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Shadowed by the Veil of the Colorline: An Autoethnography of a Teacher of Color at a Catholic Predominantly White Institution (CPWI) in the United States

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Abstract

Findings from a case study autoethnography are reported. Catholic education in the United States remains predominantly white demographically. While efforts have been made to address this issue from a student standpoint, more attention is required on racially diversifying the faculty and staff. In order to achieve this, voices of color and their stories must be included in the dialogue. The researcher (also the subject) recalls his first year of teaching at a Catholic Predominantly Catholic Institution (CPWI) over two decades ago in this autoethnography. The qualitative data is analyzed through a critical race theoretical framework based on the work of W. E. B. DuBois.

Introduction

“How does it feel to be a problem?”¹
W. E. B. DuBois

The dialogue on race in America, framed initially within the black and white divide, has expanded to include other people of color—most notably Hispanics/Latinos and Asians. This is due to the demographic trends projecting Hispanic/Latinos to be the majority ethnic population in the United States by the middle of this century, and to the fact that Asians are currently the largest immigrant population immigrating to the United States.² Since the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which eliminated immigrant quotas coming to the United States, the dialogue on race has gradually begun to include more racial and ethnic groups; these groups had been previously subjected to either Ellisonian invisibility or were “Orientalized” into a monolithic group.³ Despite tremendous advancements that have enabled greater inclusion and equity in America, there remains a veil or colorline between the experiences of white people and people of color as characterized by W. E. B. DuBois in the late 19th century during the time of racial reconstruction in America, which followed the Civil War and the elimination of slavery.⁴

Dr. Martin Luther King once referred to Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock as the most segregated hour in America due to segregated church services

taking place all over the country. This theme continues to resonate in American Catholic education. The majority of American Catholic schools remain predominantly white.⁵ While Catholic education is allotting greater resources in recruiting and retaining students of color, just as much investment is needed to recruit and retain teachers of color. The experiences of the few teachers of color working in Catholic Predominantly White Institutions (CPWI) is the focus of this study.

Using the qualitative method of autoethnography, the researcher traces his first year teaching at a Catholic Jesuit high school focusing on both personal journal reflections as he was going through this experience in real time and then analyzing those same entries decades later. This autoethnographic study utilizes a critical race theoretical framework based on W. E. B. DuBois' concepts of the veil, the colorline, and double consciousness as they apply to issues of race in the United States. This study looks to explore the following questions:

- What insights can be gleaned from the experiences of the researcher in his first year teaching and/or being underrepresented in a CPWI?
- What insights can be gleaned and can inform CPWI institutions and the

researcher himself in working with first year teachers of color?

- What insights can be gleaned by both the CPWI institutions and the researcher in moving forward on racial justice issues in American Catholic education, particularly as it pertains to structural racial diversity within these institutions?

Methodology

The purpose of this article is to explore the personal experiences of the researcher during his first full year teaching at a CPWI, which in this instance was a Catholic Jesuit high school located in an affluent suburb of a metropolitan city in the United States. The experience encompasses a school year, beginning with the researcher moving across the country to take this teaching position, officially beginning in August and culminating the following July with his selection as the school's second diversity director in the history of the institution. He would succeed another person of color considered a pioneer and legend of the school, who previously had been part of the institution for several decades as a student, athlete, teacher, coach, and diversity director.

Autoethnography

The methodology for this study is autoethnography. Autoethnography is a process used to analyze cultural experience through memoir and autobiography. It presumes that research is not neutral or objective, but political and subjective.⁶ This technique has postmodernist origins that rose in prominence in the late 20th century, advocating for more socially just, political purposes. Autoethnography combines aspects of ethnography and biography to record personal experiences retrospectively.⁷ This methodology provides the researcher the opportunity, in hindsight, to recall experiences and moments that provided insight to a particular cultural context, experience, or phenomenology. Autoethnography uses the subject's own words to tell his or her own stories, which is an important aspect of critical race theory that emphasizes the importance of sharing narratives directly from people of color in their own words.⁸

Autoethnography presents a researcher's personal experience that characterizes and depicts certain cultural practices, beliefs, rituals, and situations through a unique lens (in this case, an underrepresented person of color) to shed some light on a particular social justice cause. In this study, autoethnography combines researcher reflexivity with thick descriptions of his experiences balancing intellectual and methodological rigor seeking to address three emergent elements in scholarship:

- To introduce new, evolving ideas about what constitutes research and data while simultaneously acknowledging the limits of scientific quantitative data, which can overgeneralize ignoring the specific context detailed data that qualitative, narrative data can capture.
- To take into careful consideration the ethics and polarization of research avoiding the mythology of objectivity of the data and impartial bias of the researcher by focusing on reflexivity.
- To take into careful consideration the importance of social and cultural identities and their possible roles in research.⁹

All three of these aspects are critical to conducting research on issues of diversity, inclusion, and racial justice form a critical theoretical perspective. Autoethnography is qualitative research used for the purpose of collecting nuanced, complex, data in a specific research space. The benefits of this methodology are that it points out the limits of scientific, positivist knowledge by connecting the personal to the larger contextual conversation. It stresses the importance of story-telling and narrative while being acutely aware of the ethical implications of the research.¹⁰

Why Autoethnography for This Study?

Autoethnography ensures that the actual voice of the person or the main subject in the study is included in the data collection. In too many instances, abstract theorizing or intellectualization takes the place of actually including the subjects voices themselves. These important voices are limited muted by attempts to represent. This has a profound effect in environments where certain

voices are severely underrepresented. Attempts to speak on people's behalf about their personal, intimate experiences is counterintuitive to issues of justice and compromises the subject's personal agency. In these instances, the data findings and conclusions become vulnerable to overgeneralization and monolithic tendencies.

Epiphany in Autoethnography

Epiphany represents ruptures or interruptions in one's daily life characterized by ethnographic data. They represent life-changing, life-altering events that transform a person's worldview. According to Denzin, there are four forms of epiphany. These forms include the following:

- A major epiphany event that touches every aspect of a person's life and the reaction is instantaneous.
- The representative or cumulative epiphany that produces a strong reaction to an event, but that strong reaction is representative of a series of events that have taken place over a period of time.
- The minor epiphany that is mainly symbolic representing a major reaction to a moment.
- The relived epiphany which is the term given to strong reactions that arrive upon looking back a previous event thus a reliving of it. The data results will be presented as epiphanies accompanied by analysis.¹¹

Reliability and validity are defined by each autoethnographer. Reliability is about the credibility of the researcher and the narrator in who they are within the narrative they are revealing. The truthfulness of the account and the intention of the narrator are key aspects in determining reliability. Both of these are critical, but there is also a realization that different versions of a story come from different perspectives. Being aware of the perspective of the reflexivity of the storyteller is important in qualitative research. Reflexivity seeks to reveal the perspectives and/or personal experiences a storyteller is bringing into the qualitative study. For this study, the reflexivity of the researcher is important in addressing the aforementioned questions, which is why it is chronicled in depth in

this study prior to presenting the ethnographic data results and analysis. It is also important to note that the author kept a daily journal throughout this time period, for personal rather than professional reasons. This journal served as a resource in terms of recall and recollection of events that took place decades ago.

Researcher/Subject Reflexivity

The researcher of this autoethnographic study is also serving as its main subject. Therefore, reflexivity is important in the study to give the reader a thick detailed description of the author/subject's positionality to the themes and issues explored in this study. For this study, reflexivity was framed in two ways: the researcher/subject's life as a student and as an educator in Catholic Jesuit education. In the upcoming sections to minimize confusion, the research/subject will be exclusively be referred to as the "subject" and the data analysis will be presented with the subject in first person form.

Life as a Student in Jesuit Education

The subject of this autoethnographic study is a product and proponent of Catholic education; he was born and raised in the Catholic faith tradition. The subject is also a first-generation American, whose family is from India. His father was initially Hindu, and upon meeting his mother became an adult Catholic convert. His mother was born and raised Catholic all her life in south India. Despite initially being a Hindu, it was the subject's father who introduced him to Catholic Jesuit education beginning with high school and continuing through college and graduate school at institutions throughout the United States. All of these Catholic Jesuit institutions instilled within the subject a devout Catholic religious faith linked to maximizing one's potential and utilizing it to help make the world a better place. First from his parents and then through Catholic education, the subject has always retained a strong sense of Catholicism and a passion for studying this faith theologically and philosophically; this led him (at the strong behest of his mother) to attend Catholic educational institutions all his life. It also led him to minor in theology for his undergraduate work and acquire a Master's Degree in Religious Education. In between these

degrees, he took a gap year volunteering at a Catholic Jesuit high school teaching theology and coaching basketball. This experience left an indelible impression on him and a strong desire to pursue a career in Catholic education, and specifically Catholic Jesuit education.

