really think that these articles may help us get into the reality of that situation, and maybe it will help you and Dad to remember some more details about your experience there. I don't know, I just believe that, well, for me, reading these articles gave me a much deeper emotional understanding of what you and Dad were witnessing and experiencing.

Ruth: Sure.

Daniel: Well, ten articles appeared in *The Sunpapers*, *The Baltimore Sun* and *The Evening Sun*, from January 9 through January 19, 1949. This was just 5 months before the two of you arrived. See how the editors of the paper drew attention to these articles? Every article is printed under this consistent headline -- "Maryland's Shame: The Worst Story Ever Told By The Sunpapers." Look at these double-width columns, the larger print font, the wider spacing between the lines and these huge graphic photographs. I mean these photographs are pretty disturbing. Look how almost every paragraph is only one sentence long. This reporter, Howard M. Norton, investigated all of the five state mental hospitals in Maryland. They were all overcrowded, understaffed, and in very poor condition, and the patients in all of the hospitals were neglected and living in deplorable conditions. In many ways, though, Crownsville was the worst among the worst. Let me read just the first half of this article that focused in on Crownsville in particular:

(Reading.)

Crownsville State Hospital, near Annapolis, is the only hope of the insane Negro in Maryland.

It is the only place—public or private—to which he may turn for treatment.

Yet, Crownsville already has more than it can handle.

More than 1,800 men, women and children are herded into its buildings—into space meant for not more than 1,100.

And there are only eight doctors and one nurse to take care of them.

The extreme overcrowding at Crownsville is a menace to the health and safety of the inmates, hospital staff and surrounding community.

(Stops reading.)

This next section is called "The Dumping Ground."

(Continues reading.)

This is a verbatim excerpt from the series of articles from *The Baltimore Sun* and *The Evening Sun* newspapers that were published in January of 1949. I felt it was important to include this fairly lengthy excerpt without any additional subtext commentary in order to evoke some emotional reaction from the reader and to give "rich description" to the social and institutional context within which the experience that my mother will be describing was situated.

The same newspapers published a follow-up series 11 months later, in December of 1949, the byline for which was "Report to the People." That series highlighted some improvements that had been made in each of Maryland's five state mental institutions.

“The Dumping Ground”

Men and women are sleeping in damp, dark basement storage rooms, in sweltering attics without fire escapes, on porches and in “recreation” rooms.
Idiot children sleep two in a bed.

Ruth: What was that? Did you say idiot children?

Daniel: Yes. (Reading.) Idiot children sleep two in a bed.

Allyn: Well, you need to understand the times, here. Much of the terminology that was used then seems so, so crude to us now. And the treatments. At that time they didn’t have the psychiatric medicines they have today. They relied on lobotomies and shock treatments . . . restraints and solitary confinement and such.

Daniel: (Continuing to read.)

Idiot children sleep two in a bed.
Teen-age girls lie on mattresses on the floor.
Because Crownsville is the only Negro mental hospital, it is the dumping ground for the senile of that race.
Today, more than 150 beds are taken by aged and hopeless men and women who should be in a home for chronics instead of in space that might be used to cure more hopeful mental cases.
Only 30 out of the 1,800 are getting electric shock treatment, and none is getting deep insulin shock.

Epileptics Sent There

The doctors try to give individual “psychotherapy” (confidential talks with patients). But with a ratio of one doctor to 225 patients, they can treat only a few.
Crownsville is also the dumping ground for feeble-minded Negro children and epileptics.
The “children’s buildings” are among the most crowded of the institution.
For the children there are only two wards—one for girls and one for boys.
Sex offenders, ex-prostitutes, epileptics and idiots are lumped together with young children who are only feeble-minded or mentally retarded.
The younger and more hopeful ones learn bad habits from the older ones.
They see epileptics in their “seizure” struggles. They watch the senseless gesturing of the drooling mongoloids.

