

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

2012

Language as Microaggression: the New Lexicon of American Racism

Juan Thurmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thurmond, Juan, "Language as Microaggression: the New Lexicon of American Racism" (2012).
Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 283.
<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/283>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

LANGUAGE AS MICROAGGRESSION: THE NEW LEXICON OF AMERICAN RACISM

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Mississippi

by

Juan Thurmond

December 2012

Copyright © 2012 by Juan Thurmond
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

There are countless occasions where marginalized groups bear witness to language-based discriminatory practices. Language, as defined here, is a species of symbolism. After reviewing the sociological literature, the term “microaggressions” appears to best describe the phenomena in its everyday occurrences. Microaggressions are “the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Sue, 2010). Sue classifies microaggressions into three forms: microassaults, microinsults, microinvalidations. The purpose of the project was tri-fold. By an analogous process of inference and conjecture, I demonstrate how Sue’s taxonomy of microaggressive forms are grades of subjective intensity that are presupposed, if not conceptually integrated. First, an overview of the theory of double consciousness and the literature on microaggressions is presented. Six participants were interviewed, analyzed and then classified into Sue’s taxonomy. Responses indicated that microaggressions are real despite their subtle, phantasmal and illusory nature. Additional findings suggest that Sue’s microaggressive forms may not *only* be categorical, but also the locus of a proposition, or ‘lure for feeling.’ Implications for these subtle intensities are considered, then compared and contrasted with a transmuted concept of Du Boisian double consciousness to demonstrate through a theory of perception the limitations of Sue’s *Microaggression Process Model*. Examples from popular culture are considered throughout the study for added clarity.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, daughter, and wife.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Zandria Robinson for her patience and the long hours spent discussing and editing this thesis. Without her assistance, this project would not exist. I would also like to thank Dr. Jeff Jackson and Dr. Kirk Johnson for their thoughts and suggestions. Their guidance has been both instructive and inspirational. And lastly, but certainly not the least, I would like to thank the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for my acceptance into the program and for financial assistance. This service has proved to be indispensable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THEORY OF DU BOSIAN DOUBLE COUNSCIOUSNESS AND MICROAGGSSIONS	8
III. AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MICROAGGRESSION FORMS.....	26
IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	47
APPENDICES.....	50
VITA.....	55

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We live in the midst of a seemingly “post-racial” era in which the United States, with its documented history of racial atrocities, has elected its first African American president. With this, some argue that the concept of race is no longer important, or that it does not play a significant role in the shaping of lives and culture. The problem is precisely this *seemingly* aspect. Instead of the deliberate, overt and explicit discriminatory practices that happened in the past, in these years of the Obama era, racial prejudices and biases occur on more subtle levels. Derogatory epithets like “nigger,” “porch monkey,” “jungle bunny” and “coon” are no longer openly accepted. Although the gains of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, Gay and Lesbian, Student Antiwar and Third World Movements slowly forced such terms from use, they were ultimately replaced by other slights. In other words, centuries-old forms of blatant, “old-fashioned” racism have morphed into subtle, seemingly invisible, ephemeral forms of oppression.

Conservatives and many liberals today argue, that, “Jim [and Jane] Crowism is over,” and that people of color, especially African Americans, are the ones responsible for perpetuating the “race problem.” While African Americans have made some racial progress on the fronts of education, housing, and access to opportunity, racism is far from dead. There remains an

inheritable relic from the past that is capable of advancing and perpetuating its detrimental realities. This tension between de facto separatist practices, coupled with the undeniable aspects of racial progress (e.g. people aren't being lynched every day, African American president, etc.) is what I am claiming creates a virtual reality, rather than an enriching one. Virtual reality is what I have come to understand as the contradictory and conflicting worldview that generates both distorted and secondary realities. An enriching reality is one that disrupts the sense of permanence that often dominates thinking. Rather, it avoids the idiosyncrasies of particular modes or schools of thought.

After reviewing the sociological literature, the term “microaggression” appears to best describe the idea of virtuality that is meant. Microaggressions are subtle, conscious or unconscious, verbal and nonverbal, intentional or unintentional, delivered slights, insults and invalidations that send denigrating messages to marginalized persons or groups (Sue, 2010: 40). There is a perfect illustration of this experience in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) where Du Bois writes:

I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghkanic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards—ten cent a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with *a certain suddenness* that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil (emphasis added; 2003:5).

This particular passage contains the “sense-experience” or “feeling” of a racist microaggression. Certainly, Du Bois attributes her refusal to his race and not, for instance, to something that he cannot put his finger on. Microaggressions are experienced by people of color as “real,”

“tangible,” and “direct.” The goal of this thesis will be discussing instances of its many occasions. However, it is also the case that microaggressions can be spun and interpreted in different ways which do not directly point to race as the source of the slight though it may be.

The historical development of this concept is, in fact, indispensable to our explaining of Sue’s *Microaggression Process Model* (2010: 65-86). There, Sue identifies and summarizes five domain (phases) that are likely to occur during a potential racial microaggression. The five domains include: Incident, Perception, Reaction, Interpretation, and Consequence.

In the above excerpt, we witness a microaggression at its inception—the “Incident Phase” of Sue’s taxonomy (i.e., as the raw data of sense perception), or as a “certain suddenness,” as Du Bois recalls it. Du Bois’s experience occurs many years before it is given the academic euphemism “microaggression.” We are simply pointing out the sense experience of the microaggression *at its inception*. As presented in the above-mentioned excerpt, it is simply an uncomfortable, awkward or even embarrassing moment, yet a feeling and sensation that is coupled now with a perception of black-white relations nonetheless.

There is another helpful example of this phase in Toni Morrison’s work *The Bluest Eye*. There, the narrator in the novel, a nine-year-old girl named Claudia, highlights how abstract symbols work as conceptualizations during perception. With this illustration, we come into contact with the objectification of unintended consequences through Claudia’s experience. It reads:

Frieda and I are washing Mason jars. We do not hear their words, but with grown-ups we listen to and watch out for their voices. . . . The edge, the curl, the thrust of their emotions is always clear to me and Frieda. We do not, cannot, know the meanings of all their words, for we are nine and ten years old. So we watch their faces, their hands, their feet, and listen for truth in timbre.

Needless to say, the dialectical method is a particular way of viewing the world. And Claudia appears to have discovered a least one of its principles, which is the relation between how adult expressions and posturing are pitted against her own. Here, Morrison's example demonstrates how the unintended consequences of gestures and tones can generate distorted realities during an initial stage of experience. From the sound of the adult's inharmonic temperament and behavioral habits, to Claudia and her sister's understood meaning of those sounds and gestures, back to the adult's own perspectives, lies a double contrast and, an analogical standpoint of two different contrasts. My goal is to help adequately situate what may already appear to the reader as integrated, or that which has not already unwittingly been discounted or presupposed as "not given." In other words, it has been taken-for-granted. Although Sue's *Model*, for reasons to be explored later, is much better than good, I interrogate his phase "Perception" in order to demonstrate how we may better understand the growth of experiencing occasions and the accretion of value as they apply to our feelings (i.e., like in Du Bois and Claudia's case), as initial physical feelings that evade our acts of judging. As a thesis project, we look at how the world of data during this "outside-in" and "inside-out" process of the collection of can generate virtual realities. In other words, the subject-predicate contrast is a fundamental sense of division that finds its way into subjectivity.

During the growth of our experiencing occasions, we operate by an "outside-in—inside-out" cognitive process. This process deals with not only a notion of generic contrast, but moreover, it is applicable to the actual and potential world. The process can be best described in relation to "outside-in" as "whole to parts," and "inside-out" as "parts to whole." Respectively, it is an "input-output" phenomenon. Given this, I will spend considerable time developing a

theory of ingression to help better explain how perception can sometimes work. Ingression is “the functioning of one actual entity in the self-creation of another actual entity” (Whitehead, 1978:23). Thus, it is a particular mode in which the potentiality of an eternal object is realized in a particular actual entity [...] (Ibid., p. 23). What I mean to suggest here is that the feelings involved during the actual occasion of an individual’s ultimate purpose, is an aim that gains satisfaction in a particular mode of ingression. This particular mode of ingression, as discussed here in this paper, is a perspective by which the subject prehends. I find it important to mention here, that, by no means am I (nor would I) advocate for such a perspective. Perspectivals have limits. Yet, it is moreover a standpoint. And because it is a standpoint, it is of the essence to assist in its virtual integration.

This is not to say that phases three, four, and five, i.e., “Reaction,” “Interpretation,” and “Consequence,” respectively, are irrelevant, or insignificant. Rather, my goal is simply to show how a sensation functions as a proposition, or lure for feeling” (Ibid., p. 184) The feeling *felt*, I argue, meets its categorial demands of microaggression as the objective datum arises from the past like a haunting. In other words, it is a potential reaction. Although the “incident phase” constitutes a “situation experienced,” it also contains an “object intervened” during the microaggression process given its history.

Sue does provide us various ways of looking at the situation experienced through group-specific microaggressions. He also explores these categories as they operate in the areas of education, employment, medicine, law, housing, etc. My claim, however, is that he does not adequately explain an “inside-out” method of looking at the same event through his microaggressions forms.

In Sue's taxonomy, he provides readers with three ways to classify microaggressions. The forms include: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Given this, I argue that the *Model* does not provide an adequate perspective for the individual experiencing the microaggression. How can an individual develop this capacity?

