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Don't Wanna Teach No White Children: The Journey Into My Pedagogy

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Don't Wanna Teach No White Children

The Journey Into My Pedagogy

Fran Bates Oates

Abstract

This article is an autoethnography of one African American female educator. It is the story of her social justice disposition development to teach White students after graduation from a Historically Black University (HBCU). Revealed is the personal journey of her racial identity development before attending the HBCU and the irony of the relational and institutional impact attending one southeastern HBCU had on her preparation to teach. The initial research and inquiry was to explore how attending an HBCU impacted both Black and White education graduates' social justice disposition development to teach in multicultural classrooms. From this inquiry it became clear that as a faculty member of the HBCU and an instructor in the Education Preparation Program, this African American educator had to first reflect on who she is racially, resurrecting her lived experiences from her family background within her community and the background of her early education preparation in order to make an impact on education graduates' social justice lens. This article reviews her racial and social justice development before attending the HBCU, during matriculation, and after attending the HBCU. It journals the journey of one African American female's path to her pedagogy and her level of consciousness to teach students who were different from herself. HBCUs have long been recognized for their mission and rich legacy of providing education for African American students. These Black colleges and universities have been the heart of Black racial identity development with their distinctiveness and unique ability to raise cultural awareness of Black students. The level of awareness has traditionally been for HBCUs to prepare Black students to go out into the Black

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communities and serve. Examined is how one African American female raised her level of consciousness and cultural awareness of her racial identity to prepare to go into the communities and teach White students.

Keywords: social justice disposition, autoethnography, education preparation programs, teacher preparation, HBCU, double consciousness

Introduction

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois, 1903, p. 9)

In the excerpt above, W. E. B. DuBois (1903) introduces the concept of double-consciousness, of being, what was then called, a Negro and at the same time being an American in a White dominated society. DuBois (1903) was making a poignant declaration of the African American's quest for identity. He maintained that one had to cultivate a double-consciousness of looking at oneself first and then see oneself through the eyes of a White society totally different from one's own. In contradiction to DuBois' concept, most Negroes of his time felt they did not want to be in both worlds. According to Negroes then, most were comfortable being among their own in segregated worlds that did not interact with Whites (Lewis, 1993). Jim Crow laws made it illegal to integrate, with repercussions for Negroes who tried. Some repercussions were severe, including burning their homes, lynching, beatings and whippings, and fear and intimidation. Many Negroes felt it easier and safer to comply and remain segregated. Slavery was abolished then, but integration was still illegal (Lewis, 1993) and in order to know the limits or exclusions, a Black man or woman had to view themselves from their own unique perspective, but to also view themselves as they might be perceived by the outside (DuBois, 1903).

DuBois was well educated and wanted to use his education to serve the community and show Negro men and women another lens of American society. Though DuBois experienced much criticism from his own race for this concept and his stark polarities, ambiguities, and contradictions about double consciousness, the concept received national attention and continues to be a topic of discussion (Lewis, 1993). Like many other Negroes from this era and the African American Civil Rights Movement years, understanding both worlds could make the very difference of survival for African Americans (DuBois, 1903) regardless of the criticism.

DuBois (1903) felt the development of a double consciousness had serious implications if Negroes were the only ones who needed a second sight. He spoke of the necessity of Negroes to understand the discourses and social structures of White America that were shaping the lives, desires, and consciousness of Blacks

then; but he felt the understanding of our own Black racial identity was necessary in order for the Black race not to conform to how the White world identified them (E. Allen, 1992). As I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, I felt double consciousness was literally necessary for my success; to understand and see myself as the White man saw me, and to know who I was, my history, my ancestry, my roots in order for me not to be constrained to the way Whites saw my race. Understanding my Black identity was as necessary as my knowing what the White world expected of me; it was necessary for me to have the informed ability to maneuver back and forth across the veil of discrimination that DuBois described in his writings (DuBois, 1903).

In this article, I explore how I developed my African American racial identity while growing up to be a successful educator in White America. My research interest lies in how my personal experiences growing up and my education at one HBCU influenced my development of a social justice disposition to teach White students.

Believing that social justice can be defined as both a goal and a process (Bell, 1997), I investigated how my personal life experiences and the matriculation at one HBCU influenced me to develop a consciousness of “full and equal participation” for all students in my classroom that met their individual and cultural needs (Bell, 1997, p. 3). The process of attaining this goal of social justice is “democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities” (Bell, 1997, p. 4). I examined how my personal experiences and matriculation at one HBCU impacted my professional habits, attitudes, values, beliefs, and moral commitment that underlie performance in the classroom, and my dispositions for this social justice definition (Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation, 2014). Additionally, my beliefs about our “moral and ethical responsibility to teach all students fairly and equitably” are important aspects of my story (Villegas, 2007, p. 371). I explore this through my autoethnography.

Rationale

I found it ironic that a White female faculty advisor at my HBCU changed my lens of White Americans. When I entered college, I expected to only have Black professors because I had only experienced Black teachers in my education career. Upon arriving I found what I expected, many Black faculty and only one White female advisor in my program. Though I was on a campus with only Black students, I arrived with the notion that outside of this cocoon, I still had to have a double-consciousness to be an American. It was a time I had no thoughts about teaching White students or that I was arriving at my HBCU to learn how to do that.