Patients Carry Others to Table

And they themselves grow worse and worse instead of better.
One hundred and fifteen girls spend most of their days in a single long, bare “play” room with virtually nothing to play with.

There are not even enough chairs for all of them to sit down.
Some of the epileptics lie all day on the bare floor.

There are so few attendants that the older girls have to carry the helpless ones bodily to and from their meals.

Girls picked up on the streets by police are dumped into this group indiscriminately, because the State has no other place for them if they are feeble-minded.

Crownsville is supposed to do for Negro children what Rosewood Training School supposedly does for feeble-minded white children.

But there is *no school* at Crownsville.

Not one of the more than 200 boys and girls at Crownsville is getting any formal schooling at all.

Many Called Salvageable

At least 25 per cent of them could take extensive “special” education and might become useful citizens, according to the doctors in charge.

Another 25 per cent could absorb limited learning and improve their condition.

But next to nothing is being done for these salvageable children.

The entire “training staff” consists of one woman, who shows a few of them how to sew, weave rugs, and use simple tools.

Crownsville is dangerously understaffed. It has only 110 attendants, though its budget allows 217.

This means not more than 45 are on duty at any given time. These attendants are not merely guards, but also “parents” and “nurses” to the patients, and cannot spend all their time watching them.

Out of the 1,800 patients at Crownsville there are 59 known criminals, at least ten of them homicidal.

Escapes are relatively frequent.

Twenty eight escaped in 1948.

(Stops reading.)

This appeared in *The Evening Sun* on January 11, 1949.

(Silence.)

Daniel: Mom, can you continue with your story?

Ruth: Yes. And then I want to sing you a song. Well, I think what helped me most to understand people of a different culture were these young women, Black women, who had been put in there as either . . . you know, they would have called them mentally deficient. I assumed they were being put in there . . . maybe they had been prostitutes roaming the streets and so, instead of getting any help, they were put in the mental hospital. And these women, these girl-women, between . . . I'd say between 16 and 20, taught me so much. I'm sorry I don't have more pictures.

Daniel: (Pointing to his laptop computer screen.) Here is a photo of two of the young women. It says Deloris and Estella on the back of this photo.

Ruth: They were such, I mean . . . I very soon knew they were not mentally ill or mentally deficient. Each girl, I'll call them girls . . . some of them may have been 20 . . . they each were given charge of a baby. Now, these little black babies – probably a lot of them had this kind of –well, some were born blind. But a couple of them probably had something like spina bifida. They weren't these girls' babies. They were given to them to take care of. That was their responsibility there. And the girls would sort of vie with each other as to which baby was dressed the cutest that day. I don't know where they got these beautiful little dresses, but they always had those babies looking – just gorgeous babies. And I remember feeling so struck at how passionate they were in taking care of these little ones.

But, the other memory is of the woman that ran our section. I mean, I felt she was just outright cruel. Allyn has said to me, "It wasn't that, Ruth. You had never been away from your home environment, your farm in Virginia." Well, she was in charge of this whole place, but she was downright mean sometimes. And she called me in one day, and she said, "I noticed how you're going to have trouble because you can't be friends with these girls. I mean, they'll turn on you." And she was giving me all this sort of scare stuff. And I have pictures somewhere of some of the black boy-men who would help us at different times. And I just learned that a lot of them were wonderful people.

So, I want to sing you a song. What they made these women do! I don't know if it was every day, but it would have been often. They had a huge auditorium-type room where they would just put chairs all around the walls. Some of them, oh the age would run from these babies to maybe 60 year-old women who were childlike. They would have all been put in there, all different ages. Many of them they would put in a high chair. Some couldn't walk, of course, and they'd sit there most of the day. The fellows would set up tables and they'd eat in there. So it had to be cleaned. I don't know if they did that every day or not, but my memory was of, like, ten black girls on cement floors on their knees with a bucket with hot sudsy water, and a scrub brush. And they would scrub this floor, and they had a big rag and they'd wipe it up with a rag.