Each of Sue's forms is like its own camera lens, or "microaggressive form" which allows for limited levels of analysis and interpretation. The problem is that each form has its own intensity for detection or perception, with microinvalidation being the subtlest; and therefore, the most abstract and potentially harmful. In fact, giving an analysis at this level depicts instances sometimes as "illusory," "haunting," and "virtual." Therefore, the "perception" phase becomes the main concern of this thesis project because (1) microinvalidations are subtle, (2) a part of perception, and (3) understudied, and more importantly (4) an especially interesting and meaningful cite of investigation for exploration of microaggressions.

In order to understand the ghostly and enigmatic nature of microaggressions, we can use William Edward Burghardt Du Bois's (1868-1963) concept of double consciousness. The theory of double consciousness describes nearly identical circumstances of microaggressions' "contentious," "ghostly," "illusory," and "haunting" nature. Here, I adopt the *theory* to help highlight the hidden and unconscious factors of an "outside-in"/ "inside-out" transmission of experience. In the course of this discussion, I demonstrate how transition from the incident phase to the perception phase is sociologically important but poorly understood. What I mean here is that the feeling *felt* during the incident phase of a microaggression is largely neglected in the literature but is vital to an understanding of microaggressions. Because each particular microaggression that Sue describes in his taxonomy is complex and distinct in its intensities, it

follows that each occasion is not only novel to that specific occasion, but specific to each microaggressive form. My claim is that given the intensity of a microaggressive felt, we can expect to see variations in interpretations in relation to its various forms. My study seeks to explore this issue empirically by the following speculative-methodological stance. I begin by giving an exposition of Du Bois's concept of double consciousness and an articulation of Sue's theory of microaggressive forms. Using a theory of perception, I show how one is actualized in the other. Additionally, I have provided several popular culture examples. In particular, I have chosen the recent depictions of LeBron James and Mario Balotelli as King Kong as my central focus to have some support for the view which I am refuting in my conclusion. In the following section, six empirical cases are provided as examples of microaggressive forms as theorized by Sue. Here, we are introduced to an irreducible perspective of generic contrasts in Sue's theory. In the concluding sections, I demonstrate how the general dispositions of Sue's microaggressive forms and intensities can generate a transmutable concept of Du Boisian double consciousness that needs to be refuted.

CHAPTER II

THEORY OF DU BOISIAN DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS

The theory of double consciousness, perhaps W. E. B. Du Bois's most well known theoretical contribution, contains an astounding number of insights into the experience of race and racial identity. As Cornel West describes it, double consciousness is "the dialectic of black self-recognition [oscillating] between being *in* America but not *of* it, from being black natives to black aliens" (West, 1999: 58). But this is not all. The theory has other subtle, *seemingly* nonexistent hindrances that operate more subtly. While Du Bois does not explicitly elaborate this point, implications of this claim can be seen throughout his oeuvre. In "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," the opening chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois gives us a succinct idea of his experience.

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town, or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduced the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.

And yet, being a problem is a strange experience,—peculiar even for one who has never been anything else, save perhaps in babyhood. . . . (Du Bois, 2003: 7).

It is precisely this residue of similar but subtle, enigmatic message forms that continue to

characterize many African American experiences today. A fundamental component of Du Bois's theory of double consciousness is that African Americans experience the world quite differently from European Americans. Notice that Du Bois shifts the "framing" of the original utterances of white folks' speech acts in order to get at what he refers to as "the real question," which is "How does it feel to be a problem?" By finessing the framing, Du Bois highlights a very important aspect of semantic pragmatics, which is: valuation and the distinction between race-based interpretive differences.

Central to Du Bois's query is the concept of white folks' frame of reference. This points towards how things had to have been situated not only behaviorally, but cognitively. Utterances during slavery and the Jim and Jane Crow era were simply communicative apparatuses that white folks used as directives for their hierarchical worldview. To comply with white authority was not only expected, but was registered as the verbal (speech) or nonverbal (thought) norm. Message forms no doubt must have played out in an etiquette that divided ideals into "normal" versus "deviant," or "active" and "passive" ideological frameworks. Given this, the former conceptual framework imposes a sense of aesthetic valuation and normativity on the latter alternative conceptual framework. Needless to say, scholars who used white theory and practice had the racial privilege to neglect, dismiss, ignore, and eclipse other alternative conceptual frameworks. This not only proves to be psychologically advantageous to white folk *per se*, but it is disadvantageous to cultural harmony.

In considering the ways that double consciousness develops in general, oppression appears to be a least one ingredient. Such a concentration on only the self-interest and epistemic grid of a few comes at the sacrifice of wider interests and the broader cultural good. As Charles

Mills puts it in *Blackness Visible*, “[a] relationship to the world that is founded on racial privilege becomes simply *the* relationship to the world” (Mills, 1998: 10). This imagery helped establish white theory as an epistemology of normativity. For blacks, any deviation from white directives has been in the past viewed as insubordinate and the grounds for incarceration, torture, or death. Needless to say, this helped spread radically different worldviews between whites and blacks. Du Bois repeatedly alluded to this fact when referring to black American experiences: “one ever feels, his two-ness . . . [his existential predicament] two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body . . .” (*Souls*, p. 9). We are all too familiar with the crippling effects of this dark past, and sadly, this fracturing condition may be more common across races than ever before. Robert Gooding-Williams is helpful in highlighting this idea in his recent work *In the Shadow of Du Bois* (2009) where he writes:

Judgments and strivings predicated on American ideals will conflict with judgments and strivings predicated on Negro ideals, for where the latter judgments and strivings pertain to an accurate picture of Negro life, the former pertain to an inaccurate picture that derives from double consciousness. Except for the condition of double consciousness, American ideals would not “war” with Negro ideals, because except for the condition of double consciousness, American ideals and Negro ideals would not give rise to conflicting judgments and strivings.

[. . .] *double consciousness is a causally necessary condition of conflictual two-ness*, for the condition of double consciousness is required to engender a conflict between American and Negro judgments and strivings (emphasis added; 2009: 82).

Beyond strivings, though, there is a conflict between black and white perspectives. Like any oppressed group or individual, African American’s experience of microaggressions cluster around tropes and metaphors of invisibility, namelessness, and powerlessness. Those who are not oppressed (i.e., whites, or those who can be said to “occupy personhood,”) either (1) recognize the circumstances of the oppressed and choose to ignore it, (2) are completely unaware of the

circumstances, or (3) are aware of the circumstances but unsure when they actually take place or what to do about them. One cannot help but to think of whites' "social alexithymia," which is, "the inability of a great many whites to understand where African Americans and other people of color are coming from and what their racialized experiences are like" (Feagin, 2010: 89). As Joe Feagin points out, "[it] involves a significant lack of cross-racial empathy" (Ibid). Both black and white presuppose whites' underlying sense of privilege. For the oppressed, the circumstances themselves pose a complexity of problem simply because of its conflictual nature. For example: Not only are African Americans forced to think about how they might be viewed in the eyes of others like most Americans do after a sense of "a self" has been constructed, but they exhaustively think about how the event of blackness might be perceived by others as well. Sadly, then, the idea of double consciousness has become black people's problems, which has emerged into an array of American societal problems. Classical writers like Ralph Ellison (1914-1994) in his book *Invisible Man*, James Baldwin's (1924-1987) *Giovanni's Room*, and Frantz Fanon's revolutionary work (1925-1961) *Black Skin, White Masks* have all pointed out in their own personal ways how they have been simultaneously influenced by and opposed to white Americanism. In the opening passage of *Invisible Man*, Ellison gives a description of this experience.

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—in-deed, everything and anything except me (p. 3).

As we can see, the experiential weight of white supremacist imposition creates what Du Bois

might call, “a peculiar sensation” in Ellison. Denied the sublimity of Immanuel Kant’s idea of “occupying personhood” or the normative status for participation on the stage of life, Ellison is practically nonexistent. His experience, a racialized consciousness, speaks to a collective black experience, “a monolithic conglomerate,” as West has once said it.

What Ellison reveals here is significant. Notice that in his language usage he signifies an ocular metaphor—mirrors of a hard, distorting glass—that serves as a referential lens to reality while being-in-the-world. His linguistic considerations provide a perspective that points out a major interpretive difference when we compare and contrast it to Rene Descartes’s [*cogito sum*.] Following the seventeenth century French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), the modern European world was turned from a stage of skepticism and thrust into a world of certainty with his famous utterance, “Cogito ergo sum.” With this, he greatly influenced the way people came to see and interpret reality. His conception of *cogito sum* simultaneously defined and ultimately “transformed the subjectivity of doubt to certainty [...] in an attempt to provide a theoretical basis for the legitimacy of modern science” (West, 1999: 74), but more importantly, he inverted the idea between “thinking” and the “thinking ‘of being’.”

Without considering the ways in which the non-Cartesian sum (*hereafter*, Ellisonian sum) develops and operates in the oppressed, African Americans find themselves forced to interact with reality, under a symbolic structure that reinforces and promotes psychological advantages to whites. The impact of this unknown separation and preferential value of a worldview is what Du Bois attempted to hash out through his central metaphor of “the Veil.” He writes:

The worlds within and without the Veil of Color are changing and changing rapidly, but not at the same rate, not in the same way; and this must produce a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment. Such a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must

give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretence or to revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism. (Du Bois, 2003: 143).

These changing realities have become familiar enough to African American's lifeworld experiences *to be considered* fundamentally established and naturalized. Grappling with their sense of "double life [...] double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes," African Americans are seduced by an ontological framing that creates dipolarized ideological empires. As such, perspectives and the gamut of ideas are divided into two psychic spheres, two theoretical moral worldviews, one white and one black.