The Catholic Jesuit institutions the subject has attended and worked at have all been CPWIs. The subject struggled with this tension early in his childhood. He originally attended first grade at a very Catholic racially diverse grade school in Bronx, New York before switching to another Catholic school in Des Moines, Iowa where he was the only person of color in the entire Catholic school. He and his parents tried to ignore this fact at first since everyone around him appeared to be doing the same. This had the effect of both deemphasizing his identity as a person of color, while also embracing the ecumenical spirit of the Church. Friends and colleagues supported this endeavor most of the time, particularly in a Catholic context, but every once in a while there would be a painful reminder that the subject was different or stood apart from his majority white contemporaries. In childhood, much of what he recalls has to do with the intentional mispronouncing of his name by teachers who would not even bother to find out if they were pronouncing it correctly. This happened so frequently it got to the point where he even considered using his saint name, Joseph, as a substitute though he never followed through on this. As a young adult, the subject tried to ignore these instances, but painful reminders persisted. Early on, the subject did not know how to articulate or characterize these feelings of cultural dislocation and grappled with these issues without any real context. The subject's conception of racism at this point was an all-or-nothing framework. He did not have the ability to grasp the complexity and textures of what was happening. Nonetheless, the subject was a person of devout faith and wanted to teach at a Catholic, Jesuit high school.

Life as an Educator in Jesuit Education

When the subject began his first full-time job teaching theology at a Jesuit high school, he was one of three people of color working in the entire institution at the time: one Asian, one Hispanic,

and one African American, with the latter serving as the diversity director of the institution. All three would become confidants and advocates for each other in the years to come at the institution and beyond. The diversity director, who had been at the school for over forty years, would be an important mentor for the researcher. At the end of the first year of teaching, the researcher would succeed this person as diversity director of the school, which became a tipping point that accelerated a personal awakening for the subject and influencing the future trajectory of his life.

Catholic social teaching and specifically the social justice vision of Pedro Arrupe, S.J. have textured the researcher's characterization of social justice. Specifically, he is struck by the complex role that Catholic evangelization plays in social justice work, given its colonial, culturally oppressive history.¹² The subject grappled with these complexities constantly, attempting to make them coexist with his strong Catholic faith.

Scholarly Significance

The significance of this article is to provide a venue for public dialogue among people of color who wish to share their personal experiences working in CPWIs and build a community of solidarity. It also gives a unique opportunity for white people and people of color working in Catholic Jesuit education to "lift the veil" by sharing and listening to these personal experiences in order to learn more about the reality regarding issues of inclusion and racial justice at CPWIs.

This study sought to utilize autoethnography as both a model for narrative sharing as well as an invitation for the few people of color, who have chosen Catholic education as their vocational calling, to speak their own truth, encouraging empowerment in the process. The CPWIs who are trying to make Catholic education more diverse and inclusive will benefit from learning more about the complexity and depth of these issues faced by their culturally diverse contemporaries. Underrepresented communities are regularly discussed and talked about in Catholic Jesuit education, but given the very low numbers of people of color on most CPWI staffs, it can be challenging to garner direct feedback from them. Scholars, academics, and educators

coming from underrepresented communities are very important in CPWIs given the overall changing student demographics and the growing need to recruit and retain this population in CPWIs. It is also important that story sharing take place among people from underrepresented communities who feel alienated or isolated in their work. The significance of this study is not to provide simplified conclusions and analysis of the narrative provided, but on the contrary to invite educators to dialogically explore the complexity and richness of these experiences. The goal is not to deny or celebrate the tremendous progress that has been made by CPWIs since the researcher's first year of teaching nor is it to judge or critique ongoing efforts being made. The purpose is to emphasize the importance of articulating and sharing these experiences to present the unique challenges that people of color face in CPWIs.