There'd be ten of them across this huge room, and as they did that, they would sing. And, I don't know, I wonder, Dan, if I sang this to you kids. I used to sing it quite a bit because it was so neat. Now, you gotta think in terms of how Black people sing. They'd sort of rock as they sang.

(Singing)

Does Jesus care, when I'm alone?
I know my Jesus cares for me.
Does Jesus care, when I'm so sad?
I know my Jesus cares.
(And others would sing, Yes my Jesus cares, Yes my Jesus cares.)

Well, I know, yes, I know he cares.
Yes. Oh yes. I know my Jesus cares.
Oh, yes, I know he cares. I know my Jesus cares.
Yes my Jesus cares.

And, that used to break me up. These girls that had been mistreated. God knows what they'd already gone through -- singing those songs. I never forgot it.

Daniel: Did you ever hear those songs anywhere else?

Ruth: Never.

Daniel: So, your memory of that song now is based on just hearing them sing it way back in 1949, and maybe you singing it a bit since?

Ruth: Hearing them sing, yes. We would (gesturing quotation marks with her fingers) "supervise." Ha! You know, we would stand and watch them. Sometimes I would sing with them. And they thought that was really funny, and they'd laugh. They were wonderful, wonderful women. And I often wonder what's happened to them. I wish I had more of those pictures. I don't know where they are.

Daniel: Do you remember any of their names?

Ruth: You know, I don't. And that's probably when the woman jumped on me --for learning to know their names. We were only there two months, see. So, I don't remember the name of the woman who was in charge. I don't remember any of the names.

(Silence.)

Daniel: Well, I have a little surprise for you, Mom. And I think Dad will enjoy hearing this too. (Turning to his laptop.) Here is a recording of an all-women gospel group called “The Angelics,” and they are singing “Does Jesus Care?”

(Plays the recording.)

(As the recording plays, there are various reactions. Allyn taps his foot and pats his hand on his leg. Tears begin to form in Daniel’s eyes.)

Ruth: That’s just about how they sounded.

(Recording ends.)

Ruth: That’s pretty much how they sang it.

(Silence.)

Daniel: I just think it is amazing how clearly Mom remembered that tune. There is absolutely no doubt that this is the same song. It felt to me like I was there in that hospital, watching those women on their knees!

Ruth: Who did you say that group was? When did they make that recording?

Daniel: Well, the name of the group was “The Angelics,” but they were also known as “The Angelic Gospel Singers.” They were founded in 1944 in Philadelphia, and this recording was made at just about the time you were at the Crownsville Hospital, somewhere between 1949 and 1955. Here (turning to his laptop), here are their names: Lucille Shird, Josephine McDowell and Ella Mae Norris. Margaret Allison was playing the piano.

(Handing a piece of paper to Ruth.)

Here, Mom. Here is the song on paper. This printed version of the song was copyrighted in 1943, just six years before you heard it at Crownsville.

(Silence.)

* * * * *

Daniel: Now here is another amazing part of this story for me. I don't know if you remember, Mom, but I told you during our interview that I thought I had heard this song sung in Harrisburg. I used to be a member of the Gospel Travelers, an a capella men's group at my church. We sang spirituals and traditional Black gospel songs. I was the only White man in the group. And our group used to get invited to sing in other Black churches on special occasions where all of the men's groups at all of the Black churches would be invited, and there would be a service...or more like a gospel music program, in which each group would sing a few songs. This was an amazing experience for me, and it fed me spiritually like very little else can do.

Well, as part of my dissertation, I decided I needed to explore the role of music in my life. I found a videotape of a music program at a Baptist church in Williamsport in 1998. The Gospel Choir of our church and the Gospel Travelers men's group – I sang in both – were providing a whole program of gospel music. So I watched this videotape. And when our men's group started singing, the song was "Does Jesus Care?"!