Independent scholar Cynthia Schrager, in her essay "Both Sides of the Veil: Race, Science, and Mysticism in W. E. B. Du Bois," has pointed out these "two conflicting currents" which Du Bois addresses. There she claims that the two domains are like a contest—"an internal debate within the black community [...] as it were, between the so-called 'soulless materialism' espoused by Washington . . . and what we might call the 'spiritual strivings' [advocated by] Du Bois" (Schrager, 552). Schrager suggests that Du Bois's narrative focused more on the power of knowledge and on the *inwardly touched character* of American Negroes while Washington's centered more on the culmination of wealth through self-help initiatives. Du Bois and Washington, both seduced in their own particular ways by the "elitism of an Enlightenment ethos," undoubtedly had their flaws. Du Bois's major shortcoming, I believe, was his naïveté of the intrinsic motivations of white supremacy, while Washington's civic compromise and unwitting submission into white capitalistic society proved to be premature, if not just all out short-sighted. The social divide as far as Schrager could see was simply a reproduction of "the border dispute being waged in late-nineteenth-century western culture between science and religion . . ." (Ibid.). Following the lead of American pragmatist pioneer, William James, she

characterized the split as an antipathy between the “*scientific-academic*” and the “*feminine-mystical*” minds (emphasis added; Ibid.). As we shall see below, this idea fits well with Gooding-Williams’s “conflictual two-ness” theoretical analysis of the concept of double consciousness.

I find it important to note here, however, that although Du Bois did not agree with Washington’s self-help agenda, it was not a complete dismissal of Washington’s aim as much as it was his strategy. Du Bois knew that self-help efforts were not able to deal with the political power of white elites. For these reasons, Du Bois was not only firm on the energies of self-assertion (like Washington), but he aimed at a way of empowering African Americans with a weapon of self-development and self-government, which would prophetically emphasize a theory of mind from the “inside-out” of its subjective form, rather than strictly an “outside-in” and physical one. Washington’s strategy is simply a physicalism that blinks at rights advocacy. It takes the predicament to be strictly a logical matter from the outside concrete world. This is precisely why it is a notion of the double consciousness.

The rights and ideas of African American liberties were in the hands of the white elite. Washington’s failure to see or hold secure the significance of those *intrinsic* qualities that Du Bois held as fundamental for a “truer self-consciousness,” proved instead to be a loose end in his thought and project. With this, it is commonly argued that Washington uncritically accepts, if not all out endorses a white frame of reference for African Americans. His preoccupation with oneness, i.e., the “outside-in”, ignores African Americans’ larger predicament of dealing with the Cartesian *cogito sum* which is from the “inside-out.” Given this, Washington’s plan regrettably falls right into the hands of white separatist practices by overlooking this smaller detail. Failing

to realize that self-help initiatives would be *seconded* under Jim and Jane Crowism, Washington inadvertently was asking black people to leave their future possibilities in the hands of non-morally persuaded white elites. Today, the way that these discriminatory factors work during intellectual activity has proved to be frighteningly similar. In the following section, we explore the theory of microaggressions and I explain how.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions, as described by Sue...

[c]an be overt or covert but they are most damaging when they occur outside the level of the conscious awareness of well-intentioned perpetrators. Most of us can recognize and define overt forms of bias and discrimination and will actively condemn such actions. However, the “invisible” manifestations are not under conscious awareness and control, so they occur spontaneously without checks and balances in personal, social, and work-related interactions. They can occur among and between family members, neighbors and coworkers, and in student-teacher, healthcare provider-patient, therapist-client, and employer-employee relationships. They are numerous, continuous, and have a detrimental impact upon targets. *Being able to define microaggressions and to know the various forms they take must begin with a cognitive and intellectual understanding of their manifestations and impact* (emphasis added; 2010: 40).

The term “microaggressions” was first coined by Chester M. Pierce and colleagues in his work on racism during the 1970s as the “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’ of blacks by offenders” (as cited by Sue). In the decades following Pierce’s research, there was very little attention given to the study of microaggressions and its effects. However, works like Derald Wing Sue’s taxonomy in *Microaggressions in Everyday Life* (2010), and concepts like “de cardio” racism, a term coined by John L. Jackson, Jr. in *Racial Paranoia* (2008) have recently emerged. Consider two popular culture examples to help illustrate this point.

Twenty-two year old soccer superstar, Mario Balotelli is no stranger to racial microaggressions. Neither is the American professional basketball player LeBron James. Both athletes have recently been linked to and depicted as the image of King Kong within this recent year. According to National Public Radio (*hereafter*, NPR) correspondent Sylvia Poggioli, “Balotelli has faced numerous flashpoints of racist abuse both on and off the playing field” (NPR Producer, 2012), since he gained national recognition with Manchester City and the Italy national team. Only days before Italy’s victory over Germany in the Euro 2012 soccer tournament held in Warsaw, soccer fans in Turin were chanting, “There’s no such thing as a black Italian” (Ibid). Some fans even greeted him by “throwing bananas and making monkey imitations” (Ibid). As if that was not enough, *La Gazzetta dello Sport*, reports Poggioli, a renowned Italian sports daily newspaper, insensitively published “a cartoon depicting Balotelli as King Kong swatting soccer balls on top of Italy’s Clock Tower Big Ben” (Ibid). LeBron James has had similar stirrings. On the April issue of *Vogue* 2008 magazine, the 6-foot-8 NBA superstar is seen “baring his teeth, with one hand dribbling a ball and the other around 5-foot-11 Brazilian model Gisele Bundchen” (USA Today, 2008). According a columnist in the *USA Today* it is an image that some magazine analyst have “likened to King Kong and Fay Wray” (Ibid). There are a number places we can begin interpreting these happenings. I shall like to begin with Balotelli and the racially inflammatory chant, ‘There’s no such thing as a black Italian’

MICROASSAULTS, MICROINSULTS, MICROINVALIDATIONS

The utterance, ‘There’s no such thing as a black Italian’ perfectly describes what Sue calls a microassault (2010). They are one of the three major forms of microaggressions presented

in his theory. The other two are microinsults and microinvalidations. As Sue defines it, microassaults are “the conscious, deliberate, and either subtle or explicit racial, gender, or sexual-orientation biased attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors that are communicated to marginalized groups through environmental cues, verbalizations, or behaviors” (2010:28). They can be best understood as blatant, open and voluntary discriminatory acts or verbal abuse like we see in Balotelli’s incident.

However, as we have mentioned, microaggressions are not always open or verbal. John L. Jackson, Jr. was undoubtedly aware of this fact because in his work *Racial Paranoia* (2008) he attempts to articulate and transform the previous cultural intensity, i.e., Jim and Jane Crow race-based data of perception, and transcend it beyond blatant, specifiable forms. This is the idea that Jackson has in mind where he writes:

We are being naïve if we think that we can sit down and intellectualize ourselves out of its sticky clutches, if we imagine that ending explicit commitments to blatant types of racial discrimination must mean that we are done with racism’s awful legacy for good. It is a trap that scholars fall into as well, assuming that all they have to do is objectively “deconstruct” race, prove it isn’t real in the biological ways we once thought, and then imagine that by doing so they have somehow inoculated us all against its most hazardous features, dulled its sharpest talons. That isn’t nearly true (p. 84).

Here, Jackson points out that we cannot deconstruct race or remove explicit forms of racism and think we are getting out of racism. In doing so, he alludes to the “ghostly character” of racism. Thus, it follows that it is more difficult today to spot racial microaggressions because it is not “old-fashioned” racism like we would see during the Jim and Jane Crow era. Jackson’s concept of “de cardio” racism is racism that people of color attribute to white people’s hearts because it cannot be directly picked out in what people are saying or doing because they are all politically correct. In short, to be racist is no longer openly accepted because white people know that it is

frowned upon.

One of the major shortcomings in Jackson's theory, however, is although the ability to have qualitative perceptions is necessary to individual well-being and survival, it may not be sufficient to describe the nature of microaggressions in other potential and actual occasions. What I mean to point out here is that while Jackson helps us with understanding the subtleties of a race-based data through his concept of "de cardio" racism, if taken in isolation (as a standpoint, and thereby postulating a whole), the theory simply takes on a fallible description which ignores other marginalizing epiphenomena despite their actual occasions. This is certainly not to say that what Balotelli felt is not a racial microaggression. Many would rightfully argue that it was flat-out racist. My claim is that while people should be able to perceive microaggressions where there is an explicit occurrence, they should not only be able to point out other less-explicit types of occasions too, but more importantly (for reasons to be discussed later), not to unconsciously transfer the proposition to other demographics. Otherwise, this in turn is also a microaggressive reality. Microaggression as discussed here begins to take on a virtual and more illusory character. Sue does not categorize microaggressions under these terms. However, in Section IV of his work *Microaggressions*, entitled "Microaggressions in Employment, Education, and Mental Health Practice" he does discuss and show the *impact* that the accretion of these microaggressions have (2010: 209-280).

The way that we shall think about the term 'impact' here works best if thought of as in a theory of intensity. Intensity, as described by Alfred N. Whitehead, "is the origination of a conceptual feeling by the subjective aim..." (1978: 27). Thus, the subjective intensity of the experience is also a conceptual feeling. It is best understood as a mode of perception with a

nexus of operations and functions. Briefly, then, the subjective aim of the individual, in the moment of an actual occasion, is also causative agent from the perceived physical world.

