Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

Othered but Unbothered: Agentic and inclusive narratives of Black Professors in US higher education

Carolyn Walcott[1]
Clayton State University, Marrow, GA, USA

Abstract: Black professors across US university campuses continue to navigate race–based and other forms of discrimination. This research paper argues that as a collective, African *American, Afro–Caribbean* and *African* professors experience discrimination at the intersection of their race, gender and nationality. To build my argument, I engage in conversations with ten professors from the Black Diaspora to elevate their stories of dialectical tensions, and racial and cultural stereotypes they confront and negotiate, while maintaining agency and creating safe spaces for inclusive and transformative teaching and learning in their classrooms. Using critical race theory and race–based *essentialism* to ground my work, I also engage in ethnography to illustrate the transformative role of intercultural pedagogy in dismantling essentialist misperceptions and simultaneously transforming the way students interact with and include *others* in society.
Keywords: African American, Afro–Caribbean, African, Experiences, Professor, Race

Introduction

As an educator, I approach the university classroom with a student–centered teaching philosophy that emphasizes the construction of knowledge through inclusive engagement with diverse student bodies. My convictions are influenced by the immersive experiences I obtained in high school from teachers in my home country, Guyana, South America, where students were receptive to both Guyanese and international educators. I was transported through time and history to the continents of Asia and Africa by expatriate teachers whose voices and stories I considered both a privilege and welcome disruption to the Eurocentric orientation that characterized our curriculum as a former British colony. I never allowed my gaze to question their authority or authenticity. Instead, I celebrated the opportunity to glean from the unrestrictive transfer of knowledge and the emancipation it created for the expatriate teachers in particular, whose voices connected students to local and international cultures and spaces, while stimulating their worldview.

My foray into higher education in the United States years later revealed the complex nature of the *other* as I moved across various college campuses primarily in the US South, the heartland of the civil rights movement and former confederate states, where issues of race and education have remerged in recent times. I have encountered students who are eager to embrace my distinctive Caribbean dialect and expertise, while very few have resisted change, opting instead to enact microaggressions through teaching evaluations. Said's (1978) essentialism extended by Delgado

[1] Corresponding author; an Assistant Professor of Media and Communication Studies in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Clayton State University. 2000 Clayton State Blvd, Morrow, GA 30260. E-mail; carolynwalcott@clayton.edu

and Stefancic's (2013) Critical Race Theory which magnifies the interplay of race and power dynamics, exemplifies my experiences, and the stories of Black professors who configure teaching as performative and contested, yet transformative. Race and gender identity intersect with nationality and credibility to form an added dimension of power dynamics in higher education (Strayhorn, 2023).

This essay builds upon previous scholarship on the lived experiences primarily of African Americans in higher education. It incorporates the experiences of Afro–Caribbean and African professors, while dismantling the monolith of *Blackness* that punctuates scholarship on race in higher education. I offer distinct classifications of the scholars whose contributions are often whitewashed by western scholars. My efforts are aimed at addressing the otherization of Black women in particular whose voices are critical to their individual stories but are often subverted by white women (see Harris, 2013 in Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). The voices of Black men are critical yet equally silent in existing scholarship. I reference African Americans to describe professors born in the United States, Afro–Caribbean as professors with Caribbean origins, and African as professors born in Africa. I also classify Afro–Caribbean and African professors as foreign–born to illustrate their *otherized* experiences relative to their US–born counterparts.

By way of outline, I begin by offering an overview of scholarship in the field to distil early and contemporary discourses on race and identity in higher education. Next, I amplify the voices of ten university educators whose lived experiences are shaped by their race, gender, identity, and nationality. I share the conversations as critical moments of listening and engaging in cross boundary discourse as put by Royster (1996), to discover how professors of *African American, Afro–Caribbean* and *African* origin confront and contest student perceptions of subject matter expertise based on a misaligned view of the foreign–born faculty as 'less credible', 'less intelligible' and even 'less intelligent' (Smith et al, 2018; p. 216). I also explored the role of race and gender to compare how they featured among *African American* professors and their foreign–born counterparts, and to record whether gender and cultural representations contributed to their experiences.

I present the dialectical tensions that *African* professors constantly navigate, through immersive teaching and evaluation exercises, but also highlight their moments of triumph as students embrace their subject–matter expertise and value they bring to the classroom. Then I provide readers with insights into curriculum transformation as a deliberate turn to an emancipatory pedagogy that acknowledges the inherent challenges and opportunities for integration in the current debate on inclusive teaching. Closing reflections are also provided to guide future directions.

Discourses on Race and Identity in Higher Education

An essential theoretical feature of this study is Critical Race Theory (CRT) which offers a solid foundation for the analysis of "discriminatory practices against people of color at the intersections of race, gender and nationality. The CRT movement is a "collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023, p.3). Several subgroups have emerged over time to highlight and contest identity–based and ethnic discrimination faced by persons of Latina, Indigenous, and Asian origin, among others. The work of Lat–Crit scholars who focus on "immigration policy, as well as language rights and discrimination based on accent or national origin" (p.3) provide a useful backdrop for the current work.

National statistics reveal that Black full-time faculty constitute approximately 7 percent of all faculty in colleges and universities in the US, although they represent 13 percent of the national

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

population. In addition, Black female assistant professors make up 4 percent that hold that rank, with Black men retaining the remaining 3 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024).

As an educator from the Global South, I frequently encounter questions pertaining to my nationality. I realized very early in the academy that I was engaged in a space that required a full understanding of what it meant to be at the intersection of Black, female, and experientially Caribbean. I also refrained from adapting gender essentialism or racial essentialism which assumes "there is a monolithic black experience…" (Harris, 2013 in Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, p.349). WEB Du Bois's (1903) seminal work on *Double Consciousness* took on new meaning as I forged an insider–outsider ethos as a Black academic woman. More importantly, I questioned the place of Afro–Caribbean educators in celebrating and maintaining our immigrant identities.

According to the US Census Bureau, 9.5 million new immigrants settled in the country between 2010 and 2017. The Bureau classifies immigrants as "foreign–born" or who were not U.S. citizens at birth, but are naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents (green card holders), temporary workers, and foreign students (Camarota & Zeigler, 2018). Thomas (2012) notes that the population of Afro–Caribbean immigrants in the United States in 2009 totaled 3.5 million Afro–Caribbean, African American and other African professors accounted for 4% of the total fulltime professors and 84% were White fulltime professors (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Black faculty members also endured structural racism disparities as it created barriers to access, promotion, tenure and retention *(*Allen et al, 2000; Fraizer, 2011). Apart from structural barriers that black faculty face, variations in English language usage also contribute to the lived experiences of black non–American professors on US college campuses. This is particularly noticeable for experienced faculty members whose colonial heritage, combined with cultural dialects, have produced variations of spoken English that are not usually embraced and recognized, in some instances, as English. To regulate their vocality Afro–Caribbean educators engage in recursive strategies, shifting between their dialect and formal speech in US classrooms (Smith et al, 2018).