Now this is amazing, because this is the only video recording that I am aware of that records the Gospel Travelers performing ... it is certainly the only one that I have. And we only sang three selections at this event of, probably, forty or so songs in our repertoire. And I know "Does Jesus Care?" was not a song that we typically sang. Would you like to see the video?

Ruth: That's really something, Daniel. Yes. Let's see it.

(Daniel plays the video on his laptop until it ends.)

Ruth: You always had a nice voice.

Daniel: So here I was, singing this song, almost 50 years after Mom first heard it. A song I may have heard as a child as my mom was rocking me. A song that connected my mom emotionally to the pain and the oppression and the enduring spirit of those young women at Crownsville...and now I was singing it. And this music was my emotional connection to African American people in my life in Harrisburg and some of the spiritual food that kept me aware of my own privileged position relative to the people I lived and played and worshipped with.

Allyn: Yes.

As I shared earlier in relation to the influence of the church on the nurturance of White, privilege-cognizant antiracist character, I learned in my research that music was a very strong influence. Music has been, throughout my life, a way for me to connect emotionally with people. And I hadn't thought about music in relation to helping me to connect with people and to expose my own White privilege, but many people that I interviewed made reference to my connection with music and felt that it had played a major role in my developing concern about racism over time.

Daniel: I don't want to read too much into all of this, but the lyrics of this particular song carry some messages for me. It seems to be such a simple song with a simple message. "Does Jesus care? Yes my Jesus sees and cares." Do others see? Do I see? Do I care? "When I'm oppressed" -- that's the first condition named in the song. "When I'm oppressed."

And, "When my burdens press me to the ground" -- those women were pressed to their knees on that concrete floor.

And then there's that verse that I took the lead on. It seems appropriate for me to sing that particular verse. It's not like the other verses that focus on being oppressed or distressed, or laden down with burdens pressing to the ground. My verse is about a sense of dread and about the tears I shed.

(Singing.)

Does Jesus care?
When I'm filled with dread?
I know my Jesus sees and cares.
When my pillow's wet from the tears I've shed,
I know my Jesus cares.

For me this verse addresses my recognition of the unearned privilege that I have, and how it is harming others and how it separates me from people and from my own full humanity. And when I shed a few tears . . . when I connect emotionally – not just intellectually – with the full cost of White privilege . . . my complicity with systems of oppression, my separation from people, my obsession with holding on to the illusion of security in the things that privilege confers on me . . . when I connect emotionally, I feel grateful that I still care . . . that the spirit of love inside of me, that it is still there.

I never thought that my dissertation research was going to pull me into the realm of spirituality so much, but it did. And the two of you, and a few other people that I interviewed, really opened me up to that. And the social scientist in me wants to discount it, yet the social scientist in me must acknowledge it and share it too!

(Silence.)

This passage integrates multiple research result themes, including *Importance of Community, Humanity and Spirituality*, and *Emotional Connections*.

Daniel: Mom, I remember being so . . . so moved and amazed when you told me that story during my interview with you. I'm still moved and amazed. Had you ever told that story to anyone before?

Ruth: No. Not before we talked that day.

(Silence.)

Daniel: Remember the woman I told you about who was pleased that I was taking on my full name, Daniel?

Allyn: Yes

Ruth: Yes.

Daniel: Well I shared this story with her. She really encouraged me to spend some time with the story, reflecting about why it is that White people don't often share with other White people the stories or experiences they have had – times when they realized that People of Color were being harmed, or when they connected emotionally with the pain of People of Color.

I don't know if this was part of your experience or not, but I just had this kind of vision at one point of you, Mom, rocking baby Daniel on your lap, and singing this song to your baby, and remembering these women. But then as Daniel grew to be a toddler, maybe you were reluctant to keep singing that song to him anymore. Soon he would be heading off to preschool or to Kindergarten, and he might sing them in front of other people, and sing them in this rocking cadence with this call and response. What might people think?