Therefore, when an individual achieves mastery of his or her environment through the signifying mode of consciousness (i.e., race-based consciousness, gender-based consciousness, etc.), a perception of its causative agencies is perceived as well. The generic contrast between the two is based on a perceived history. An example of the concept is useful here. On May 09, 2012 President Barack Obama became the first president to publicly endorse same-sex marriage.¹ The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (*hereafter*, NAACP) went along with President Obama's bold initiative, deeming it a relevant civil rights issue. However, some clergymen and local leaders broke away from the organization and began talking like the people who once oppressed them. One case in point, Reverend Keith Ratliff, Sr., a long time outspoken critic of same-sex marriage and president of the Iowa-Nebraska chapter resigned. According to NPR analyst Cheryl Corley, Rev. Ratliff said that the "[d]eviant behavior [of homosexuals] is not the same as being denied your right to vote because of the color of one's skin." In Ratliff's own words, "Gay community: Stop hijacking the civil rights movement" (NPR Producer, 2012). What then is the difference between Rev. Ratliff's analytical focus and the temperament which informs the operations of Washington's self-help project? Not very much I fear. A nexus of intensities like Ratliff's, however, is insulting to the lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transsexual community (*hereafter*, LGBT community). This is exactly why it is a microinsult.

As defined by Sue, microinsults are the "interpersonal or environmental communications

¹Interestingly enough, President Barack Obama has been called the first "gay president" along with actually being the first president of African American-decent. Yet ironically, former President William "Bill" Clinton was named the first "black president" although he is in fact of white heritage and decent.

that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity that demean a person's racial, gender, or sexual orientation, heritage, or identity" (2010:31). The interesting thing about microinsults is that they typically "come with" or reveal other hidden themes, i.e., metacommunications. In an original microaggression taxonomy proposed by Sue and Capodilupo (2008), they included the following themes cited by (Sue, 2010: 32-39).

Table 1 is a representation of Sue and Capodilupo (2008) proposed microaggression taxonomy. Here, included microinsults and microinvalidations show considerable overlapping. Where in some cases we are left with little doubt as to the intent of the microaggression (i.e., microassaults, which are conscious and deliberate), the dividing line between microinsults and microinvalidations usages generates confusion and fosters illusory realities. As Sue points out, "microinsults and microinvalidations often come from a catch-22 created by double messages" (Sue 2010:88). It is this microinsult-microinvalidation contrast which should not only help us better understand the transmuted complexity of a Du Boisian double consciousness, but also, in assisting us with the integration and synthesis of its conflictual two-ness.

Sue's theory, unlike Jackson's, highlights other relational modes of thinking (i.e., de cardio sexism, de cardio classism, etc.). In doing this, Sue is not preoccupied with a fixed disposition of assuring us of *only racial* microaggressions. This helps us in remaining mindful of the interrelatedness of other epiphenomena potentially involved. However, Sue's project, too, has its shortcomings. The mere idea of separating group-specific microaggressions into their own discriminatory parts, acting as wholes, simply demonstrates how we may unknowingly place an invisible wedge between interpretations and our "thought-to-be" viewpoints through theories of intersectionality (i.e., racial microaggressions, race-gender microaggressions, race-

gender-age microaggressions). The problem is that it does not adequately capture the subjective valuation of experience. It is more segmentally applied. As we saw in Rev. Ratliff's case, he gives priority to race-based epiphenomena. While we can agree with Rev. Ratliff that Black Power Movements are clearly different in type than the Gay and Lesbian Movement—to remain culturally insensitive to the LGBT community's struggles not only neglects the general consensus regarding how oppressive systems overlap and operate, it perpetuates social division. There is a knowable subtlety here, which, if overlooked, may have devastating outcomes. This is how microinvalidations work. Sue tells us that microinvalidations are characterized by “communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups, such as people of color, women, and LGBTs” (Sue, 2010: 37). Here, in the valuation of the language-symbolization process, Ratliff demonstrates social division and ordering. This *bias* necessarily occurs when we make any pronouncement. However, to tell other marginalized groups, to ‘stop hijacking the civil rights movement’ clearly confuses a right for an expectation. Nothing is wrong with this, but less well understood is how the ideological empire of whiteness retains its status as a cultural identifier. Consider the following lexical items as a simpler illustration: “nigger” and “wigger.” Reportedly, “wigger” is the derogatory, white equivalent of a term for “nigger.” Here it should become glaringly obvious that blackness is the primary qualification for being a “nigger.” Whiteness, on the other hand, retains a privileged ranking. At best, there is only the “white nigger.” Given this example we can admit to the intersections of microaggressions, like in Sue's methods. Our general dispositions however lead us to believe that a concept of a process is a disagreement in terms. As a result, this can lead to confusion. In Sue's *Microaggression Process Model* (2010) he

attempts to describe the (1) initial stages of a racial microaggression; (2) how they are perceived; (3) the recipient's reactions; (4) how they are interpreted; and (5) their consequences (2010: 65-86).

In Sue's (2010) *Model* (See also Table 2), we see the concept of a microaggression in its completeness, i.e., from beginning to end. It constitutes the immediacy of a microaggressive form. In other words, each of the five phases in their 'togetherness' establish the complex unity of an actual occasion. It can be said, then, that the *microaggressive process* is the logical relations to that which is not yet felt. It is a snap-shot picture which happens instantaneously with no involvement of conscious awareness.

Phase one, the "incident phase," is a situation, scenario or event experienced by the subject. Phase two is "perception." This domain deals with the subject's belief as to whether or not the incident was racially infused or motivated. Much of our focus is centered around this domain because, as even Sue maintains, "responses vary" (2010: 68). In the next section, we shall take a look at some participant responses from an empirical study that was conducted. There we can see how and why responses sometimes vary among participants. Sue's *Model* fails to demonstrate adequately, that, during phenomena of the "incident phase," there is a felt microaggressive form which helps satisfy the interpretation of the remaining phases (i.e., reaction, interpretation, consequence). For example, if the incident phase is a microassault, there should not be any questioning in the domain of perception. If there is questioning as Sue has indicated in his description of the second phase, then, the perspective represents *invalidating microaggressions* (i.e., microinvalidations) if it is unconsciously taken-for-granted, or neglected. It is precisely this "inside-out" subjective function, in conjunction with Sue's "outside-in"

method that is needed in order to help expand the theory. As Sue points out, “one of the important core ideas of the perception phase is the process of ‘Questioning’ ” (2010: 72). With this we become conscious of an actual-potential contrast which effect the remaining phases in different ways. This transfer of function, in the reaction phase, for instance, generates realities like “paranoia,” “sanity checks,” struggles for “self-recognition,” and “saving face” of the offenders (Sue, 2010: 73). As we move into phase four and five, interpretations and consequences, of course, vary according to factors like: (1) personal experiences, (2) their relationship to the perpetrator, (3) the racial/cultural identity development of the recipient, and (4) the thematic content of the microaggression (Ibid.). What is accounted for in large part here in this paper is (4) because: the actual is the concrete, tangible and finite world of the incident itself. This is also what in fact makes it physical and real. The incident is potential, in that there is the free play on the imagination. Therefore, it holds a conceptual and mental component as well. Cognitive and deliberative oscillation is an aspect of intellectual activity that many of us often take for granted. It is what oftentimes generates propositions of misconception and error. When expressed in terms of its generic contrast during perception, it is best defined and understood as a theory of virtuality, oscillating in the flux of between a physical pole and a mental poles.

Sue provides a serviceable light on the operation that I am referring to with an example from the 2008 presidential campaign (2010: 5-6). Here he demonstrates how microaggressions, with the proper environment, can work as symbols.

[...] Republican Senator John McCain appeared at a political rally taking questions from his supporters. One elderly White woman, speaking into a handheld microphone, haltingly stated, “I don’t trust Obama. He’s an Arab.”

McCain shook his head, quickly took the microphone, and said, “No ma’am. He’s a descent family man, a citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with.”

Sue continues,

At first glance, John McCain’s defense of the then-candidate Barack Obama appeared admirable. After all, he was correcting misinformation and defending a political rival.

But upon deeper reflection, Sue concludes that,

[...] his response [McCain], while well-intentioned, represented a major microaggression.

What I am taking Sue to mean here by “major microaggression” is the potency of the microaggression in relation to the subtleness and intensity of other potential microaggression forms. In this case, the microaggressive form is at a very high level of abstraction not because of its conceptual-value, but because of the level of generality it is grounded on in relation to other microaggressive criteria for detection. “Major microaggression” therefore means “at,” “in” or “of” the highest intensity of abstraction for which a microaggression can possibly be detected, which is its level of subtleness. This appears to be a slippery slope because the “highest level,” as many might argue, is, perhaps, what is explicit, blatant and deliberate, i.e., microassaults. But as we all know, language is biased, and then again, promiscuous. Besides the brute fact of ‘the woman seeing something inherently bad or wrong with being an Arab,’ other underlying themes can remain hidden, and often do. As Sue goes on to point out,

Equating mistrust with a person’s nationality or religion, especially being Muslim or of Middle Eastern heritage, has resurged in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

What we have witnessed here are the categorial demands and imagery of an ingression of the symbolic reference “terrorism” into the Middle Easterners and Muslim community at a

microlevel. It is extremely subtle, but it is precisely why it is a microinvalidation. However, notice the triviality of the idea. The microaggression is also a microinsult because it is utterly insulting as well. Thus, where historical events like 9/11 can work to produce preconceived meanings and fixed to dispositions with as much regularity in their complexity as to objectify present and future possibilities, (not only with those same concepts, but also similar conceptual feelings as the initial phase), these value-laden symbols then can be rightly identified as microinvalidations that not only “creep in” undetected as functional substitutes of the reality experienced; but they are fill-ins, mixed “hybrid feelings” (Whitehead, 1972), i.e., propositions, for the thought of those experiences as a “perspective of perspectives” as thought to be felt by the subject and by others. In the concluding section, I discuss these propositions as they apply to a popular culture example involving Mario Balotelli and LeBron James. However, in this next section, we explore the responses and analysis of an empirical study conducted to help highlight some microaggressive forms when they actually occur. Thus, the purpose aim for in this project is to answer the question of *what is the capacity for the realization of a microaggression?* This question was answered by interviewing students throughout the insular South on their experiences with microaggressions. Interviewee responses were coded and analyzed using Sue’s taxonomy of microaggressive forms.