When it became time for me to student teach, the White Cooperating Teacher at my school placement said she wanted to give some advice so I could “get along there”. She told me I should not wear my large afro, my African head wrap, or even my braids. I was told I had to wear my hair so I did not appear to be militant. Using my hands as I talked to express myself and the passion in my expression needed to be tempered, I was told. My bright colors and flamboyance in my dress was

not acceptable by my White female cooperating teacher either. She told me what *not* to wear. "You are too expressive," she said. At the end of the first two weeks she asked for me to be changed to another classroom to do my student teaching. I was moved to an open classroom suite with all Black females (except for one of five) and all Black students who were in the remedial reading and mathematics classrooms. In my confusion of how to identify as a young, Black female and as an aspiring American educator, I did not know from whom to get advice. Resting in the confusion, I waited for someone to emerge. One day during an advisement conference, I found myself explaining my student teaching experience to my assigned advisor, a White female faculty member (for the purpose of this research, I will call her Dr. JB). It was the first time I talked to someone White about the conflicts I was facing for the first time in my life. Yet, being comfortable to talk with a White woman about another White woman's prejudicial behaviors towards me was difficult. I felt fear to take that step, fear I would not be understood and fear there would be some punishment or negative consequence.

Arousing my awareness, Dr. JB motivated me to prepare myself to teach White students and to question my view that social justice was only for my race because of my experiences of racism. I entered the HBCU in 1970 and graduated four years later from the Elementary Education Program. Though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had become law that banned discrimination based on race or color, the early 1970s still encompassed much resistance to integration. Thus I stayed on campus where White students did not live in the dormitories. However, I had constant contact with Dr. JB particularly during my junior and senior years. As my advisor in the Teacher Corps program, she spent many hours with me talking about what she characterized as my "gift for teaching." Initially, I was hesitant to interact with her. I remember feeling torn between allowing her to see my world as a young Black woman and having to act a certain way to please her and get good grades. Yet, my exploration of a close relationship with my White female faculty advisor influenced my writing this article. She showed me another side of her Whiteness that I had not experienced in my lifetime. I developed a different understanding and a new consciousness of having a teacher who was very different from me, showed me no prejudice, and embraced my Blackness, my afro, my beautiful dark skin, and the Black heritage of which I am a descendent. Dr. JB developed a relationship with me that allowed me to discuss my racial identity with her.

The interrelatedness of my relational and institutional experiences at my HBCU, my lived experiences growing up, and how they both impacted my social justice lens are the basis of my autoethnography. Through deep introspections of my own experiences, I discovered how I learned to see White Americans through a different lens than I experienced growing up. I wanted to tell my story such that it impacts the way HBCUs prepare both Black and White teacher candidates to teach *all* students.

The question that guided this inquiry was: *What are the relational and institu-*

tional impacts of the HBCU on education graduates' social justice disposition for teaching? To frame this inquiry, I questioned the influential impacts on my racial identity and my social justice disposition development *before* attending the HBCU, *during* matriculation, and my social justice disposition *after* attending the HBCU. It explains the journey and path to my pedagogy.

Review of the Literature

HBCU Identity

The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines an HBCU as any historically Black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was the education of Black Americans. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) pride themselves in traditional and cultural descriptions of distinctiveness, coined by some as the Black college “mystique” (Willie, Reddick, & Brown, 2006) and by others as the HBCU experience that is like no other (W. R. Allen, 1992; Astin, 1993; Astin, Tsui, & Avalos, 1996; Davis 1991; Fleming, 1984; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Willie, Reddick, & Brown, 2006). Many boast of the distinctiveness as unique opportunities for African American socialization, cultural and ethnic identity, and transformational interactions with faculty. Emblematic of the African American quest for educational parity and social equality in American society, HBCUs have offered opportunities for “self-actualization and social mobility to all who sought them while teaching racial tolerance and producing alumni who have distinguished themselves as tireless workers for cross-cultural understanding and social justice” (Jewell, 2002, p. 7). Given such a legacy and identity, HBCUs should consider themselves uniquely qualified to make contributions to the ongoing quest for a truly inclusive society. In their pioneer role, HBCUs have been firmly rooted in the power of education to protect the freedom of African Americans and to place high value on social justice and human equality (Fleming, 1984; Jewell, 2002).

Numerous studies attest to the relational and institutional benefits for African Americans attending HBCUs (W. R. Allen, 1992; Astin, 1993; Astin et al., 1996; Davis 1991; Fleming, 1984). Educational researchers have investigated the particular role interpersonal relationships at HBCUs played in the success of African American students' academic performances. The findings suggested that Black college students' outcomes are influenced by the immediate surrounding social context, while interpersonal relationships represented the bridge between individual dispositions and the institutional setting (W. R. Allen, 1992; Fleming, 1984; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Willie et al., 2006). The combination of interpersonal relationships and characteristics of the institution influenced academic performance and helped to define the HBCU identity.

The HBCU trained and mentored its students toward the direction of “making constructive contributions for solutions to the difficult problems of race relations” (“The Early Years,” 2012, p. 7). Race issues and racism that had developed prior

to and after the Civil War became a focus. HBCUs had a desire to train all of their students to be social justice advocates for change and to embrace the benefits of their unique mission.

As a proponent of social equity, the unique teaching and mentoring styles of HBCU faculty interactions impacts the social justice advocacy of all its graduates who leave the HBCU to teach in public schools (Willie, et al., 2006). Hours of one-on-one mentoring and advising, the desire to eradicate the wounds of oppression and slavery, and the obligation to prepare its graduates for advocacy for an inclusive society are all examples of the uniqueness of HBCU faculties (Willie, et al., 2006).