Racism, language deployment and nationality in the academy

In their phenomenological study of African–born professors in higher education mainly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Okpala and Okpala (2014) explore their transition, socialization and mentoring experiences as well as the challenges and keys to effective transition. They drew data from 15 male and 9 female professors employed from 18 public and 6 private institutions. The scholars found that the educators received little to no mentoring, experienced social isolation, discrimination and marginalization even from their deans and directors.

Okpala and Okpala (2014) also found that the educators experienced being overburdened with service but overcame obstacles to empower themselves through resilience. Marginalization was also present in both predominantly white colleges and HBCUs due to the accent of the African born faculty. In addition, studies have situated language use in exploring how Afro Caribbean professors utilize English as part of a recursive and repositional strategy in US classrooms. Smith et al (2018) also found that Afro–Caribbean professors moved recursively between their local accent and what is considered Standard *English* within US classrooms based on its acceptance or resistance by students. The qualitative study, which recorded the experiences of six Afro–Caribbean multilingual educators with English across Caribbean and United States contexts, also found differences in pronunciations and language.

Notions of minority' or 'person of color' are conflated with students distinguishing international faculty as 'foreign,''less credible,' less intelligible' and even 'less intelligent' (Smith et al, 2018; p. 216). Thus, faculty consciously repositioned themselves as Standard English speakers among students and colleagues alike once they perceived their intelligibility to be questioned and resisted as a form of racism (Smith et al, 2018). However, bidirectionality of language use was also practiced particularly within inner familiar circles and classrooms where language forged deeper cultural understanding among the US and international student population (Smith et al, 2018).

The female African American experience: Intersectionality

The issue of representation of black faculty as part of a deliberate effort to diversify the pool of educators across US campuses also emerged during the civil rights era (Middleton, 2016). Scholarship in the field has since offered a range of perspectives, including the relative deficit of black professors in the academy at predominantly white colleges and the judgments activated by white students toward black professors (Fang–Yi & Hendrix, 2016). In the milieu, black professors experience race differently, with gender playing an intervening role for female black professors at both predominantly white colleges and HBCUs.

Despite the creation and presence of HBCUs across the United States, Fang–Yi and Hendrix (2016) argue that most of the college and university campuses remain predominantly white. This creates a credibility challenge for African American professors, particularly females, who are labelled as "black professor" mainly among white students who often question their competence. To Fang–Yi and Hendrix (2016), black female professors experience race differently at HBCUs where there is more respectability, and a functional student–faculty relationship seen as nurturing. Moreover, black male professors share a different experience from their female counterparts with respect to the ethos of discipline they bring to the classroom (Fang–Yi & Hendrix, 2016).

In their case study analysis of data from 1995 to 2000 and in 2014, Dade et al. (2015) found that the deployment of survival skills, including resistance to status quo domination, made African American females stronger. The qualitative study recorded the experiences of four African American females who served as faculty on the same campus and academic department during an overlapping time span. The act of unity and making an impressionable impact on other African American females who are yet to travel the hierarchical level serves as empowering (Dade et al, 2015).

Female black professors also highlighted challenges in intersectionality within the classroom where issues among a double minority prove difficult to discuss. This is magnified when both race and gender intersections cannot be ignored, as race always trumps gender, thereby requiring impression management. Thus, each participant reported an active role by speaking nationally and internationally, researching and writing, lecturing and consulting, and continuing to 'turn the wheel a bit' to eventually achieve the desired impression Further, the authors posit that the keys to defeating societal and institutional racism reside in setting achievable individual goals, the ability to control teaching materials and to direct it to the interests of our [colored]communities, and measuring success using the nature, strength and impact of activism or active involvement Dade et al, 2015).

Studies also suggest that the absence of minority perspectives within the US classroom stymies the delivery of content applicable to minority students (Barcus & Crowley, 2012; Haskins et al, 2013). This absence is directly related to the limited pool of black faculty recorded by the Department of Education, and perhaps the lack of involvement of faculty in course syllabi. Thus,

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

Barcus and Crowley (2012) and Haskins et al (2013) note that students of color feel isolated and ill–prepared due to irrelevant course content or content which fails to include marginalized practitioners' standpoints. Moreover, earlier studies posit that applying the beliefs of CRT may help educators develop academic practices that address matters of impartiality and social justice in the classroom and faculty–student relationships (Closson, 2010; Ladson–Billings, 1999).

In a related study, Geer and Spalding (2017) tested age as a moderator of the effects of racism on psychological symptoms for a sample of African American adults. Participants in this study consisted of 184 African American women from ages 18–82, who were recruited from the Southeastern region of the U.S. Ninety–five were from mainly white Universities and 89 were from an outpatient medical clinic (Geer & Spalding 2017). The study showed that younger women of color were more impacted by exposure to racism than older women of color.

The classroom is also perceived as a safe space for discussion, but class size and a willingness to openly discuss sensitive or uncomfortable topics such as white privilege are also necessary to overcoming racism However, the centering of students and decentering of professors as powerful agents are also critical to creating and maintaining such safe spaces (Delano–Oriaran & Parks 2015). Delano–Oriaran and Parks (2015) assert that students are likely to embrace the need for racial consciousness encouraged by white professors, while respecting differences. They also posit that an informal setting, created by black female professors within a predominantly white university, may also dispel stereotypes associated with the angry black female in power while stimulating open discourse (Delano–Oriaran & Parks 2015). Although the authors note that both white and black female professors faced denial and resistance when attempting to introduce white privilege, their creation of a safe space for discussions on both micro and macro levels of white privileges stimulated participation *(*Delano–Oriaran & Parks 2015).

Patton (2004) makes an important observation by noting that a minor increase in female professors cannot correct racism and sexism issues in academe notwithstanding attempts at embracing differences in beliefs, culture, ethnicity, viewpoint and lifestyle. For the author, Black female professors face gender and race struggles differently from their white female counterparts, with gender and racism institutionally embedded to privilege white faculty, while protecting white supremacist patriarchal hegemonic order as noted by hooks (1984). This may explain why some Black professors take a politically correct stance rather than openly express their positionality.