CHAPTER III
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MICROAGGRESSION FORMS

METHODOLOGY

Ten people were asked to participate in an interview across southern campuses and communities. Of those who were approached for interviews, four expressed concerns about being voice recorded. The resulting six participants were included for analysis: Nicholas, a 21-year-old African American male from Tennessee; Vaughn, a 22-year-old African American male who grew up in Mississippi; Ashley, a 23-year-old African American female who works at a local restaurant near a southern university; Calvin, a 26-year-old African American male student; Ricci, a 25-year-old graduate student and library employee; and Victor, a 29-year-old African American male who works as an attorney in a local law firm.

All participants included in the analysis consented to participating prior to starting the interview. Interviews occurred at convenient locations surrounding local universities, namely outside of libraries, student centers, lunchrooms, bus stops, etc. All interviews were conducted during the day, and took no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Interviewees were selected using a convenience sample.

Each interview followed a similar structure. Verbal consent was obtained prior to starting a voice recorder. After starting the recorder, participants were asked the following questions:

1. Do you believe that racial discrimination is still going on today? If so, how?
2. Have you had any personal experiences with racial discrimination?
3. Do you recall any instances where you believed you were being discriminated against but you were not quite sure? If so, when or how?

Each question was read to the interviewee one at a time for clarity and understanding.

Interviewees were given ample time to answer each question before moving on to the next question. The interviewer provided verbal cues (i.e., “how so”, “what do you mean by that?”) only to help provide clarity to the interviewee’s response.

The interview concluded after participants had responded to all questions. They were thanked for their time before being debriefed and excused from the study. Voice recordings were transcribed, then, excerpts were selected as examples for analysis and discussion.

CRITERIA FOR DATA AND CODING PROCEDURE

After all interviews took place, interviewee responses were categorized and analyzed across types of microaggressions: a) microassaults, b) microinsults, or c) microinvalidations.

Responses were categorized as follows:

Microassaults: blatant, with high intensity for detection

Microassaults carry a high intensity of detection because they are typically purposeful, conscious and deliberate acts of discrimination against other marginalized groups. Interviewee responses were included in this category if when they fit the description of de jure racism seen in Jim and Jane Crow era.

Microinsults: subtle, with a moderate intensity for detection

Like microinvalidations, microinsults are also subtle. However, microinsults are generally slants or slights directed towards the self-esteem, for example, the discriminatory-

based language in “separate but equal” and “don’t ask, don’t tell” policies. Microinsults are more detectable than microinvalidations, but not as detectable as microassaults. Interviewee responses were included in this category based on the microaggression’s complexity to causing confusing or pause in the respondent.

Microinvalidations: very subtle, with an extremely low intensity for detection

Although microinvalidations have a low intensity for detection, they potentially cause the most harm because oftentimes they are ignored or neglected. This is, in fact, what constitutes it as a microinvalidation. They directly dismiss, deny, or negatively prehend the events and reality. More destruction is possible here because of microinvalidations extremely subtle detection. It bespeak to an invisible and seemingly nonexistent, and ghostly character, like the Ellisonian sum (see introduction). Interviewee responses were included in this category based off its theme and predilection for colorblindness.

DATA ANALYSIS

Nicholas, a 21-year-old undergraduate retells a story of an incident in a public restroom at a local bar near a southern university:

I was peeing in the bathroom and this dude came stumbling through the door, like sloppy drunk. He saw me and said, “Oh, my bad,” cause it was kinda a small bathroom. It only had a toilet and a urinal. His boy came in right behind him and bumped into him [.] and he said [the friend], “What’s going on?” Then the other dude said, “Nothing [.] but a nigger is in here using the toilet.” I got so mad...

There is nothing very unconscious or subtle about this incident, which is precisely why Sue would categorizes it as a microassault. It is a clear attack aimed at Nicholas’s race. Nicholas, in stating that, “[he] got so mad,” indicates that he detected it as such. What is of particular interest here though is the social bond that is broken as an effect. Given the comment, “[...] a nigger is in

here using the toilet,” the “drunk dude” makes a clear distinction between him and Nicholas. Because racial domination defines the relationship between Nicholas and the “drunk dude” in white and black terms (no pun intended), it is not hard to see how an accretion of value involving race-based phenomenology gains efficacy through common day-to-day aesthetics. Sue predicts this much in his outside-in *style* of methodology. The *style* as a methodology however is excessively objective. The logical entailment of this approach is to help us locate a cultural and epochal *schism* from the physical outside world. As seen in Nicholas and the “drunk dude’s” case, it is in the form of a relic from the old Jim and Jane Crow era. It represents the relationship and symbolism of master-slave dialect. Thus, not only is Nicholas immediately reduced to a brute and second-class citizen by this subtle form of racial inheritance, but he is sociohistorically posited into another space and time period. If this idea is *unwittingly neglected* or not prehended as a real possibility to Nicholas, a microinvalidation arises because although the concept of different space-time traveling is knowable, it is oftentimes fallibly interpreted, rather than explicitly understood of as a real potential and actual entity of reality. This in turn can generate a *seconded* reality, i.e., a transmuted sense of Du Boisian double consciousness.

Vaughn, a 22-year-old undergraduate from Mississippi shares with us a similar experience he had one Sunday after a church service:

We had just gotten back from church. I must have been about 9 or 10 [...] these white people were flying [read: speeding] by the house and I heard somebody say, [participant whispering] “You fucking niggers!” I couldn’t really tell what exactly they said exactly, but I know they said “nigger” cause I asked my mom what it meant [...] and she asked me where I had heard it from.

Here, we have another example of a microassault. Aforementioned, racial microassaults are simply “old-fashion” forms of Jim and Jane Crow racism that can produce secondary realities.

Here, again, it is an attack on race, Vaughn's race. Although, it is not likely that Vaughn had thought himself in any definitive terms as a brute, a slave, or a second-class citizen given his tender age, he has been most certainly qualified as one by "the Other," i.e., white people. With this, Vaughn has been transformed into a "subhuman" species, and seconded by social convention and cultural practices, as Sue theorizes. Yet, Vaughn is too young to understand that *mentally* he is able to remain free from such conventions, and that linguistic structures are merely compartmentalizations that can imprison him if they are unwittingly taken wholesale as some truth. Sadly then, Vaughn, as with most children, has the dreadful misfortune and dilemma of negatively prehending microinvalidations, until some conversion-like experience helps in the transformation of his perceptual interpretation. This is partly because, as children, we do not quickly *discover* the true essence and value of ourselves until the conflictual two-ness *schism* is eliminable from our thinking. This is a distinction between fact and form. Failing to intellectually grasp the limits of a race-based identity through an inside-out style methodology is a necessary feat unless the individual is to remain *mentally assimilated* to the physical world of form, as a "subhuman," "a child" or "second-class citizen" by conventional sociohistorico-cultural practices. This "outside-in"-*"inside-out,"* is simply another generic contrast of a transmuted form of Du Boisian double consciousness. As a form of rethinking, Vaughn must contact this inside-out perspective as a way to counter-balance the outside-in perspective. Otherwise, there a virtuality begins to emerge around other conceptual possibilities.

Ashley, a 23-year-old undergraduate retells her experience as a hostess in a restaurant:

... when I was helping Tiffany [a co-worker and waitress] this one table was really rude to me. They said they needed to-go boxes. So I grabbed them some. But after I gave them the boxes, the kids were laughing every time I passed by the table. I thought they were laughing at me so I went to the restroom to check to

see if I had anything on my face. I didn't see anything so the next time I went by the table and the kids were laughing—I asked them [the family of four] if they needed anything else. They [parents of the children] shook their heads but one of the kids said [while giggling], “Yea, my dad said could you box up the lemons, too.” They started laughing, but you could tell that the dad was embarrassed. I don't think he was expecting his son to say that [.] I told him, *I was offended* and that I thought *he was rude*. When I told Tiffany and she said she didn't think they were racist [.] She knew them she said [.] *they aren't racist*—they just come from money and think they're better than everybody else. She saw it as a class thing. Me and Tiffany still cool but I don't think that was just a class thing. To me it was racist.