Well, this woman, this mentor of mine who likes the fact that I call myself Daniel now, she shared that she believes that White people don't share these kinds of stories for fear of being cut off . . . disconnected from . . . from or by other White people. If you would have shared that story with other White people, the things you had witnessed in that so-called hospital, other White people may have offered some excuse, or explanation, or rationale as to why these women were there. "Maybe they couldn't survive any other way," or "probably there was no employment for them," or "they just didn't have the resources for people that we have today". . . in essence discounting not only the suffering of the Black women, but discounting your aching desire to connect with these women and to care about them. And that eats away at the souls of White people . . . this fear, and this discounting . . . that Whites even do to other Whites – of the pain they experience or witness or inflict or feel.

Ruth: Well. That is really what happened to me. The mean-spirited woman in charge there pulled me aside and tried to frighten me away from associating with these young women. And that was sort of your attitude, as I remember it Allyn, like I was just naive, and if I understood the complexities of the situation, I would learn that things were not so simple and I wouldn't have such an emotional reaction to the suffering of these women.

Allyn: Yes. I suppose so. I suppose so.

(Daniel fumbles with his laptop.)

Daniel: This all reminds me of another point that one of my interview participants made. It's amazing how much I can now recall from all of these interviews. I guess I have now spent so much time with the recordings and transcripts that things just pop into my head. I'm trying to find this quote ... here it is. I also remember this because it seemed to get to the core of what I was trying to learn, especially about myself.

One of my interview participants remembered a passage from a PBS documentary series called, "Africans in America." Well I went and found two quotes from that film, and I have them here on my laptop. Here it is. The first quote is from Barry Unsworth, who was one of the talking head experts in the film. He's talking about the slavers . . . the crews on the ships for the middle passage:

(Reading the quote.)

The slavers, they knew, at one level, that these were human beings, because they were obviously, clearly human beings. At the same time they were objects of profit...and those two concepts couldn't obviously really be reconciled. And they never were reconciled. It was just that the humane, the sense of humanity of these people, it was simply suppressed for the sake of gold. And the shocking thing is that human beings are able to indefinitely suppress the urgings of their common humanity and to deny it for the sake of making profits. (WGBH Interactive, 2010)

And I guess I would add, for me, not only for making profits, but for many other reasons -- like fearing the disapproval of others, or fearing that I, too, could be that suffering person. And so I am wondering if you, Mom and Dad, if you were suppressing your humanity . . . or were you clinging to it at that hospital? And what are the ways that we are suppressing our humanity in our daily lives, or even right now?

This passage integrates multiple research result themes, including *Importance of Community, Humanity and Spirituality*, and *Emotional Connections*.

Allyn: You said that there was a second quote from that film?

Daniel: Oh yeah. Thanks, Dad. This quote is from the memoirs of Olaudah Equiano. He lived from about 1745 until 1797. He wrote a narrative account of his life, which included his capture as a child in Africa, his experience in the middle passage, life as a slave in Virginia, and many travels later in life. He was active in the campaign in England to abolish the slave trade.

(Reading.)

Is not the slave trade entirely a war with the heart of man? And surely that which is begun by breaking down the barriers of virtue...involves in its continuance, destruction to every principle and buries every sentiment in ruin. (WGBH Interactive, 2010)

“The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that's the essence of inhumanity.”

George Bernard Shaw (1901)

This closing, with quotes from Olaudah Equiano and from George Bernard Shaw illustrates the research result themes of *Importance of Community*, and *Humanity and Spirituality* by emphasizing the damage done to the humanity of those who oppress, those who are complicit with oppression, and those who are indifferent to the pain of oppression surrounding them. A quest for White, privilege-cognizant, antiracist character is a quest to regain one’s humanity by knowing the pain of others and knowing seeking healing for the woundedness of oneself and others.

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