The current debate on classrooms as safe places for student discussions reflects a new level of political correctness that professors exercise in expressing their worldview on issues around race. However, Constance-Huggins (2018) alludes to her own reflexivity in teaching on race and racism as a black female professor from the Caribbean. For hooks (1994), the standpoint of professors is critical to advancing discourse and critical thinking in the classroom, rather than political correctness. Thus, critical pedagogy offers a place and space for both reflexivity and expression of standpoint.

Moreover, Murry–Johnson and Ross–Gordon (2018), in their study, found that black professors utilize disarming and depoliticizing tactics by making the race discussion less personal by constantly citing scholarly evidence or including students' opinions. By stating one's teaching approach and style, black professors also signal boundaries and norms (Murry–Johnson & Ross–Gordon, 2018). The qualitative case study, conducted with six educators of color and two white educators (seven females and one male), also located the intentional inclusion of emotions during the class discussion on race as beneficial to students. Several educators acknowledged the importance of completing antiracist education with PK–12 teachers with the aim of exploring and exposing students to diverse materials *(*Murry–Johnson & Ross–Gordon, 2018). Studies also reveal that student ratings illustrate their perceptions of professors with respect to race, with African and

Hispanic professors receiving lower evaluation scores than White and Asian professors (Basow & Martin, 2012). However, other findings suggest that student evaluations may be an ineffective way to measure the quality of teaching as students may rate a professor highly even when they do not learn much (Royster, 1996; Basow, Codos & Martin, 2013). Amid these experiences that are further compounded by isolation (Middleton, 2016), black female academics also endure sexism, racism and classism (Walkington, 2017).

The preceding review accounts for the liminal lived experiences of black professors, including African–born, Afro–Caribbean and African American professors. They are particularly critical to understanding how those realties manifest on a broader scale in the current study, with the inclusion of black male academics. To fill the existing gap while broadening the scope of the black experience, largely confined to African Americans, this study examines how race, gender, and nationality intersect to influence classroom dynamics experienced by three distinct groups bonded by a common Black identity. Moreover, Love (2019) underscores although Black people are not a monolith, as "many of us have experienced similar educational, historical, social, economic, political, and spiritual conditions, so we share a culture" (p.129). Love argues that the historical and economic constructs in which enslavement of Africans ensued during the triangular trade resulted in the dispersing of Black bodies. Consequently, Black people were separated geographically, with the Global South distinguishing Blacks from the Global North, yet we share similar stories of exploitation and trauma (see Walcott 2021). The search for commonality also extends outward in culture as African Americans and Afro Caribbean natives are increasingly discovering their roots in the African region through DNA tests. Moreover, manifestations of the past are constantly revealed in the present through educational settings in which Black academics from the Global South turn inward for community to navigate uncharted terrain.

Methodology

Selection and Recruitment of participants

This study relied on the voices and experiences of Black faculty as cocreators of meaning in being othered but unbothered in various spaces across US college campuses. I was intentional in selecting ten faculty, with an equal composition of males and females, who identified as Black, but reflected a microcosm of American and foreign–born nationalities. This was necessary to understand participants' gender and nationality featured in their interactions with students in general, as part of their lived experiences in US higher education contexts. Most of the participants were tenured or on tenure–track positions in their respective departments. To begin the process, two Black US–born participants, one male and one female, were recruited from an existing network of colleagues with distinct experiences at predominantly minority and white serving institutions, respectively in the US South. This initial process was essential to discover how historical and contemporary experiences of race, particularly in education, shaped the lives of *citizens*, before capturing the experiences of *aliens* who have both experienced and witnessed alienation based on their race and nationality. Next, I enlisted the participation of an additional eight professors, four females and four males, who identified as foreign–born, through email contact and referral from colleagues. Of the eight foreign–born participants, four shared Caribbean origins, and four were from the African region which provided balanced contributions to the shared conversations. A major criterion for selection of the participants was their critical engagement in pedagogical practices that forged global awareness and emphasized student immersion in practicums relative to

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

the participants' professional competencies. I also engaged faculty who navigated campus classrooms at PBIs and PWIs to unpack how their experiences cohered or diverged.

Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with a broad overview of the study as part of the informed consent protocol approved to meet ethical standards. Once signed consent was obtained, each interview was scheduled and recorded via Zoom. Interviews ranged from 30–45 minutes and were followed by a process of transcription enabled by otter–ai software, and open coding, constant comparison of themes, similarities and distinct experiences. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity and that of their university. The analysis process was also undertaken through member checking with participants, following the initial process of coding to ensure that their perspectives were accurately captured and reflected in the quotes selected and themes developed within the narratives.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

I relied on Creswell's (2007) phenomenological approach as phenomenology facilitates the interpretation of the "essence of the experiences" (Creswell, 2007; p.78) and the identification of common themes within those experiences. Phenomenology also offers the most appropriate method of recording and interpreting how being Black impacts the lived experiences of professors from different campuses and nationalities. Employing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach allowed me to pose similar questions, compare responses and derive themes for deeper theoretical analysis. I also recognized the salience of bracketing in the process of interpreting the data and therefore allowed the participants' voices to emerge via transcendental or psychological phenomenology as espoused by Moustaka (1994).

To address any potential power dynamics during my conversations, I disclosed my identity as a female Afro–Caribbean educator to bracket broader "philosophical assumptions" Creswell, 2007; p.62), and allowed reflexivity to derive a fresh and objective understanding of racism in academia. Findings are discussed thematically in the next section.

Calling Out Voices from the Inside

R*ace, Gender, Respectability and Boundaries*

Being African American does not provide a rite of passage to professors who are familiar with the US cultural context. African American professors experience resistance in the US college classroom, as students engage in selective respectability. In this section, I present the conversations first with African Americans to establish theoretical connections to CRT within their stories. I also move in between conversations to compare experiences.