For Ashley, it remains clear that she saw the incident as a “racist moment.” In fact, she reports “feeling it” first, thinking that she was being “laughed at.” Sue misses this moment of microaggression “as feeling.” Many might suggest that Ashley might have thought the customer was racist because she is of African-descent and the customer is white. These images can and frequently do contribute to such an extent. Sue expresses this idea and concept explicitly in his work as aesthetic intensities from the physical world. The doctrine in which I am interested in teasing out here is much subtler (like how Ashley's perception is immediately relegated to simply “race talk”). As Ashley points out, “Tiffany knew them” . . . [and that Tiffany claims it was] “just a class thing.” Of course it is possible to think one interpretation is more befitting to the scenario than the other, but to ignore interpretations is to be culturally insensitive to other's lived realities while being-in-the-world. Ashley thinks the people are racist and that the people are laughing at her. This is predicated on her experience of them as rude. She may have been predisposed to expect that white customers are rude to her as a black server. Tiffany could have been apologizing for them because she knew them, she could have said it was class-based because it makes her and Ashley (both servers) equal, as if to say, *they may have treated her like that, too*. Here, Ashley is experiencing racial paranoia because she thinks it is about race, but she

can not know with empirical certainty, other than her gut feeling, i.e., “de cardio” racism, that they are being racist, just being rude in general (with no particular motivation), or being classist. Yet, where we witness Tiffany’s exclamation of their innocence of racism, we can also see how Ashley has experienced another, subtler microaggressive form. If we emphasize the response “they aren’t racist,” Tiffany explicitly denies Ashley’s racial reality. If Tiffany is not just simply “pathologizing Ashley’s cultural values and communication styles,” (Sue, 2010) Tiffany’s reluctance to fully acknowledge or see how Ashley’s experience is real, bespeaks a sense of racial colorblindness (Sue, 2010). Although extremely subtle, Ashley has also experienced a microinvalidation (one which she may not have detected). With feeling insulted, Ashley is the direct target of a racial microinsult. But we cannot know for sure that she detects the microinvalidation transmitted from Tiffany, her friend and coworker. Ashley simply dismisses it, by saying “me and Tiffany still cool but I don’t think that was just a class thing.” In this case, the microaggression is negatively prehended or nullified on pretenses of friendship and worker association. Here we can see that microaggressions most certainly go undetected, but they remain detectable. Given this, we see another illustration of a microinsult-microinvalidation contrast, specifically because Ashley detects one microaggression but dismisses the other. This generic contrast that can not only generate a structure of conflictual two-ness whose general principle perpetuates a distorted reality during the inflow of datum between physical and mental poles, but it can most certainly perpetuates a transmuted sense of Du Boisian double consciousness as well, i.e., a distorted reality.

Kalvin, a 26-year-old graduate student had a similar experience to Ashley. Below, Calvin explains how when he was at home with his roommates one evening while watching the

Summer Olympics, the following happened:

Yea, this one time when me and my roommates were watching the Olympics. The women were getting ready to race and Steven asked me and Michael, “What country are the colors green, black, and yellow?” I said “I don’t know, but maybe Jamaica.” There was a pause. Then Michael said, “But she’s white!” I was *confused* for a second. But I kinda started to smile to myself, because I never really thought of Michael as racist. So I yelled back, so what are you saying, “That there are only black people in Jamaica?” We all ended up laughing about it (emphasis added).

This example fits particular well with Sue’s category of microinsults because it contains an unconscious message of “abnormality” and a theme of “second class citizenry.” The comment, “but she’s white” is an utterance that Calvin found *perplexingly insulting*. He did not know whether to he should feel insulted or not. Michael’s assumption that the woman was not from Jamaica because she was “white” contains a metamessage that left Calvin *dazed and confused*, but aware of the microaggression in general but not necessarily in terms of any definitive intensity. This confusion undoubtedly is generated by a disruption, or something conflitual in Calvin’s way of thinking that reflects a division, and an oscillation between reality and non-reality. There would be no reason for anyone to doubt the existence of “white Africans” too under Michael’s logic. For Michael, then, the idea of blackness is an event that is situated in Jamaica. Sue most certainly would agree with this much because the conflation of Michael’s functional logic is something that he discovered from his own experiences in culture, i.e., the physical world (which is an outside-in *style* of methodology). But if the transitive character of Michael’s immediate deduction is adequately preserved as a worldview, i.e., white racial frame (as an inside-out rather *in tandem with* an outside-in *style*)—what ideas, events or concepts might have found their location in terms like “American,” “Iranian,” or “African?” Given this, a subtle ingression of a vaguely postulated unit of logical measure constitutes a microaggressive reality

that Sue's theoretical orientation dimly captures, which is precisely why it is a microinvalidation. We cannot safely conclude that Calvin readily detects how the white racial frame has shaped his own logic. Although Calvin experiences a microaggressive reality, the trigger by which he receives the feeling dictates the intensity and the potential destructiveness of its form. For instance, on the one hand, there is a connection between *what* Michael said and *what* Calvin felt. On the other hand, there is the disharmony between *what* was said and *how* it made Calvin feel. This is a significant point to remember because it highlights a distinction between what is cultural fact in one case and subjective form in another. With this, we inevitably contact an aesthetic/moral contrast. This is a point that I shall return to in the concluding section.

Ricci, a 25-year-old graduate student and librarian employee had this to say about one of her experiences with racial discrimination.

We were in line talking, and this, there was this older white lady maybe 40 early 50s. She walks up in front of us [...] she walks up and she doesn't look at us directly, but I know she can see us [...] and she gets in front of us, stops for a few seconds and her other friend comes up and they started having a conversation. I'm checking this out while I'm talking to my friend, and my friend didn't even pay it any mind. Then the lady continued to talk. Well, as I saw the line move I tried stepping around her, without bumping her and we ended up almost hitting each other. She looks at me and says "No, no what are you doing!" I said: "Hey, we were in line before you." She looks over at her friend, I guess for some type of support. Her friend look back at her and I said we were here a least 2 maybe 3 minutes before you. They think just because we're African Americans that we still got to put up with that shit. I said to my friend, "did you see that?" She said, "Yea, but I wouldn't have said anything, I would have just let them pass."

African Americans have often described their experience of invisibility as being "ignored," "devalued," "insignificant," "less than" or "unworthy of being recognized" (Sue, 2010).

According to Sue's account, this is a clear ascription to microinsults because of its concomitant theme of "second-class citizenry." But this is not all. Being treated as a second-class citizen can

also evoke feelings of “alienation” and “objectification.” Given this, it is a microinvalidation that may or may not be detected or felt. What is also of interest here is Ricci’s girlfriend’s response. Although, Ricci initially thought her friend “didn’t [see the woman],” we find out later in the passage that, admittedly, she did and ignored it. Ricci’s reaction can also be interpreted as a “racial paranoia” rather than simply a healthy skepticism or suspicion; and her friend’s reaction, as a form of compliance or an “Aunt Jane” rather than something that was simply dismissed as insignificant. Given this, it can be rightly said that race has no meaning apart from its aesthetic and subjective intensity.

Victor, a 29-year-old attorney, with whom I spoke with outside of a southern university library, retells the following story.

I got up one morning around nine o’clock—nine thirty on Saturday morning to run when I realized I had left my sneakers at my parent’s house that was miles away. Instead of going there to get them, I decided to drive to Hibbett’s to get a new pair. When I got there, I park in front of another car in the parking lot. When I looked up to my left, I saw a lady in a car just diagonal to me. She was on her cell phone. When I got out of the car, I locked my door—and when I was walking past the lady in the car, I saw her frantically begin to tussle around for something near her car door window—when I then heard her car door lock. Then I realized that she had locked her doors because she saw me coming. I just laughed and kept walking—because stuff like that doesn’t even surprise me anymore.

Victor’s experience highlights something very interesting about the workings of the microaggressions and the Cartesian sum. When Victor got out of his car to go into the shoe store, the woman who saw him was *invoked with panic*, and as a result, “she locked her doors.” One way to look at the lady’s actions after seeing Victor are through *values* that could best be explained and attributed to gender-based ideologies, in terms of the stereotypes and taboos surrounding black sexuality. Maybe she felt as if she was vulnerable to being raped, or robbed.

This point is undoubtedly hard to tease out, but there is something interesting here about the intersections of race, gender, and age. Would she have locked her doors for an older, better-dressed black man? Or would she have done so as frantically? We cannot claim to know. I do not see how anyone truly could. This example fits well into the category of a microinsult because of its themes of “criminality” and “sexual objectification” (Sue, 2010: 36). But it fits into Sue’s category of microinvalidation too because,—where we see intersections of race, gender, and age—we oftentimes neglect that we make assumptions on some *achieved change* in the accretion of value in each of the group-specified microaggressions for our acting judgment (See Ratliff, p. 19-21). Victor has clearly detected it as such, because, as he states in his response above, “I just laughed and kept walking... stuff like that doesn’t even surprise me anymore.” Where we see “stuff like” *white people’s behavior* as “no surprise” (to quote Victor), we also bear witness to the dismissal of a feeling and intensity. Sue does make this point explicit in his theory. I find it important to say that this is certainly not to say that Sue’s scholarship is not significant, or that his contributions are not widely appreciated. This is largely not the case. Yet, it remains clear that Victor is well aware of the countless number of times in which microaggressions actually occur in his life. With this, Victor (even if only momentarily), *decides* to ignore or neglect the ensuing conceptual feeling of unity with the intensity felt. This is an important point to remember because although there can be no elimination of the conceptual feeling in general, Victor can cognitively manage the relative significance of its form. And, of course this ignores all of the contextual ingredients of the outside world.