As an HBCU, its mission clearly has always been preparing students to enter to learn all they could to depart and serve the community. For the past 40 years I have spent my entire career serving the education community, most of the time quietly, independently, advocating for an excellent education for both Black and White students. Initially, I embarked on this profession to be sure that Black students would get an education so the ripple effect would occur, and those Black students I taught would go out into the communities and do the same. Initially, I did not consider it was my responsibility as a teacher to influence the same kind of service in the White students I taught. I thought my job was just to teach my race of students.

Archetypal Model of HBCU Distinctiveness

Arroyo (2010) used a qualitative case study with a triangulated data collection strategy to develop an archetypal model of HBCU distinctiveness and to study the alignment between the model and the organization of Norfolk State University (NSU), a HBCU. The archetypal model has four dimensions: environment, achievement, identity and ethics and values. Data used for the alignment came from documentation, 11 interviews, and Arroyo's observations as a faculty member participant. To align with the archetypal model, students with "special emphasis on traditionally underserved, undereducated African American students" were used (Arroyo, 2010, p. 80). Norfolk State University demonstrated a high alignment with the archetypal model.

Of interest to my research is the environmental alignment. The environment category is divided into two domains, the socioemotional and the instrumental environments. "Socioemotional environment refers to the institution's impact on students' sense of support, nurture and social connectedness" (Arroyo, 2010, p. 82). NSU aligns highly with the model for three sources of support: faculty, racial and cultural milieu, and special programs. All of the student interviews indicated NSU faculty as the primary source and sustainer on this domain of the model. Some students made contrasts and comparisons based on their prior school experiences at PWIs. Comments from students include statements such as "all of the professors that have instructed me there made me grow socially and emotionally" (Arroyo, 2010, p. 82). Another student commented "I had professors who knew my first name and

were willing to be a resource in a time of crisis, whether it dealt with my personal life and feelings or my grade in their course. It seemed very heartfelt and sincere” (Arroyo, 2010, p. 83). This is the uniqueness that I found when I matriculated at a HBCU, and it is a uniqueness that should promote excellence in HBCUs today.

Racial Identity Development

In order for teachers to be effective with diverse students, they must recognize and understand their own world views, confront their own racism and biases, learn about their students’ cultures, and perceive the world through diverse cultural lenses (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Teachers should reflect on their own identity development and consider how their perspectives could influence their teaching and interaction with students (Howard, 2006; Jersild 1955; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Pertinent to this, the identification of our backgrounds and how backgrounds influence our daily perceptions and actions feed our racial identity. Borrowed from the discipline of counseling, racial identity refers to a “sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (Helms & Carter, 1990, p. 3).

DuBoisian Double Consciousness

W. E. B. DuBois was a pioneering sociologist, historian, novelist, editor, playwright, and cultural critic. Without ever seeking a mass following, he eloquently articulated the frustrations and desires of African Americans and demonstrated a passion for Negro people to have more than they had before. After graduating from Harvard University, where he was the first African American to earn a doctorate, he became an impassioned champion directly attacking the legal, political, and economic system that exploited the poor and powerless (Lewis, 1993).

As a prolific author, DuBois gained the most notoriety from his concept of “double consciousness” explored in his essays, *Striving of the Negro* (DuBois, 1897) and *The Souls of Black Folk* (DuBois, 1989). This notion of double consciousness is an important concept because it reveals the condition of African Americans being forced to learn about their racial identity and history, and develop their own self-identity at the same time they are being forced to be an American and to assimilate into a White-dominated society. In the days of the Civil Rights Movement, it was a struggle to be both an African American and an American (Moore, 2005).

DuBois (1903) theorizes a ‘Veil’ that separates the two sides. In his writing the veil represented both formal and informal structures of segregation and discrimination. “Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was... shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows (DuBois, 1897, p. 194). DuBois wanted to inspire the Negro people to rise above the Veil, an idea of which he received great criticism (Allen, 2003; Reed, 1997) for not urging people to tear down the Veil. In

order to see the Veil, DuBois theorized that “the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness” (DuBois, 1903, p. 9) which he defines as the ability to perceive two worlds and see through the Veil that separates them. The first world is the world of Black America; the other was White America.

The DuBoisian theory of double consciousness is important to my inquiry because as an African American female I learned to see and be with both sides of the Veil. I felt I had no other choice. It did not appear to be a challenge to understand the culture and history of White Americans; that was all I was taught in school. My focus was on my civil rights as an African American. Understanding my own identity, my beliefs and values about White America was of equal importance to my entering the classroom and teaching others so different than how I grew up, was treated and educated.

Methodology

Because my inquiry developed from my own personal desire to interpret experiences that impacted my racial identity development, I chose the qualitative approach to my inquiry. Qualitative research is “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The basic beliefs, epistemology, or “worldview assumptions” I bring to the research is an interpretivist perspective (Creswell, 2009, p. 3). I hold the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which we live and work. As a qualitative researcher, I sought to understand my culture and my personal experiences. Based on my historical and social perspectives (Crotty, 1998), I sought to understand the impact the HBCU had on my social justice development. Using a qualitative design, I amassed my personal narratives exploring what life experiences I brought to the HBCU educational setting, and what discoveries I made about myself as a result of attending school there. Brunner (1994) affirms this method of narrative inquiry for inservice teachers. She advocates, “As students are called on to explore their own personal histories, their social, political, economic, and cultural realities through a curriculum of multiple voices, their predisposition tends to become more apparent” (Brunner, 1994, p. 235). Self-reflection becomes a means to self-discovery (Chang, 2008). Talking about race, racial encounters in my life and how they developed my racial identity as well as my pedagogy was complex and often emotional.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that describes a personal experience in order to understand a cultural experience (Chang, 2008). This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, “socially-just and socially-conscious” act (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. xix). Ellis (2004) defines autoethnography as research, writing,

story, and method that displays multiple layers of consciousness as a form of self-reflection and writing. The method explores the researcher's personal experiences and connects her autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings.