Ongoing dialogue on issues of racial justice cannot be defined solely based on the concept of racism, but rather must delve into other aspects, such as racialization, othering, tokenism, intercultural/intracultural dynamics, cultural hybridity and other integral concepts. Along with having a more thorough conceptual understanding of the complexity of race, it is important to be familiar with the historical context in which they exist as CPWIs. None of these issues can be addressed without the historical, cultural context; these issues do not exist in a vacuum. All of this is to ultimately determine in Catholic Ignatian terms "a way of proceeding" when it comes to issues of race in Catholic Jesuit education.¹³ The goal of this autoethnographic study is avoid placing conclusive judgements on the situations depicted here (i.e., racist or not racist). Moreover, this autoethnographic study is the experience of only one person of color working in a single Catholic educational institution more than two decades ago. This study seeks to emphasize the importance of these narratives for insight, greater empathy, and awareness to the challenges of these issues of race both for the person of color as well as for those who interact with him or her within the cultural climate of the CPWI institution.

Literature Review

American Catholic Jesuit Secondary Education

The Society of Jesus, more commonly known as the Jesuits, is the largest Catholic religious order in the world. The Jesuit mission has always consisted of transforming the world for the purpose of Catholic evangelization utilizing cultural inclusion, diversity, and social justice. One of the key reasons why Jesuits have been in the epicenters of both Catholic education and Catholic social teaching is their unique, innovative mission as a Catholic religious order of engaging the complexity of the culture rather than seek to avoid it.

The problem space for this study is a Catholic, American Jesuit high school. Catholic Jesuit high schools in the United States are CPWIs—primarily run, led, and sustained by white people.¹⁴ This lack of diversification becomes more apparent higher up the chain of hierarchical power in terms of administrative leadership.¹⁵ Including the Cristo Rey schools, 14% of the faculty at all American Catholic Jesuit high schools are people of color, 7% of assistant principals are people of color, and no nonclergy people of color are presidents and principals at the time of this study. In terms of women, the numbers are a bit more promising with 37% of the faculty and 28% of assistant principals being female. Data was also presented indicating 19% of the principals are women, and of the 59 Jesuit high schools in the survey, two have women presidents.¹⁶ The lack of diversity among staff in Jesuit high schools further decreases therefore, as the level of power goes up indicating symptoms of white male privilege. The majority of people of color in administrative positions serve as the diversity directors of their institution.¹⁷

There are close to 60 American Jesuit high schools, with 27 recognized as Cristo Rey Jesuit High Schools.¹⁸ All of these schools served diverse populations in terms of not only race but also economics, but this changed in the middle of the 20th century as America's cultural dynamics began to shift. In the 1960s, spurred on by the policy changes prompted by the Second Vatican Council, Jesuit secondary educational institutions that once

employed only Jesuits (who required no salaries or compensation) now looked to the laity (non-clergy) for human structural support. They needed the laity (non-clergy) to lead some of the apostolates and take on a more active role in the Jesuit mission. This shift required not only extensive training, but also involved a salary. As a result, previously fully endowed education was forced to charge higher tuition to cover their operational fees. For Jesuit high schools to maintain their prestige and cultural influence to sell their brand, they had to raise their tuition costs and expand their infrastructure.¹⁹

Consequently, the Jesuits began to charge higher rates of tuition and thus began excluding many families who no longer could afford a Jesuit education. As a result, many American Jesuit high schools transitioned to catering to—and becoming part of—a more affluent and therefore more white constituency. During this transition, many of the Catholic Jesuit high schools began to move, along with a large portion of the American population, to the suburbs, including places like Chicago, Denver, and St. Louis.²⁰

While some Jesuit high schools did not necessarily leave their urban locations, they started to recruit students from the wealthier suburbs to make the longer commute rather than recruit students in their own locations.

Ironically, while this was taking place in the populations of these schools, the curriculum/pedagogy reiterated social justice values and ideals in the classrooms based on the mandate by Pedro Arrupe and the 34th General Congregation of the Jesuits.²¹ Offices and departments such as service, diversity, and ministry emerged to target specific issues interweaving them into school pedagogy and curriculum. Meanwhile, the institutional practice and operation of these traditional Jesuit high schools began to create offices and infrastructures devoted to economically sustaining these schools: fundraising, advancement, communication, and public relation offices emerged.²²

The Jesuits recognized the trend towards catering to a wealthier, whiter clientele in their traditional Jesuit high schools.²³ They realized they were really lagging behind in terms of structural

diversity in all of its forms—race, ethnicity, economic, gender, and so forth. Jesuit secondary educational leaders grew concerned about this given the Catholic Jesuit mission. They continued to devise ways to address this phenomenon within the curriculum of their schools and within their “modus operandi,” but also sought more innovative approaches outside of their traditional schools. As a result, the first Cristo Rey Jesuit High School opened its doors in the fall of 1996.