An accumulation of microinvalidations is an integral determining factor of the intensiveness and impact of a microaggressive form. The “valuing up” or “valuing down” of his

feelings in an actual occasion is also causally linked to the objects of these feelings, i.e., white people's behavior. Otherwise, there is no microaggressive form to be found. But as we have earlier concluded, it is not a question of detecting the microaggression, but one of intensity. But yet, when dealing with the intensities of microaggressive forms like microinsults and microinvalidations, it not only becomes difficult to epistemologically categorize the nature of their character (as Sue has attempted), but it is equally important to remember that the character is subjectively ascribed by a personal order. With the emergence of a microinsult-microinvalidation contrast arises a division between subjective feelings. Sue attempts to clear away some of the confusion through his conceptualization of microaggressive themes. However, as demonstrated in the vignettes above, even those themes have been shown to overlap into more than one microaggressive form and feeling, as undetected, but certainly not undetectable. Here, in Victor's case, we see the adverb of his experience, for he *decides* to deal with "stuff like" *the relentless continuation of white people's behavior* as something "unsurprising," but knowable. This is undoubtedly is a form of resistance. With this, he has privately, if not consciously minimized the level of adjectival frequency with which the intensities are conflictually contrasted.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Of the many minorities who may adopt American values, their experiences, with overwhelming regularity, evoke and implicitly validate both a racial and sexist contract, which relegates their cultural distinctiveness as meaningless and undesirable. Indeed, it is true that Du Bois often contrasted the dipolarized ideological frames through his central metaphor of “the Veil.” However, despite this criticism, Du Bois ultimately sought to resolve the “warring ideals” between the two sterner logics. Any naysayers refuting this end are unquestionably doing a gross misreading of his oeuvre and a misrepresentation of what he really meant. This, too, can be a microinvalidation because many individuals often *neglect, overlook* or *unwittingly dismiss* the “predominance of the Enlightenment ethos” which largely influenced thinking in general during that time. For example, if we look through a yearbook, we can generally make accurate judgments on what time periods particular images were intensified (e.g., the 1960s, 1970s, etc.) contingent upon the clothes people are wearing, hairstyles, eyewear, and through relevant imaging in the backgrounds. During the time of the photo however, these realities and its concomitant of influences were considerably less evident to us, and to the people in them, although the ideas themselves were omnipresent. When we reify these ideas, intensifying them and, carrying them out—they become just as real as they were during the actual occasion (but in

the Cartesian product of another vaguely postulated unit of temporal activity as an actual occasion).

Although subtle, we are greatly influenced by the conflictual two-ness *schism* of this particular technological historical epoch too. As we have seen in some of the examples above, the microinsult-microinvalidation contrast can generate distorted realities. By dealing with the physical side of an actual occasion, i.e., culture—through mediums like the media, mascots, books, architecture, sound—one’s preference for specific content is not only shaped to be viewed a certain way, but it is interpretable under a specified Cartesian lens. When content of the physical world does not reflect its conceptual pole, a demarcation is produced between the two poles. This reality is accounted for by the various levels, generalities, intensities and “levels of generalities and intensities” by which microinvalidations occur.

According to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (2010), America has the largest prison population per capita (Patterson, 2011: 138). Of those incarcerated, African Americans and Hispanic Americans, statistically speaking, far exceed the likelihood of Asian or White Americans in being incarcerated. If this were not shocking enough, the U.S. Department of Education has even shown that in the last two decades, “racial and ethnic segregation in America’s public schools has increased” when compared to the 1950s and 60s (Ibid., 155). Yet, racial progress is undeniable. But with propositions such as these, it is not hard to see how a predicative pattern of perceptual conceptual feelings would not reflect what Derrick Bell has called a “flexible amnesia” for the collective black community (2004: 5). Even as Michelle Alexander has exclaimed in her book *The New Jim Crow*, “the symbolic production of race is partly held together by the power to define the meaning and significance of race in its time”

(2012: 196). To be brief, Alexander shows that every racial caste system in the United States—from slavery to Jim and Jane Crow, to Jim and Jane Crow to this current era of mass incarceration—there has been produced some type of racial stigma” (Ibid). To be “black” during the era of slavery, exclaims Alexander, “was to be a *slave*,” to be “black” during Jim and Jane Crow it was “to be a *second-class citizen*,” and today in this era of mass incarceration it is “to be a *criminal*” (Ibid). Because concepts like “slave,” “second-class citizenry” and “criminal” are conflated with what it means to be black in America from the “outside-in,” through aesthetically maintained social conventions, political agendas and media elites, it tells us very little in regards to how we can resist microaggressive effects despite their enigmatic nature. This is a broad outline of what Sue’s outside-in style of methodology demonstrates for us. In this last section, however, I use a popular culture example to help illustrate the inside-out *style* of methodology.

CONCLUSION

Since thinking can be a substitute for action, it follows that an image can be a proposition for a conceptual feeling (Whitehead, 1978:184-207). The proposition, to be presented here is like “cheese on a cracker,” it is “a lure for feeling” (Ibid.). Images, unlike words, are a datum of objectifications with an indefinite number of interpretations. Images refer to both temporal and non-temporal entities. Given both LeBron James and Mario Balotelli’s recent King Kong depictions, with all their determinant racial and ethnic inheritances, and the long legacy of slavery in American, conceptual reproductions of African Americans being depicted as “monkeys” undoubtedly affirms a racial microaggression. The King Kong image is a proposition of *perpetuating racial stereotypes*. It is a stigma that constitutes the physical pole of the experience. Within its presentational immediacy, is the conceptual pole as well. During an

actual occasion of an experience, the subject prehends conceptual data, receiving it within a physical feeling. Given each actual occasion of the experience, the free play of the imagination receives data from the physical world, with all its subjectively inherited memories, acquired habits and cultural tastes. Clearly, then, the media is a culture and seasoned medium for the accretion of microaggressive valuations. For instance, not very long ago, a friend informed me, that there was a black couple featured in a K-Y Jelly commercial. In depicting a mode of ingress, i.e., a perspective—one of the things that happens (in addition to sparks and fireworks), is that a watermelon bursts. “It was very quick,” she said, “but it was clearly a bursting watermelon.” Whether intentionally or not, the commercial is linking people of color “sexual pleasures” with watermelons, or what in some cases have been referred to as “nigger apples” during the Jim and Jane Crow era. Therefore, an ingress of some kind of primitive, “porch monkey,” “watermelon sexuality,” has found its way into the event blackness as an ingredient in African American’s lives. This is a racial microaggression. A lot of her friends reportedly saw it and thought so too. Yet, K-Y Jelly could very easily say they did not intend for it to be racist. The doctrine here maintained is a theory of intensity revealed in the proposition entertained by the prehending subject. What then is the character assigned to the datum presented if it is not “the Other?”

Now, returning to our previous popular culture example: According to a newspaper column in the *USA Today*, James told *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer* he was pleased with the new *Vogue* cover, saying he was “just showing a little emotion” (Jones, 2008). He told columnists: “Who cares what anyone says?” (Ibid). Mario Balotelli, on the other hand, was outraged. Although, the King Kong depiction is undoubtedly a racial microaggression, the ways James and

Balotelli grasp the data reveals something very significant. Because these responses are different, we see an actual occasion where a racial microaggression is given two different interpretations, i.e., microinsult-microinvalidation contrast. Here we see that the image is not only different in interpretation, but more importantly, it shows a difference in subjective feeling. This, then, reveals an intensity, i.e., microaggressive form—one that comparatively is not within “the Other.” Sue’s *Model* misses this datum of conscious experience. As previously mentioned, the *Model* is ‘merely’ a snapshot of a microaggression in its immediacy. To judge it otherwise is an act of logic than of thinking. In other words, it is a distinction between fact and form. Datum “received” as experience, is initially indeterminant. But as we can clearly see with James and Balotelli, history has its own personal order. Kenneth Burke put it best where he writes:

[...] historians for the most part *are relativistic*. But where one considers different historical characters from the standpoint of the total development, one could encourage each character to comment upon the other without thereby sacrificing a perspective upon the lot. This could be got particularly, I think, if historical characters themselves (i.e., periods or cultures treated as “individual persons”) were considered never to begin or end, but rather to change in intensity of poignancy (emphasis included; 1989:256).

Given this Jamesian and Balotellian imagery of the microinsult-microinvalidation contrast, *self* is the personal order of occasions that have been serially threaded together throughout the passage of time. The images themselves refurbish the intensity of a substantive metaphysics in its literary experience that regenerates logical subjects into some type of vaguely postulated “Washington-Du Bois imagery.” This fracturing perpetuates a dialectical relation in perception as well as in thinking. However, if we take away the color scheme for a moment, to clear away some of the ambiguity of a microinvalidating reality, we notice that this type of dichotomized perception does not simply belong to African Americans experiences. Rather, the point is that the

microaggression works idiosyncratically across various demographics. The intensity here revealed is based on the individual subject and not a determinant categorical scheme of *what is and is not perceived* in a more unifying and encompassing scheme of reality. It is simply one of a multiplicity of particulars contrasted in a personal order of perception, namely, in propositions that were highlighted in order for it to be uniformly or systematically indicated as such. The predicate (i.e., race-based, gender-based, sexual-orientation based, disability-based, class-based, etc.) personally ascribed to the subjective form is part of the intensity that invariably ends up qualifying the character of the microaggression. As we have saw in the vignettes, no incident was definitively determinable as a specific microaggression form. It is simply a balanced measure of “valuing up” or “valuing down” the complex form of the personal order by the prehending subject. When viewing these entities separately, it is not hard to see that one either sees the perils of racism as alive and well or as dated and obsolete. Double consciousness, first and foremost, is a racialized consciousness. Today, in its transmuted form, it does not simply belong to the oppressed, but after years of civil unrest and struggles, it is now observable in the oppressors as a white racial frame. Feagin was undoubtedly understood this point because he coined the idea and theorized the concept in a way that reinterpreted Du Bois’s idea from an “outside-in” *style* methodology. The reader has more than likely heard some white Americans insisting on their experiences with reverse discrimination. Thus, we live in a time where the oppressor *feeling* is that he or she denies responsibility or guilt for the dark, bloody horrors of American slavery. Yet, this does not say much about the effects of their unjust enrichment. And the disinherited, it has been often said that they claim a victimology for their lowly conditions. Upon higher levels of consciousness, i.e., persons who rightly prefer of a moral order over and

against the predominance of an excessively aesthetic one, may notice that the oppressor's burden of "[white] guilt," and the oppressed's "racial paranoia" are actually two different sides to the same coin. Given these academic euphemisms, we notice that "guilt" is easier to dismiss than "paranoia," especially given the psychological wages afforded to white Americans in our current society. What is even more troubling is that double consciousness is considered a consciousness "of the oppressed," and the "white racial frame," describes consciousness in white Americans. If we do not insist on illuminating and eliminating the various modes of conflation-ingression contrast that spawn these very dangerous microinvalidating realities, we are failing to efficiently eliminate the reproduction of oppressive systems. Many of these microinvalidations, in large part, have to do with the underrepresentation of marginalized groups' perspectives in essential areas like education.