Autoethnography is a qualitative, narrative inquiry method that offers a way of giving voice to personal experiences for the purpose of extending sociological understanding. Chang (2008) describes it as an ethnographic inquiry that utilizes the autobiographic materials of the researcher as the primary data. "Autoethnography emphasizes cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's behaviors, thoughts, and experiences; raising the cultural consciousness of self and others" (Chang, 2015, p. 2). Ellis and Bochner (2002) define the method as "autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation" (p. 739). Ellis (2004) writes, it is "part *auto* or self and part *ethno* or culture" and *graphy*, which is the application of a research process (Ellis, 2004, p. 31). I employed autoethnography to discover new dimensions of my own life and examine my own cultural assumptions through deep and intense self-reflection. It became a powerful tool for my individual and social understanding (Ellis, 2009) as the exploration of "how the context surrounding self has influenced and shaped the make-up of self" (Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang, 2010, p. 2).

I chose autoethnography as a way of writing that "privileges the exploration of self in response to questions that can only be answered that way, through the textual construction of, and thoughtful reflection about" my lived experiences as it related to my culture (Goodall, 1998, p. 3). Through this method I was able to draw connections from my personal life to the lives of others, "weaving intricate connections among life and art, experience and theory, evocation and explanation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1997, p. 208); wanting readers to do more than read the words, wanting readers to think and feel. I extended the power of the inquiry by using dramatic recalls, poems, unusual phrasings and colloquialisms, and monologues to evoke readers to understand my position while questioning their own. I wanted to tell a story that readers could enter and feel a part of so that readers could think about their lives in relation to mine. I wanted them to be able to see through my eyes, to experience what I am writing about, and to see their social justice dispositions in new ways; to see themselves anew. My autoethnography was paramount to the exploration of how life experiences and the HBCU influenced identity and racial consciousness. My methodological reflection was included in Glesne's (2016) new edition of her book reiterating the prominence of this method to this research. This is what Glesne (2016) said about my choice of method for this inquiry.

The author's story exemplifies how integral her autobiographical experiences are to her research. Consider what would be lost if she omitted her own story in a study of historically Black colleges and universities, identity, teaching, and social justice. (Glesne, 2016, p. 261)

In this inquiry, I used the method as cultural in its interpretive orientation as described by Chang (2008). Autoethnography in this sense is not about focusing on just self alone, but about “searching for understanding of others’ cultures and society through self. Self is a subject to look into and a lens to look through to gain an understanding of a societal culture” (Chang, 2008, p. 49). My personal experiences became the impetus for future exploration of White female education graduates in parallel to my autoethnography. My ultimate goal was to treat my personal data with critical, analytical, and interpretive eyes for cultural and social understanding of self and the others, particularly White female students.

My experiences now and those in the past suggested that my research interests had their origin in deeply personal experiences and my professional commitment to prepare teachers for students with more multicultural backgrounds than our own. In this inquiry, I explored how my HBCU prepared me to teach students of races different from mine and how it influenced the lens through which I learned to teach children of other races, specifically White students.

I love to tell stories. It's in my soul. Stories are the way humans make sense of their world. You may come to understand yourself in deeper ways. And with understanding yourself comes understanding others. (Ellis, 2004, p.32)

Autoethnography is a method of qualitative inquiry that refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. I love to tell stories that explore multiple layers of my consciousness and lead to new interpretations of understanding. It takes “soul,” by this I mean “opening up a deeply personal space in your life from which to create understanding” (Goodall, 1998, p. 136). We learn to see and feel the world in a complicated manner and then reflexively turn that lens on ourselves. Using autoethnography text, I made my personal accounts for this research substantive such that I wrote about my personal relationship to culture; “with a back and forth autoethnographic gaze” (Ellis, 2004, p. 37).

First they look at the 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. (Ellis, 2004, p. 37)

Moving back and forth, in and out of my stories, I explored how I developed my racial identity, where I come from, and the contexts that influenced my sense of self. The gaze examined the question “Who am I?” and “what influenced my sense of self”?

My Autoethnography: My Safe Cocoon

Before Matriculation at the HBCU

Family and Community Impact. On a beautiful morning, the blue sky was sprinkled with threatening clouds that soon flowed away and welcomed the bright-

ness of another perfectly sunny day. In the early 1950s, this was the morning of my birth representing all that I would become; sunny, cloudy, bright, and beautiful. First born of two daughters, it was the day I was born to research and write this story. My Mommy and Daddy brought me home to our big two story house in a small town in Virginia. It was the place where my parents met, fell in love, got married, and began their family after graduating from a legendary HBCU there.