Professor Daniel Spencer is the archetype of faith, tenacity and a media industry professional turned academic. He is well connected to the film industry in the US South. As I listened to his account, I sensed both pain and rejection but there was also a noticeable strength of character and personal validation that anchored his teaching and service. Spencer shared that unlike his white male counterparts, his interactions with students at the PWI he served prior to his current PBI post, included sublime racism and disrespect. There were students who "would literally call me by my first name," Spencer shared. He adds, "I would listen to them address other professors and they wouldn't do that." I juxtaposed Spencer's point of view with personal practice and performance, while contemplating how female African professors, like their Caribbean counterparts, establish boundaries based on a culture rooted in our shared colonial heritage and

formality. Professor Ngozi Ike, a female African American tenured professor of Nigerian heritage provides an example below:

> …my syllabus is almost about 20 pages long, because it has everything. It has email etiquette, it has how you address me, forget I have a first name, you will not be calling me by my first name…when you enter into my class, you're entering into a fictional village in Africa, or town, I am not only teaching you African history, I'm teaching you African culture. And as I am standing, I can promise you I'm probably older than your parents. So no, you don't get to call me by my first name.

Returning to the male African American professor's struggle despite his credentials and expertise, I questioned Spencer's nuanced perspective of disrespect and whether it is attributable to students' socialization. I was also curious about the role student demographics play in how Spencer was perceived. Surprisingly he pointed out that his competency is never questioned by white male students, but rather white females. The apparent race and gendered opposition Spencer describe reflects similar experiences recorded during my conversation with his female African American counterpart who insists on shifting existing structures despite the opposition. Her experiences are captured in the next segment.

Countering the trope of [Un]educated Black female academic

Although female African American academics are part of the fabric of western culture, they continue to be essentialized. Some students also question their credibility. This adds another layer to the existing burden of performance that Black women in the academy are forced to carry compared to Black men as another participant acknowledged during our conversation. For instance, Angela King, a female tenured journalism professor, shared that she has encountered race and prejudice in both mainstream journalism and the college classroom. King's recollection of prejudice dates to her childhood experiences during the civil rights era in the US South, and more direct aspersions as "a culturally deprived colored girl" in the newsroom. She felt that the notion of depravity reflected the racist dynamic present in the newsroom, and the gender stereotypes often activated against black female reporters. Her transition to the campus setting also elevated the presence of racial epithets, centering on the presence of race, gender and [dis]respectability within the lived realities of female African American professors. Apart from questioning King's legitimacy, students challenged her capacity as an industry expert and refrained from extending equal authority like Spencer's experience. The following account by King illustrates one such instance:

> I recall very vividly a student asking me when 'was the last time' I wrote a story and I gave them a multimedia project that I had done a week ago. This was amazing in part because this was a student who happened to be a white male who questioned my credentials. I can tell you that I've seen some students automatically assume that I don't have x or y credentials, and I've seen where students have called male professors, particularly white male professors doctor and not address female professors likewise. And personally, it doesn't matter to me whether a student calls me professor or doctor. I know that I have the credential. So what's most important is that we engage in learning. And I think learning goes both ways.

Race–based discrimination appears embedded in the lived realties of Professors Spencer and King, who are both African American and are acquainted with the history of segregation in the

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

US South, and microaggressions which take on the form of racism on their campuses. Nonetheless, they have both found ways to resist the tropes they encounter and have set themselves a trajectory to broaden students' perspective of the world and the spaces in which they learn. These efforts are considered essential pedagogical interventions to address existing stereotypes.

Decentering gender biases, Reinforcing experiential teaching

Intercultural immersion as revolutionary pedagogy

The racial epithets described earlier by King have fueled her approach to teaching and scholarship as she examines media "at the intersection of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access." She utilizes her extensive international travel and media expertise to shape media pedagogy among students, and to shift their view of other nations and cultures. As a former journalist, King also remains actively engaged with media establishments and has deliberately curated content and internships for students at her PWI in the US South. Her media pedagogy focusses on learning outcomes designed to develop media and cultural competencies simultaneously among students. Below, she shared an example of experiential teaching aimed at stimulating learning:

> …each student has to select a different country to write about reflection paper and within that and invariably, I'll have several students who will want to do Germany, Italy, or UK. I intentionally, at the intersection of race, when we're talking about conflict and war zones and foreign correspondence, I include by design, how can I say this, journalists, such as Ethel Payne, who's a foreign correspondent, as a piece of the conversation…

My conversation with King underscored the significance of "greater global experiences" among students to understand geography, and the fact that "Africa is not a country." Her voice also presented an opportunity for me to segue to professor Adebe's approach in his *Cross–Cultural Journalism* class to push the boundaries of college education beyond the university campus. Like King, he draws examples from his native country, Nigeria and the African and Asian regions, including China, Bangladesh and Kuwait, to share his immersive travels as teaching tools. This strategic cross–cultural approach also extends to the way students are encouraged to view others who do not share similar values. One example that stood out during our conversation illustrates transformative teaching and learning which I discerned as a replacement strategy that involves dismantling of walls and building bridges as pathways to education. Below is an excerpt from our conversation that illustrates one student's transformational experience as Adebe recalls:

> I deliberately assigned her [a student] to do a story on somebody who has a totally different sexual orientation…She later told me 'I didn't know I could relate. We are now friends.' That is the essence of the class.

Transformational education through cross–cultural learning, as discussed earlier, can be considered a useful approach in higher education. More importantly, it disabuses inherent perceptions about the developing world and decolonizes the university and college curriculum. While these efforts are initiated by both African American and African professors, they have not prevented essentialist views from emerging among students. This is discussed in the next section which captures the dialectical and credibility contestations African professors experience.

Othered in the Classroom: Nationality and Credibility

Dialectical Stereotypes

For the foreign–born professor, entry into academic spaces in the United States presents several challenges. These include the otherized gaze due to dialectical differences, and preconceived notions that are assigned to one's credibility based on their national identity. Professor Anthony Abimbola, a tenured African male professor at a university in the US South, has encountered students who have activated racist tropes while questioning his competencies and intelligibility. Abimbola explained that the outsider gaze is the first hurdle many academics from the Global South, including Africa, encounter mainly from white female students. He noted that some students often assume that foreign–born professors are "not competent enough to teach them." Such competences support ethnocentrism, and the notion that academic competence within a college or university classroom requires articulate American English.

Abimbola's experience also mirrors Professor Akinde Adebe's story which I reenter for comparative purposes. He sums up his dialectical tensions the following way:

> ...when it comes to communication, a device I asked them in class, you know, that early stage, do I speak with an accent? Oh, yeah [they responded]. I say you know what? You guys speak with an accent too. So the important thing is, are we communicating? The way you sound to me is the way I sound to us all of us who have accents. I said, besides, is anybody from England here? You're not the owner of the language.