FURTHER STUDIES

As I have attempted to demonstrate, and as many of us all know, the issue of consciousness is sticky. However, I find it important to remind us that the process that I conjectured above with Jamesian and Balotelli imagery is not consciousness, but rather a conscious snapshot that helps point to an event or what happened from the subject's adjectival perspective. It does create a consciousness. Sue and I both agree on this. But because human beings are conscious, and they do in fact engage in the act of reflection, they will begin to notice microinvalidations more through the inside-out *style* that I am suggesting. It is a reflection and at the same time, it provides an ability to reflect. The question then is: What do you do with the consciousness that it creates? No one helps illustrate this important point of the two styles 'together' in its subjective harmony better than abolitionist and reformer Frederick Douglass

(1818-1895). In his autobiography *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), Douglass sets up an instructive analogy for our concluding thoughts with his recollections of life on the slave plantation. There, Douglass tells us how personal relationships between the slave and his overseer in the era of slavery have served the aim of an oppressive system. In Douglass's view, one was either a slave to the slavemaster or to the slavemaster's proxy. This undoubtedly is an absolutist worldview. However, Douglass tells us about a fight with the slavebreaker, Covey. After Douglass successfully defends himself in the fight, he is transformed (from a brute to a person). As Douglass retells it, "I was a changed being after that fight" (1987: 151). Here, Douglass not only claims his independence and freedom, but he also reveals to us a new form of resistance. Douglass no longer *felt* subject to another's will, for he had discovered in the conflict, a limit to the slavemaster's domination. Douglass had contacted *mental* freedom. With this, Douglass begins to radically reconstruct his thinking. Douglass certainly understood that he was bound *by fact* to slavery, but *in form* he was not. Free of the charges of Du Boisian double consciousness and the seemingly sycophancy of Washington's unwitty submission, Douglass's account serves both extrinsic and intrinsic ends. We see the prisoner move from *a prison* to, one *of what the prisoner sees* in a very subtle manner and intensity. This subtly, or what I have come to understand as a microinvalidation, gives way to considerations of beauty that it does not give to moral law. An aesthetic order is just simply Nazi, Germany all over again. Moral order, however, is binding on all persons at all times. More importantly, moral ends *derive from feeling*.

In sum, a traditional education is an absolutist geometric structure adjusted for, but indifferent to, acts of justice by Douglass's account. Like Sue's methodological *style*, traditional

education is viewed by cultural fact, adjustable by an aesthetic order, and comprised of impersonal surface categories of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. This inevitably takes precedence over a person's talents and abilities. It was not until Douglass defended himself against Covey that algebraic structures of a moral order begin to emerge (just like how and what we come into contact with in the Jamesian and Balotelli conjecture). After the conflictual twoness, Douglass was not only able to reflect after his fight, he was able to redefine persons and limit the oppressor's form of domination.

In an oppressive society, the true slave education—i.e., the wretched and the disinherited of the earth—comes from the “inside-out.” Given this, we penetrate the surface of reality, to the beyond, into the sublimity and depth of our humanity and personhood because, as Douglass shows us: Education is a process. It is a process of unlearning and relearning. But for the oppressed, we must remember it is also a process of relearning and unlearning.

If consciousness is cyclical (which I am arguing that it is), we can get readers to contact *feeling* and reflect on what happened. Through an “inside-out” *style* methodology, may be a useful exercise to consider in psychotherapeutic models. That way, we get people to start contacting the microaggressive moment as *feeling*, and thus— to become more aware of what they feel at that moment and why. When people reflect, they focus on other things like inquiry, difficult dialogues, memory and signification and meaning. With this, we can generate a radical reconstructionist view that can help others resuscitate the suffocation of their *own* identities and, to focus on different response classes of the sociological imagination in a technologically-driven society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. 2nd ed. (New York: The New Press, 2012).
- Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. (New York: Vintage, 1993).
- Bell, Derrick. *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 5.
- Burke, Kenneth. *On Symbols and Society*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).
- Corley, Cherly. "After NAACP Marriage Stance, Discord and Discussion," *NPR*, June 8, 2012, advance access online version, <http://www.npr.org/2012/06/08/154522287/after-naacp-marriage-stance-discord-and-discussion> (accessed September 6, 2012).
- Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom*. ed. William I. Andrews (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003).
- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. (New York, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1995), p. 3.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (New York: Grove Press, 2008).
- Feagin, Joe. *Racist America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010).
- Gooding-Williams, Robert. *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-modern thought in America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 66-95.
- Jackson, John L. *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness*. (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2008), p. 81-109.
- Jones, Brent. "LeBron James' 'Vogue' Cover Called Racially Insensitive," *USA Today*, March 24, 2008, advance access online version, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/people/2008-03-24-vogue-controversy> (accessed October 17, 2012).
- Mills, Charles. *Blackness Visible*. (London, Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 10.
- Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eyes*. (New York, Pocket Books, 1972).

Patterson, Thomas E. *We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

Poggioli, Sylvia. “ ‘Super Mario’ Challenges the Idea of Who’s An Italian,” *NPR*, July 7, 2012, advance access online version, <http://www.npr.org/2012/07/07/156306806/super-mario-challenges-the-idea-of-whos-an-italian> (accessed October 8, 2012).

Schrager, Cynthia D. “Both Sides of the Veil: Race, Science, and Mysticism in W. E. B. Du Bois,” *American Quarterly* 48 (1996): p. 551.

Sue, Derald Wing. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010).

West, Cornel. *The Cornel West Reader*. (New York, Basic Civitas Books, 1999).

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality*. (New York, The Free Press, 1978), p. 23-25.

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MICROAGGRESSION THEMES

Table 1: Microaggression theme adopted from Sue and Capodilupo (2008)

Microaggressive Theme	Definition
Use of Sexist/Heterosexual Language	Microinvalidation which highlights term that exclude, ignore, deny, negate, neglect, invalidate or degrade women and LGBT individuals.
Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism	Closely related to the theme of colorblindness, this microinvalidation is a form of abnegation which involves an individual's denial of personal association with racism, sexism, and heterosexism
Myth of Meritocracy	This theme asserts that race, gender, and sexual orientation are not seen as inhibitors to one's life world chances or successes.
Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles	This microinsult works under the belief that cultural styles of White, male, and straight groups are normative and that people of color, females, and LGBT individuals are somehow abnormal. It sends metamessages to assimilate and acculturate, while devaluing other cultural values.
Second-Class Citizen	Second-class citizenry is a microinsult that contains an unconscious message that certain groups are less worthy, less important, less deserving, and are inferior being that they deserve discriminatory treatment.
Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping	This occurs when expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes are conveyed.
Sexual Objectification	Sexual objectification is the process by which women are transformed into "objects" or property at the sexual disposal or benefit of men.
Assumption of Abnormality	This theme is related to the perception that something about a person's race, gender, sexual orientation is abnormal, deviant, and pathological.

APPENDIX B: MICROAGGRESSION PROCESS MODEL

Table 2: The Microaggression Process Model as proposed by Sue (2010)

Domain	Explanation	Example
Phase 1: Incident	An event or situation experienced by the participant	Verbal Nonverbal/Behavioral Environmental
Phase 2: Perception	Participant's belief about whether or not the incident was racially motivated	Responses reflect: Yes/No/Unsure, Questioning
Phase 3: Reaction	Participant's immediate response to the incident	Healthy Paranoia Sanity Check Empowering and Validating Self Rescuing Offenders
Phase 4: Interpretation	The meaning the participant makes of the incident, answering such questions as: Why did the event occur? What were the person's intentions?	You Do Not Belong You Are Abnormal You Are Intellectually Inferior You Are Not Trustworthy You Are All The Same
Phase 5: Consequence	Behavioral, emotive, or thought processes which develop over time as a result of said incident.	Powerlessness Invisibility Forced Compliance, Loss of Integrity Pressure To Represent One's Group

VITA

JUAN THURMOND

913 Chickasaw Drive Oxford, MS 38655 (618) 305-5830 jthurmo1@go.olemiss.edu

EDUCATION

B.A., Psychology, University of Mississippi, August 1997

A.A., Paralegal Studies, University of Mississippi, May 2006

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Assistant, 2010 – 2011

University of Mississippi

Course: Introductory Sociology

Teaching Assistant, Spring 2012

University of Mississippi,

Course: Race & the Criminal Justice System, Introductory Sociology, Teaching