I remember playing in our big yard safe and secure inside of the Black iron fence with a bench and bird feeder on each side of the yard. It all seemed enormous to me as a little girl; a big White house with a red and White brick wall securing our privacy all around the back yard and a cement pond on the side with big gold fish in it. As I remember we seemed to have a wonderful life with more than many Negro people had at that time. Our neighbors and my friends were all Black. In today's language, we would be considered a 'traditional middle class family'; however, we never heard of that label and we certainly did not feel that way as Black people. Mommy told me Negroes did not have equal pay for work as White citizens did. In a time of no technology or other ways to research salaries, there was no way to make comparisons, yet they knew they were not equal in many respects. My mother and father, as well as any Negro of that time, would dare not question it.

My mother did not work the first few years we were in elementary school. After my second grade year, my mother rode to work with my father and worked on the same army base. My father got dressed in a suit and tie every day and went to work as the first Negro man to work in the army base budget department in our military community. There were many military bases in the area; naval, air force and army. Though my Daddy had many Negro and White friends on the bases, the communities where we lived were all segregated. Though my father worked on the base and was invited to the homes of White officers, he could not enter the Officers' Club or any other activities on the base; it was illegal for Negroes to enter. He was a Negro who could cook or serve during these activities, but he could not participate.

As a young girl, my mother made sure I learned about poetry, opera, and Shakespeare. She dressed me in beautiful dresses on Sundays for church with crinoline slips underneath to make them stand out, White socks, and Black patent leather shoes. After church, we went to Mrs. Jones' house, who lived two houses from us. Though at the tender age of five and six years old I did not understand any of it, I sat quietly and listened to her read poetry, Machiavelli, Shakespeare, and many more classics. I took dance, ballet and tap, voice lessons, and piano. Mommy made us speak in complete sentences, putting beginnings and endings to every word we spoke so that others knew we were intelligent. Daddy would not allow us to leave the house unless we were presentable and dressed immaculately; to him that meant hair combed, face and legs oiled down, and clothes matching from head to toe. We were not allowed to use the "n" word in our house. Now I understand that my Mother and Father were preparing me to see both sides of the binary, to have a double consciousness that would help me be successful in a White

world. It was the 'sign of the times' in which they lived and in which their parents had lived before them. My parents wanted to teach me 'levels of excellence' in all we did and in all we valued; they taught me this excellence was a standard of who we are as Black Americans. I felt safe and secure in my world as it was then.

Earliest Memories of Being Black. In the 1950s through the 1970s, I witnessed a lot as a young Black female growing up in a segregated world of overt racism in the Southeastern United States. I always knew I was a Negro, then Black, then an African American. There was no place I could go that I was not reminded of the color of my skin. Who I was then, and who I am now, is the sum total of my experiences; it is my identity as a Negro, Black, African American woman, a teacher and as a researcher. It is personal, and it is the truth as I have come to know it. It is my story.

I am a Civil Rights baby. My Daddy was active in the community serving as an advocate for education and the homeless, and representing a voice against racism and discrimination for what was then called 'Negro' men and women. It was his form of promoting social justice. My Godfather, Daddy's best friend, was the Chief of Legal Redress for the NAACP. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Sixteen days later, the story of my father's last day was questionable. I was told my Daddy went to the jailhouse, and in the early morning he was brought home by someone, allegedly White policemen. The next day his cold body was discovered on the steps in front of our home; his eyes shut from life forever. I was told not to question; it was best to be quiet and remember him as I last saw him. So I did what I was told. Silence was a double-conscious way for Negroes to survive in the White world. From the brutality and overt racist acts of White Americans against Negroes at that time, you learned when to speak and when to be silent. I was a Negro then and silence was a safe cocoon.

Poignant memories flash through my mind from childhood. My childhood was peppered with sickening feelings of oppression. One Saturday morning, my Daddy and I were going downtown in our all Black community to see a parade. Though my Daddy had a car, he chose to ride the bus. I was much too young to question. A 'Daddy's girl' I was, and I wanted to go where ever he went. I looked like my Daddy; I had his chocolate skin and his dark brown eyes. I loved my 6'2" tall, chocolate, dark skinned Daddy! I walked to the back of the bus with my Daddy and watched his mortification and anger as he was told to hang his head in shame for not going to the back fast enough.

My Grandfather and I had to walk on the 'right' side of the street downtown, so Granddaddy said. As a little girl, I was not sure which side was the 'right' side; yet I noticed as Whites passed us, I watched him hang his head and look away as if he had done something wrong.

One day after elementary school, I remember running all the way home because I walked on the wrong side of the street. Two young White boys were with their father who owned the store at the corner. They told me one time before not to walk

on that side when they were there, but that day I was not thinking about them as I strolled past. They gave chase but stopped short of my all Black neighborhood. I knew when I reached a certain point, I was in my safe cocoon and they would not venture too far in our neighborhood.

I went around the back of the movie theater and walked with my friends up the fire escape to see the movie "Gone with the Wind" in the cold balcony. There was no bathroom for us. If we got hungry, we could go back down to the front window and buy the leftover popcorn from yesterday. 'Colored only' was a sign I could read before I could read any book. As a young child, I saw a Negro man with burnt feet and burnt hands hanging from a tree. I saw a cross burning in the field (more than one time); even though my friend's father told us to lie in the floor of the car, I peeked anyway. He said it was a dummy; all I remember was fear and endless silence.