In the context of language, students also question the intelligibility of professors of international origin which Akinde recounted in the case of a former female Afghan broadcaster who transitioned to the professorate in the United States. Students claimed "we don't understand what she's saying there" resulting in poor evaluations, Akinde shared, while attributing the evaluations to gender and ethnicity, in addition to the rigorous work ethic of *outsider* professors. Adebe disclosed that his female Afghan counterpart now receives *sterling* evaluations following her reassignment to a less rigorous course in the journalism studies program. His experience also resonates with another Afro–Caribbean participant who recalled how contrasting her evaluations were compared with a white male colleague with whom she co–taught. But such dialectical tensions are not confined to the female orient. Abimbola asserted that despite his journalism background and extensive knowledge, he too discerned latent ostracism related as follows:

> …. you can tell that they have a little bit different attitude to you because of your accent, because of where you come from, but they will not say that, you know, publicly. I had students complain about my accent and difficulty with understanding… the minority of students. But over the years that has gone away completely.

Silas Osana, another former African journalist turned professor who teaches at a US university in the north, describes being *otherized* as a key fixture for educators from the Global South. The Kenyan–born professor, who quit one of his posts due to constant student aggression, attributes ingrained ethnocentrism to how student [dis]engagement informs their perceptions:

> "It is because for the most part, the students are not doing the work. Or somebody may say, Oh, I don't understand him…I've seen that is because you are on your phone when you're in class. So there is that general perception. And I think it's driven beyond what is going on in class…it

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

> driven by, by a general Western perception …you know, it's a superiority complex."

As part of the African diaspora, Afro–Caribbean professors are also recipients of the ethnocentric culture that pervades some US College and university classrooms. I would also learn that appearance, complimented by the existing cultural capital some Caribbean countries enjoy, are essential features of influence in the US college classroom. As a trained female sociologist of Caribbean heritage, Patricia Williams, a tenured professor, related her story of acceptance and rejection simultaneously. Her visibility and cultural representation as a *dreadlocked* creole–speaking professor reflect the profound nature of cultural consciousness and the refusal to mask one's identity to become accepted. Williams shared that while her physical appearance attracted collegial curiosity, student enrollment has increased significantly over the years due to her Caribbean background. Below, she describes the monoliths that are also imposed on Caribbean citizens:

> …for some reason, they gravitated towards this particular accent, because I think they thought it was Jamaican too. So there was another problem…that was the perception. The negative part about the perception, though, is that I'm an outsider. I have been at [the] school [for]15 years, but believe it or not, I'm still an outsider.

It stands to reason that dialectical tensions disempower African professors situated in some US college classrooms and reinforces dominant perceptions about others with Caribbean origins based on media and cultural representation. Such an argument falls outside of the scope of the current work but is certainly useful for future studies. It points to de–westernizing media representation as part of decolonizing the college curriculum and deconstructing perceptions about Africa.

The Classroom as a Village

Decolonizing perceptions about Africa

The task of decolonizing the curriculum often entails shifting student perceptions through a combination of the cultural and intellectual capital scholars take to the classroom. Throughout our interview, I discovered that Professor Ike, introduced earlier in this essay, embodies both cultural and intellectual capital as she describes the US university classroom, situated in the US Midwest, as a transformative space. It is in that "village" that she is intentional about re–narrating western perceptions of the African continent and the various countries found there:

> Any time a student enters my class, the first four weeks, we deal with perceptions, we deal with point of view, we deal with ways of seeing different ways of seeing, we deal with racism and historiography…when I walk into the classroom, I tell my students that I am here to teach them and introduce them to what I call another Africa. It is an Africa that they don't know… it is an Africa that I love. And it is an Africa that challenges a lot of the preconceptions that they have about Africa.

The intentionality among African professors is also aimed at correcting media representation. Silas insisted that he too is on a crusade to change minds while remaining an exemplar of pragmatism. Through sociological lens, Williams asserted that the university classroom remains crucial to stimulating debate on "race and ethnicity." On the issue of belonging, "no one assumes responsibility for defining me," Cassandra Campbell stated emphatically. Like

Williams, Campbell is unapologetic about her physical persona as a Rastafarian/dreadlocked professor in the STEM field. She intimated that race and gender–based discrimination are part of the experiences that have accompanied her application for promotion and tenure, but she rejects the idea of modifying her appearance or accent. Similar experiences were shared by another Afro–Caribbean female professor who witnessed the racially subjective nature of faculty awards at her institution where her value was well recorded in student evaluations. Thus, the work of CRT scholars requires a closer examination of the problematic nature of the field, and the policies that now threaten diversity, equity and inclusion programs instituted specifically to address discrimination and racial sensitivity within the academy. Unpacking essentialist foundations, which is discussed next, remains a work in progress.

Essentialism and the *Other*

Changing Media Representation, Stereotypes and Student Perspectives

The task of transforming worldviews on college campuses entails shifting narratives associated with the *immigrant* other. This realization has already materialized for some foreign–born professors like Abimbola, introduced earlier. He uses has classroom to emphasize that "the human being cannot be illegal." He insists, "The Act can be illegal, but they themselves cannot be illegal. Certainly, don't see illegals because first of all illegal is an adjective. You don't pluralize an adjective."

For others, scholarship remains crucial to gaining credibility in the discipline to better educate students. As put by another male Afro–Caribbean professor, the challenges associated with stereotypes often manifest in "subtle biases, such as questioning my authority or expertise, or making assumptions about my background," based on race and gender. However, he considers resilience and adaptability critical to connecting with students and guiding their growth, both academically and as globally minded individuals. At the same time, sensitive issues that are discussed in ways that acknowledge students' perspectives foster critical discourse on the intersections of race and nationality in broader societal issues. In the process, students understand the importance of different cultural contexts, and "recognize the impact of their own identities and those of others on their perspectives," he explained. Spencer, the male African American professor shared a similar view with me. He asserted that, "we are all able and capable of especially being black…of writing on diversity, equity and inclusion…being a part of the African diaspora."

Although my conversations revealed a mix of dialectical tensions, *othering* and credibility issues faced by foreign–born professors from the Global South, their cultural capital, expertise and ethos in the classroom anchor their resolve to maintain joy in teaching. Moreover, as outsiders they combine their awareness of media representation and research agenda to stimulate class discussions and their scholarship in the discipline. As Abimbola noted during our conversation, "I feel a responsibility to add to the growing body of knowledge about the country. So a lot of my research is on Nigeria." This underscores the nexus between national origin, identity and one's research agenda, but deconstructing language and decolonizing perspectives that have been primed by media exposure remains a challenge as Ike explains:

> And at the end of the semester, the students…were so excited about what we had done. But they were using words that were extremely problematic when it came to Africa words like tribe, words like jungle words, like, you know, so, and I thought to myself, there were a lot of these words, right?

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

To King, representation matters as students need to "see themselves" through their professors in the classroom and received study abroad exposure. My conversations revealed the ongoing tensions that Black female faculties confront at the intersection of their race, gender and nationality. Consistent with previous studies by Allen et al, (2000) and Fraizer (2011) who identified access, promotion, tenure and retention as barriers that Black faculty face, one of my female Afro–Caribbean interviewees shared that her portfolio received intense scrutiny leading to delays in the promotion and tenure process. Afro Caribbean professors like Smith, along with Akinde, an African–born professor, also positioned themselves as credible English speakers coinciding with Smith, et al's (2018) recursive strategy they found among Afro–Caribbean scholars in US classrooms.

The experiences recorded in this essay are also relatable to earlier findings (Fang–Yi & Hendrix, 2016) and underscore how racism differs for black females situated at PBIs and PWIs. Nonetheless, disarming and depoliticizing tactics to center race and cultural history (Johnson and Ross–Gordon (2018) appear to be effective pedagogical strategies. Nonetheless, poor evaluations based on national origin remain a hurdle female Afro–Caribbean faculty navigate alongside the essentialism and race–based discrimination inherent in critical race discourse. These acts prevail years after Basow and Martin's (2012) study found similar occurrences among female African American professors, in addition to recent scholarship that support the profound impact of race–based discrimination in promotion practices (Ward & Hall, 2022). Despite the sources of tension within the academy, black African American, Afro–Caribbean and African professors have resolved to surmount the weaponization of race, gender and nationality to question their role and legitimacy in their respective classrooms. They also remain agentic and are committed to transformational teaching which I now examine.

Finding solidarity with O*thers*

Scholars from the Global South who transition to classroom spaces in the Global North, primarily US college and universities campuses, possess intellectual capital. My assertion is grounded by the belief that an international worldview enriches the experiences of students whose exposure may be limited to western media representation of the world, and indeed other cultures. The experiences of scholars shared earlier in this work also illustrate the significance of internationalizing the curriculum in settings occupied by diverse student populations. As I pondered on the implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in higher education, I explored its presence in and relevance to my own teaching philosophy of inclusivity which predated the emergence of DEI. I also yearned to give students access to other cultures to broaden their worldview. In this section, I discuss a critical pedagogical intervention which I consider an important bridge to the previous section, as it offers key insights for others in the discipline. The implications of transformational pedagogy and limitations are also discussed.

Pedagogical emancipation

Many traditions in higher education, including physical classroom engagements between students and professors, have been significantly altered due to the COVID–19 global pandemic which emerged in early 2020. As professors sought to retool to deliver quality education, students faced equally challenging circumstances brought on by the need to balance their professional work and university lives. I offer this autoethnography to demonstrate support for inclusive student engagement and effective learning outcomes across campuses in both seated and online modes of

delivery. In addition, I address the value of student feedback to enhance the way we empower them to thrive in a post–pandemic environment.

By the end of 2022, students and professors alike had arrived at the juncture of pandemic fatigue. Students grappled with the school–life–work balance and the new realities of the post–pandemic era, mainly basic survival, while professors settled for online teaching rather than seated classes in some instances. My university, located in Southeast United States, faced similar challenges. The decline in enrollment and online teaching became the reality as many departments explored ways to engage students effectively online. By the beginning of spring 2022, I imagined a course that would stimulate intercultural awareness among students, while disrupting their ideas about non–western cultures. Intercultural Communication became the automatic title, and its 'situatedness' within the US mainstream communication and media studies curriculum made it a natural fit.

To move away from narrative film traditions, I extended the critical framework of doing assignments and introduced conventions associated with deep inquiry and analysis located in qualitative studies. Consistent with the key learning objectives and learning outcomes, I assigned a mini ethnographic study to stimulate research among students and an understanding of the lived experiences of their migrant peers, friends or coworkers. However, not every student embraced the idea. The online mode of delivery was an obvious limitation to this pedagogical approach as it undermined direct interaction with students who may have developed apprehensions due to social isolation brought on by the pandemic, misunderstood the nature and intent of the assessment, or simply feared engaging with *others*. Nonetheless, 90% remained enrolled in the course. The assessment for ethnography was based on students' interpretive analysis of the interview, identification of key themes, and finally, the application of theoretical perspectives introduced in the assigned readings to the interview findings. These features were aimed at stimulating cultural competencies among students.

To begin the online conversation for Intercultural Communication, I posed the question of self–identity to students after reflecting on my identity as a female Afro Caribbean scholar in the southern part of the United States. I became used to this form of introspection and self–disclosure in in–person classes but used the online space to encourage students to engage in critical introspection of how they were perceived by others. While there were a few surprising responses including perceptions based on physical appearance, some students shared that they never considered or conceptualized their identity through historical or cultural lens. Race and ethnicity were often conflated. Undoubtedly, this gap necessitated the development of awareness and cultural competencies to which I referred earlier.

As is customary at the end of my courses, I extended an extra credit opportunity to students to candidly identify key takeaways and challenges in completing the course. The results revealed a mix of thoughtful processing of interview data and the development of a series of personal goals to develop cultural competencies. It was particularly gratifying to discover how meaningful students found the mini ethnography, as one student stated, "this hands–on approach not only broadened my awareness of diverse perspectives but also underscored the importance of open communication and empathy in fostering meaningful connections across cultural boundaries."

Feedback suggested that students not only developed cultural competencies, but a desire to introspect and embrace rather than *otherize* those outside of their culture. Most of the feedback also suggested that students developed empathy and no longer activated preconceived ideas about other cultures as they engaged with their interviewees. In this regard, one student stated, "…I plan to

Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies
2024, Vol.11, No. 5, 158-177
http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2088

ISSN: 2149-1291

adapt by having empathy and showing compassion for people in different cultures educating myself and allowing myself to be teachable when it comes to the cultures as well."