Education: Kindergarten through High School. I never went to an integrated school from kindergarten all the way through four years of college at an HBCU. All of our schools were in our neighborhood. Each day we walked to our elementary, middle and high schools. All of my friends were Black. Our all Black schools were full of all Black faculties and staffs. From high school, I left my close knitted family and my all Black community to go to college at an HBCU. In all my one race schools, my teachers emulated excellence. They accepted nothing less from me. They were tough and unyielding, challenging with the highest levels of expectation. Yet, their love and caring were nurturing, just like a mother is to the children she births. My interactions with them were personal opportunities to mentor and groom me for the world of injustices. They modeled what I had to become as an educator and as an advocate for Black children, men and women. Until I went to college all of my teachers were Black men and women; in college I only had one White instructor.

Racism shaped my truths about the world, my soul and my spirit. The bitterness that prevailed in my soul could have grown into the venom that would poison my spirit forever. I did not want to be with them, but my experiences taught me early in life that the best way to survive in this America was to consciously know their side of the mirror. To tell the stories was, and remains, imperative so that the stench of burnt souls will impact our lens of the still omnipresent injustices in our world.

HBCU Choice. As an African American female I chose to go to a HBCU to major in elementary education because I thought I would get the same kind of contagious drive to be the best that I received in my world at home and school, and I found it there. At the same time advocates for African American civil rights mourned the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the frustrations of racial segregation and discrimination rose to a crescendo of race riots, I chose to leave my totally segregated Negro life and go to an all Black college to get prepared to teach. My HBCU would keep me safe from the stress of experiencing life in a White world; it was my cocoon. I was clear about my choice and my reasons, but at that age, I did not have the maturity nor was I consciously aware of what be-

coming a teacher would mean. I had no idea how this historical Black college was going to prepare me to teach in the very world I did not want to enter. All I knew was that this HBCU was renowned for its excellent elementary education teacher preparation program, and that is where I wanted to be, with my people and among excellence.

During Matriculation at the HBCU

HBCU Activities. Attending an HBCU was a safe haven for me as a young Black female during that time. I felt protected and nurtured in this cocoon. I was 17 years old when I arrived in 1970. There were people who looked just like me, who came from the same humble socioeconomic background as I did. I experienced high expectations from my professors there. A Dean of Women taught us the etiquette of being educated women. Dormitories were full of young Black women excited about getting a college education. I went to all of the activities, every football and basketball game, every Homecoming, every dance at the canteen. I went to and participated in everything I could; pledging a sorority, participating in professional development, competing in talent shows, and auditioning for the jazz band. I took full advantage of opportunities there to see and hear great Civil Rights leaders like Shirley Chisholm, Louis Farrakhan, Black Panther leaders, Angela Davis, Nikki Giovanni, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. As I reflect, I remember:

We were junk talkin, dozen playin, bid whist 5 risers, card slappin, Homecoming yall, cabaret dressin, high steppin band playin, big leg majorettes, fine, hell week marchin in the streets, sorority pledgin, singin on the plot, hangin on the block, caf food, 50 cents chicken samages , no cars, I'm Black and I'm Proud, all Black campus. (Oates, 2015, p. 99)

HBCU Faculty Impact. As an HBCU student, I encountered extensive support, nurturing, encouragement and connection to faculty that stimulated my intellectual growth and development and inspired me to achieve a fulfilling and rewarding career as an educator. One unique and distinctive quality of my HBCU experience was my personal interactions with faculty that impacted my success. There were a number of African American faculty there; however, I was particularly impacted by the nurturing of my only White female faculty member as I participated in a federally funded program titled Teacher Corps. With all I was learning as a young adult, she changed the way I saw the world of Black and White; she calmed my anger and anxiousness. She gave me a new way of seeing things and reversed my lens about being in the world of White people.

It was very difficult to be in the Teacher Corps Program in 1973 because of so many requirements. One huge hurdle for my friends and me was leaving our campus and venturing into the city to live beyond my all Black University campus. Teacher Corps required Teacher Interns stay off campus and in the communities in which they would intern. Two other Black females and I ventured into apartment

complexes closer to our internship assignments. We did not know we were in communities where Black people had not begun to live. The manager of the complex would not let us rent any of the unoccupied units. My professor, Dr. JB, came to the rental office, argued for our rights, and personally signed for us to rent the apartment. I was shocked and amazed at her caring and support for our rights. With her same calm and patient demeanor, she took me to the emergency room after a bad car accident and even contacted my mother. At the hospital she would not allow the nurses to keep ignoring me and she stayed that evening with me until they finished.

My future plans were often a topic of her discussions with me; she questioned me for specifics each time we talked. Little did I realize that she was preparing me to face the challenges of teaching in integrated schools. She was supportive, and she pushed me to be clear about my future as a teacher. Dr. JB told me I would be teaching White students. Still with a nervous reluctance, this White female faculty at my HBCU gave me a personal assurance that I could do it; I could be successful. She assured me I would keep my all Black world; however, I had to speak, dress, teach, and be such that who I was being was accepted in the White world I was now entering; a double consciousness seemed to be required more than I realized before.

Dr. JB was the first White faculty at the HBCU (and in my young life time) to have candid conversations with me about the discriminations I encountered such as why the White man would not rent the apartment to us. At the HBCU, individually or in unplanned meetings we talked about what we would face in the White world with our Dean of Women, a Black female. In many courses, we had assignments to read or write about specific Black personalities who were civil rights leaders of the 1960s and 1970s; familiar names such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, or Black inventors. Seldom did we talk about racial tensions or issues openly in course settings. Our discussions and exposure to the civil rights movement were explored when the University had presentations or lecturers or there were planned meetings for that purpose. During those times White students were not involved; they did not participate in any activities on campus. In addition to those experiences, Dr. JB helped me realize and develop my disposition for teaching White students.