Some key takeaways also articulated by students include, "...the ability to understand and engage with people from various backgrounds. Being aware and understanding someone's cultural values and beliefs without letting my biased and stereotypical opinion change my mind set on that person as being." In addition, the interview assignment, though unsettling for some, created a paradigm shift in the way they viewed others through tainted media representation. One student made this revealing comment:

> This class really helped me understand the communication between different cultures. It also allowed me to step outside of my comfort zone/ bubble to see what other cultures experience while being in America. I haven't seen anyone being discriminated against culturally personally, but I have heard about it and seen it on television. I plan on using my experience with the class to be more culturally sensitive and find ways to help/ speak out against cultural stereotypes. I have faced stereotypes being a black American woman, but I can only imagine what people go through being from different cultures. I would really love to help other cultures out

Other responses referenced the significance of theoretical knowledge alongside practical application the following way:

> The Social Categorization Chapter… This chapter resonated with me because it was an important talking point during my interview assignment. I enjoyed the discussion of culture. I enjoyed the breakdown of our self–concept. The difference between personal, social, and cultural identities resonated with me as well. This was important because we are all at some point asked ourselves the question "Who Am I?" at some point in their lives.

For some students, Intercultural Communication provided a pathway for enhanced personal and professional interactions beyond the classroom, as one student asserted, "I started incorporating intercultural communication competence into everyday routine. I work in a diverse environment and gaining more knowledge helps me better understand where my associates are coming from."

The depth of learning also manifested in the following articulated student response:

> The lessons will always resonate with me because they have provided a crucial understanding and prepared me for the workplace post college, in terms of engaging with people of different nationalities and values. What I found interesting within the course regarding media and communication, there can sometimes be stereotypes and misrepresentation of that culture which can have a social impact. The principles that I plan to adopt in my intercultural communication skills would be to build a bridge between different individuals and communities of diverse cultural backgrounds by simply listening and having the eagerness to understand from a different perspective than my own

Some obvious challenges to teaching intercultural communication include the fact that student perceptions of *other* cultures may change incrementally, rather than automatically, following a 13–week immersion. Moreover, some students abstained from providing feedback. The course is also not required by everyone and does not account for other experiential pedagogy across US campuses.

Nonetheless, the fusion of theoretical constructions and practical assignments appear to have accomplished two major goals concurrently. First, student experiences facilitated intercultural inquiry and appreciation. Secondly, students acknowledged their own biases and how these impacted their worldview of others from a cultural context. This enabled the development of life skills for intercultural engagement and a commitment to empathy. Altogether, the teaching and learning experiences that evolved from my Intercultural Communication class resulted in an inclusive, solutions–based pedagogy that brought joy. By providing students with research skills and adding their voices to the ongoing discourse on diversity, I was able to participate in and witness transformative education. I continue to explore ways to integrate life lessons in teaching and scholarship while allowing students to be co–creators of meaning in the classroom. This is the essence of inclusive education.

Conclusion

In this essay, I discussed the intersectionality of race, gender, and nationality, and how they coalesce to marginalize Black college and university professors who identify as African American, Afro–Caribbean, and African. The narratives showed the presence of race and gender–based discrimination faced particularly by African American professors, while dialectical tensions often punctuated student interactions experienced by African professors. Although race–based discrimination appeared less prominent among Afro–Caribbean professors with whom I conversed, gender–based discrimination is a reality experienced by two of the four female professors who shared their stories. Male African professors, like female African American professors, confronted questions pertaining to their credibility, but they remained agentic in their classroom by adopting strategies, including global awareness and cultural competencies as teaching tools. These tools were also applied to deconstruct misperceptions about the African region, and an intervention aimed at decolonizing the university curriculum.

The literature corroborates the lived experiences and distinct responses to being otherized. In addition, Critical Race Theory establishes the essentializing that Black professors confront. However, despite the overt and covert nature of the experiences described, my conversations reflect the creation of safe spaces for critical discourse and a common pattern of resistance and resolve in educating students across US college campuses. Decolonizing the curriculum in a society where race–based dialogue is under increasing political scrutiny further highlights the precarity in which Black scholars find themselves in this moment. As educators we are tent makers and engineers simultaneously. We dismantle structures that are not sound, shift paradigms that undermine critical reasoning and build bridges that lead to a more engaged and informed student and global citizen.

My commitment to transforming spaces that lack much reference to the Global South has anchored both the curriculum revisions and instructional style I now apply to online and seated spaces as an Assistant Professor at a Predominantly Black Serving Institution in the US South. I have resolved to maintain joy in the classroom while leveraging my *orient*ation. Equally reassuring are the lived experiences of other scholars from the United States, and the Diaspora whose Caribbean and African origins help to validate the current study, while, in many cases, coinciding with the experiences of African American scholars as well.

The obvious limitations to the current study include the recording of experiences of ten professors confined primarily to the US South. Hopefully I have inspired others to extend the work by engaging in deeper conversations with a wider cross section of the professors who shared their stories, including those located in other major US cities. The field will also be

ISSN: 2149-1291

enriched by the voices of other marginalized groups who continue to exist, to teach, to endure and build resilience in academic spaces that aren't always welcoming.

References

Allen, W. E. –H. (2000). The Black academic: Faculty status among African–Americans in U.S. higher education. *The Journal of Negro Education, 69*(1), 112–127. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2696268

Baehen, C. M., MeLoughlin, M. M., & Gareia, S. S. (1999). Assessing Üie role of gender in college students' evaluations of faeulty. *Communication Education, 48*, 193–210.

Barcus, C. G. (2012). Training ethnic minority graduate students in a White man's program: Don't get bucked off! *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 40*, 70–81. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1912.2012.00007.x

Basow, S. A. (2012). Bias in student ratings. In M. E. Kite, (Ed), *Effective evaluation of teaching: A guide for faculty and administrators* (pp. 40–49).

Basow, S. A., & Montgomery, S. (2005). Student evaluations of professors and professor self–ratings: Gender and divisional affliction. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 18*(2), 91–106. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11092-006-9001-8

Basow, S. A., Codos, S., & Martin, J. L. (2013). The effects of professors' race and gender on student evaluations and performance. *College Student Journal, 47*(2), 352–363.

Bennett, S. K. (1982). Student perceptions of and expectations for male and female instructors: Evidence relating to the question of gender bias in teaching evaluations. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 74*, 170–179. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.74.2.170

Centra, J. A. (2000). Is there gender bias in student evaluations of teaching? *Journal of Higher Education, 71*, 17–33.

Camarota, S. A., & Zeigler, K. (2018). Record 44.5 million immigrants in 2017. *Center for Immigratioin Studies.*

Chambers, C. R. (2011 & 2012). Candid reflections on the departure of Black women faculty from academe in the United States. *The Negro Educational Review, 62/3*, 233–254.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* SAGE Publications.