HBCU Impact. During those years, my most profound breakthrough was the awareness that I was graduating from my all segregated life to teach both Black and White elementary children. I never thought about teaching White children. I never thought about needing to be Black, and at the same time, to see and understand my White students, their White parents, and the White teachers with whom I would work side by side. It was a cultural shock for me. During my matriculation at the HBCU from 1970-1974, most course assignments and campus activities reflected the civil rights struggle and examples and models of how to go out into the Black community and serve for more political success. We did not directly discuss how to teach White students or what their learning styles were as White learners. We were shown who they were racially as it related to racism and discrimination and

we were taught how to have a double consciousness to survive politically. At the HBCU, as well as at home, I was taught with great expectation, to value a good education, to be articulate in my speaking, and to be an excellent reader and writer as keys to my success as a Black female leaving my safe cocoon and going out to work into the White world.

All of my experiences with teaching and working with young children prior to college centered around volunteering for the Head Start program during the summers and the Summer Youth Program where I tutored in my own classroom with six African American males. I never thought about working or teaching in integrated classrooms; I had never seen them before. Little did I realize I would graduate from my segregated world and teach students who were different from me in every way; my students would be coming from their own world, which was all White and foreign to me. At that age, I was not conscious that all I had witnessed would affect who I became, my identity in this world, and my identity as a teacher of White students. All I wanted to do was work with my own people, my own race. Without consciously knowing what I was doing in the early 1970s, I felt I was advocating for the education of young Black children; and that was all I wanted to do.

After Matriculation at the HBCU

Two months before graduation from the HBCU, I was offered a full-time teaching position. Excited about my future, I did what most first year teachers do; I began gathering materials and making activities for teaching in an elementary school. During my interview with the principal at one elementary school, my excitement was disturbed by what my parents and Dr. JB told me, be prepared to face discrimination. The principal informed me if he said something that sounded prejudice he probably meant it to be. His honesty was shocking to me as a 21 year old. I thought in this professional setting I would not experience such. Adverse to what I expected, the Black teachers there told me to be quiet, not to question, and to understand that he was "the White man" in charge, they warned me. Again, my surprise was met with silence and I conceded to what my Black colleagues believed was the way we were supposed to be; to stay in my lane. I thought this was the way to be successful in my career at that time. Silence yielded to the usual habit of silence.

My success in the classroom did not take the same consciousness with the students. In my first years of teaching, I was in schools with majority White students and teachers. The first days of teaching, there was no difference in the way I felt about the White elementary students. I automatically welcomed them in my classroom and began teaching them without question. The elementary students came in with no filters and they did not seem to care that I was African American. It was not until my White students' parents became involved that the color of my skin became a reason for discussion. Some White parents questioned me being too young and inexperienced to teach their children. Others told the principal they would be watching what I did if their children remained in a classroom with a

Black woman. The principal never visited my classroom, but called me to the office to report that parents had complained about me teaching their children. There was never a specific reported incident that warranted White parent complaints. I often felt that no matter what I did, the principal would still complain to me. In the beginning I didn't want to teach White children. I taught in these conditions for four years before becoming an administrator. I felt in a new position I could have more of an impact.

My experiences as a school administrator did not erase the stigma of racism. As an adult, the memories continued. In 1989, I arrived at the office where I was principal in rural North Carolina on a Sunday after church, and I found a burnt cross at the window of my office. The janitor told me it was best to be quiet in all of these matters, and I did what I was told out of fear; fear what would happen next if I said anything. Fear turned into anger that so many endured so much; and it did not seem to end.

As the years of my teaching experience progressed, it was the White students in my classrooms that witnessed to their parents about the kind of teacher I was and how well I taught. I began to understand how my lived experiences influenced my disposition development about teaching students who were different from me. Now it became paramount to help prepare future teachers that would do the same.

Thirty-two years after graduating from the HBCU, I began to work as a higher education clinical faculty and then as the Elementary Education Program Coordinator of the very program and at the same HBCU from which I graduated. My passion for teaching soared when I became responsible for preparing students to teach. With the Department of Education focus on a conceptual framework of social justice, I began to contemplate what that meant for me and how I would prepare my candidates to be social justice advocates. Hence, I began my reflections of how I developed my beliefs, my dispositions, about fair and equal opportunities for all students to learn. Beliefs, memories, and repeated discriminatory events surfaced to my consciousness as I reflected, and emotions that gripped me to the core emerged. Yet, I continued to deeply reflect on my life.

For many reasons, I felt because I am an African American female, I could understand the stories of African American female education students that attended my HBCU. However, I did not know or understand how White female students that I have taught perceived the conceptual framework of social justice in their preparation to teach. The irony of a White female HBCU faculty impacting my social justice disposition development led me to inquire about my impact as an African American female on both my White and Black graduates. Because a White female helped to change my lens of the White world, it is my desire to impact the White female graduates in a way that would refract their lens about teaching children of color and that they would see themselves anew as a result of our interactions. Equally it is my desire to share my story with Black students who will be teaching students very different from themselves as well.

After graduation from the HBCU, my autoethnography helped shape my conversations with Black and White education graduates. Prior to this inquiry I did not have open conversations with White education graduates about the injustices in the world or any racial identity issues; however, I did talk with Black students about what to expect.

Conclusions

Before attending the HBCU, as I was growing up in the South, my parents directed my racial socialization in my segregated world. I went to segregated schools and lived in segregated communities. In my home, my parents and grandparents talked to me about racial discrimination and modeled how to have a double consciousness when there were social or direct contacts with Whites. I knew what prejudice was because my parents and I experienced it daily; unbelievably, I still do. In my home and neighborhood we talked about racism and discrimination, yet we lived outwardly in an atmosphere of fear during my early growing up years. Jim Crow racism justified brutal and overt acts of racial oppression previously described. In contrast to today, during the pre-civil rights era discrimination was enforced overtly with signs, cross burnings, and marches in the street by the Ku Klux Klans (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). The old fear of 'Negroes have a place and they should stay in it' was prevalent. As I wrote my autoethnography, I was instantly hooked by the old habit of fear; fear I would get in trouble; fear that I would hurt someone's feelings or that someone would see me as harping on the past too much; fear that even the death of my father would be questioned by the White man if I went too far; fear I should not speak. Before attending the HBCU and during, silence was what I did outside of my own race and culture. I did not question, I did not ask questions about Black and White issues, and I did not openly question color blindness, Whiteness, White privilege, or White females educators' preparation to teach students of color.

During attendance at the HBCU, the most distinct impact of the HBCU for me was the interpersonal relationships with faculty. These findings validated the research of pioneers such as Fleming (1984) and W. R. Allen (1992) regarding supportive faculty at HBCUs. I received support from both African American and my one White female faculty. Ironically, it was a White female faculty member who was the most honest about my Blackness going into a White classroom. We had honest and open conversations about the discrimination I experienced at my teaching internship and out in the community. So I could teach White students who were different from me, she helped me open my view about the White race and refract my lens to see beyond what I had experienced. I began to see with new eyes. As a White woman, she could tell me what the White world would do to me and what I could expect from her White view of my Black race. My Black Mother and Father, as well as other Black adults, taught me about what to expect; however, they told me from their lived experiences as a Black person experienc-

ing a White world in the midst of the Civil Right movement and a segregated South.

After matriculation, I graduated to teach in classrooms where there were only Black and White children during my tenure. Because of my matriculation at the HBCU, I was able to understand the connection and the benefit of learning and reflecting on what teaching both races meant in my social justice disposition development. As a result of this deep self-reflection, I was able to reflect on my own identity development and consider how my perspective of the White world could influence my teaching and interactions with White students, their parents and other White teachers and administrators (Howard, 2006; Jersild, 1955; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Distinct to the archetypal model of the HBCU (Arroyo, 2010) is the mission to educate, empower, and elevate Blacks. This mission serves as a foundation that now must be coupled with the challenge of raising the critical consciousness of White students attending HBCUs as it continues to impact the racial identity of the coming generations of Black students.

Developing a critical consciousness means to critically reflect and act upon one's sociopolitical environment (Freire, 1973, 1993). HBCUs must provide opportunities for its education graduates to think critically and reflect on accepted assumptions about race, but also to be able to reframe their thinking about class, gender, ability, appearance, age, sexual orientation and all the other identities. Learning to see how our lives, history, and ways of thinking and feeling perpetuate existing structures of inequality is crucial to self-reflective practices. With deep self-reflection, this high level of consciousness is the ability for each of us to individually critically examine who we are and who we are as racial beings; not only to reflect, but to also take actions of advocacy for an all inclusive classroom and society.

As faculty in a HBCU teacher preparation program, imperative is the opportunity for deliberate, open and honest conversations about race, culture, Whiteness, Blackness and White privilege without the old habits of fear and being silent. This story began with my not wanting to teach White students because of all I had experienced, and it journeyed to my deep self reflection of who I was as a person and a teacher teaching a race of children different from myself. It is the story of my path to discover my pedagogy. The process is still pertinent today, and it must be duplicated for teacher preparation programs to develop social justice dispositions in their Black and White graduates. Imperative is that HBCUs parallel their distinctive legacy of social justice advocacy with opportunities to deliberately impact their White education graduates' social justice disposition to teach African Americans and others students who are different from themselves. Equally, HBCUs must continue to lead Black students to the same self-reflection of their racial identity development as they prepare to teach White students.

Future Considerations

This research project began with an inquiry into White females education

graduates' racial identity development and the impact one HBCU had on their social justice disposition development. From this inquiry it became clear that as a faculty member and instructor at the HBCU, I had to first reflect on who I am racially, resurrecting my lived experiences from my family background within my community and the background of my early education preparation. It is recommended to extend the study to more HBCUs who have teacher preparation programs. Given this research was conducted in one southeastern state, and given the racial population in public schools has changed across the country, further research should be done at HBCUs in other regions of the United States to compare and determine the extent to which HBCUs are preparing their Black and White graduates for social justice dispositions. Extending the study to include traditional and nontraditional students would provide additional data and a comparison of how nontraditional verses traditional age college students are impacted by attending HBCUs.

This research project involved extensive self-reflection. Other future considerations for research could include the impact of teacher candidates becoming reflective practitioners and an analysis of how self-reflection activities affect social justice disposition development. Of importance to future studies is the development of a social justice curriculum for teacher preparation programs at both HBCUs and PWIs. I would suggest further research include investigations of HBCUs with components of social justice education in the curricular. The effectiveness of teacher candidates trained through a social justice perspective should be studied in comparison to the academic success of their students.

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