Closson, R. B. (2010). Critical race theory and adult education. *Education Quarterly, 60*, 261–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713609358445

Closson, R. B. (2011). Reflections on a positively deviant course on race and racism. *Reflective Practice, 12*, 457–468. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2011.590335

Dade, K. B. M., Hargrave, C., Leigh, P., & Tartakov, C. (2015). Assessing the impact of racism on black faculty in white academe: A collective study of African American female faculty. In R. B. Jeffries (guest Ed.), *Assessing the multidimensional work of Black women in education* (pp. 134–146). Western Journal of Black Studies. Pullman.

Delano–Oriaran, O. O., & Parks, M. W. (2015). One black, one white power, White privilege, & creating safe spaces. *Multicultural Education*, 15–19.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Temple University Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1997). *The souls of Black folk* (D. W. Blight & R. Gooding–Williams, Eds.). Bedford Books.

Fraizer, K. (2011). Academic bullying: A barrier to tenure and promotion for African–American faculty. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 5*(1), 1–13. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ961222.pdf

Greer, T. M., & Spalding, A. (2017). The role of age in understanding the psychological effects of racism for African Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 23*(4), 588–594. https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000148

Gregory, S. (1999). *Black women in the Academy: The secrets to success and achievement.* University Press of America.

Grosland, T. J. (2011). "We better learn something:" Antiracist pedagogy in graduate school (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). 137–152.

Hall, S. (1997). The spectacle of the other. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices, 7*.

Harley, D. A. (2007). Maids of academe: African American women faculty at predominately White institutions.Journal of African American Studies , *12*, 19–36. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41819156

Haskin, N. H., & Singh, A. (2015). Critical race theory and counselor education pedagogy: Creating equitable training. *Counselor Education & Supervision , 54*, 288–298. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12027

Haskins, N., Whitfield–Williams, M., Shillingford, M. A., Singh, A., Moxley, R., & Ofauni, C. (2013). The experiences of Black master's counseling students: A phenomenological injury. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 52*, 162–178. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2013.00035.x

hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center.* South End Press.

hooks, b. (2001). *Salvation: Black people and love.* Harper Collins.

Jones, K. H. (2021). Breaking through the" Burden of Strength". *Educational Leadership, 78*(4), 34–39.

Karen Dade, C. T. (2015). Assessing the impact of racism on black faculty in white academe: A collective case study of African American female faculty. *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 39*(2), 135–145.

Kim, D., Twombly, S., & Wolf–Wendel, L. (2012). International faculty in American universities: Experiences of academic life, productivity, and career mobility. *New Directions for insitutional Research, 155*, 27–46. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ir.20020

Ladson–Billings, G. (1999). Preparing teachers for diverse student populations: A critical race theory perspective. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 211–247. https://doi.org/10.2307/1167271

Lin, J. C. P. (2023). Exposing the chameleon–like nature of racism: a multidisciplinary look at critical race theory in higher education. Higher Education (00181560), 85(5), 1085–1100. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734–022–00879–9

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.* Beacon press.

Manrique, C., & Manrique, G. (1999). *The multicultural or immigrant faculty in American Society.* Edwin Mellen Press.

McCalman, C. (2007). Being an interculturally competent instructor in the United States: Issues of classroom dynamics and appropriateness, and recommendations for international instructors. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 110*, 65–74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tl.275

ISSN: 2149-1291

Middleton, L. (2016). Black professors on white campuses: despite progress, many still feel isolated and uncertain of their future in academe. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *63*(11), 30–35.

Murry–Johnson, K., & Ross–Gordon, J. M. (2018). "Everything is about Balance": Graduate education faculty and the navigation of difficult discourses on race. *Adult Education Quarterly , 68*(2), 137 –156. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713618756188

National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csc.

Patriann Smith, S. J.–Y. (2018). Understanding Afro–Caribbean educators' experiences with English across Caribbean and U.S. contexts and classrooms: Recursivity. (re) positionality, bidirectionality. *Teaching and teacher education, 69,* 210–222. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.10.009

Patton, T. O. (2004). Reflections of a Black woman professor: Racism and sexism in academia. *The Howard Journal of Communications, 115*, 185–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170490483629

Rollock, N. (2023). "I would have become wallpaper had racism had its way": Black female professors, racial battle fatigue, and strategies for surviving higher education. In *Education Across the African Diaspora* (pp. 90–101). Routledge.https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2021.1905361

Royster, J. J. (1996). When the first voice you hear is not your own. *College Composition & Communication*, *47*(1), 29–40. https://doi.org/10.2307/358272

Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2014). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity, 48*, 1291–1303. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11135–013–9835–3

Smith, P., Warrican, S. J., Kumi–Yeboah, A., & Richards, J. (2018). Understanding Afro–Caribbean educators' experiences with English across Caribbean and US contexts and classrooms: Recursivity, (re) positionality, bidirectionality. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 69*, 210–222 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.10.009

Strayhorn, T. (2023). "Tellin' the Truth in Their Own Words": A Critical Race Qualitative Analysis of Ethnic Minority Law School Students' Experiences. *American Journal of Qualitative Research, 7*(1), 25-45. https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/12729

Thomas, K. J. A. (2012). Contemporary black Caribbean immigrants in the United States. *Young children of Black Immigrants in America: Changing flows, changing faces*, 21–44.

U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *The Condition of Education 2014 (NCES 2014–083).*

Walcott, C. (2021). Convergences of southern identity and the global south in the national center for civil and human rights. In C. Moss & B. Inabinet (Eds.), *ReconstructingSouthern Rhetoric:Chapter 12.* (pp. 254–276).

Walkington, L. (2017). How far have we really come? Black women faculty and graduate students' experiences in higher education. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations, 39,* 51–65. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90007871

Ward, L. W., & Hall, C. N. (2022). Seeking tenure while black: Lawsuit composite counter stories of black professors at historically white institutions. The Journal of Higher Education, 93(7), 1012-–1036. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2022.2082760

Wei, F. Y. F., & Hendrix, K. G. (2016). Minority and majority faculty members in a historically black college/university: Redefining professors' teacher credibility and classroom management. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 17(*1), 102–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/17459435.2016.1220419

Notes on Contributor

Dr. Carolyn Walcott is a media and communications scholar with a diverse background in journalism education, international communication, and media development. Her research interests reside at the intersection of identity, political communication, and media practice. She is an Assistant Professor of Media and Communication Studies in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Clayton State University. Among the courses she teaches are Intercultural Communication and Media & Culture, and Media Law, Ethics & Diversity. Dr. Walcott is currently Vice Head of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Commission on the Status of Minorities.

ORCID

Dr. Carolyn Walcott, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1388-7870