The original Cristo Rey was bilingual, co-educational, Catholic, and Jesuit-sponsored; it sought to intentionally serve the Latino community, many of whom had not considered education as a long-term path toward greater economic stability. Many of the Cristo Rey students would be the first generation in their families to complete high school and graduate from college. Soon after, through scalability efforts, Cristo Rey schools formed in the urban pockets throughout the United States. As with the Jesuit Secondary Educational Association (JSEA) now known as the Jesuit Schools Network, a Cristo Rey network was created to oversee all of these schools. All of these Cristo Rey schools targeted at-risk, diverse urban students with the goal of sending them to college where they would successfully persist. The hope was that these schools would address some of the mission concerns within the traditional Jesuit high schools.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

Cornel West simply states that race matters.²⁴ Critical race theory (CRT) is the study of the role of race as an instrument of power and subjugation historically justified, on certain occasions, by the American legal system. CRT is a form of thought that rejects positivist natures of knowledge resorting to dialectical thought and discourses to deconstruct established oppressive status quo norms in order to remedy them to achieve authentic societal inclusion in a more equitable, just manner.²⁵ This dialectic of thought includes exploring historical, cultural, and economic policies that hinder communal inclusion efforts and embed people in oppressive situations based on racial constructs through legal justification basis.²⁶ CRT was a field that originated in the American law profession to examine the social construct of race with American governance and

law. The literature translated legal discourse that viewed the universality of the experience of race primarily through the experience of white people to create legal standards that constrained people of color, thus establishing a normalcy of status quo racism.²⁷ This American status quo racism endeavored to regulate and control the terms of proper thought, expression, presentation, and behavior in society.²⁸ CRT vindicates the experience of racism through and by people of color themselves to be legitimate, appropriate, and most importantly relevant in analyzing the legal system for procedures and laws that fuel racial subordination.²⁹

A theorist of critical race looks at the social reality comprised by the creation and sharing of stories by people of color and therefore providing a voice for it. The recording, collecting, and sharing of these stories provide a complexity within the issues of race that belies monolithic thinking and oversimplification. All of these are goals of this autoethnographic study. Since the legal profession has also been integral in creating and implementing public educational policy in our country, CRT continues to be utilized in exploring the field of education and in this case will be used in looking at Catholic Jesuit education.³⁰

W. E. B. DuBois was an African American Harvard-educated sociologist, theorist, and activist born in 1868, three years after the American Civil War that ended slavery. He was one of the founding members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and taught at several colleges and universities. Much of his theoretical framework on race comes from his book *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, and subsequent speeches and writing that followed. In that book, he touches on the three major themes: the veil, the colorline, and the concept of double consciousness, which form the basis of the theoretical framework used for analysis in this study.

The Veil

The veil of difference that DuBois refers to is what black people and all people of color are born with that represents their separation from the white world. This veil is reinforced by a white world consisting of privilege, power, and primacy as a

tool of subjugation and oppression of everyone else. The veil is meant to indicate to the black person and/or the person of color that he/she is inferior to the white person (often through communicated social and cultural norms, but also reinforced through legal and political systems of the United States). DuBois concluded that this process develops from an early age, alluding to his early childhood when he was often the only black child in classroom settings, and the one question that was constantly communicated to him was: “How does it feel to be a problem?”³¹ Race and racism does in fact exist, no matter how everyone pretends it does not; this veil reinforces and acknowledges the existence of a colorline that contributes to experiences of double consciousness.³² The “veil” is the line of demarcation that W. E. B. DuBois referred to between black and white people also known as the colorline in the 19th century.³³ This veil has expanded not only between black and white, but includes all people of color in their positionality to white people; this is in spite of the changing racial demographics pointed out earlier.

The Colorline

The colorline is the acknowledgment of the major role that the concept of race and racism has played in the societal structures reinforcing the social and racial stratification of the United States. DuBois uses the concept of the colorline to explicitly name this racial divide, pointing out in vivid detail the consequences of this colorline, based on white supremacy. This includes forms of slavery, colonization, coloniality, and privilege as it pertains to the entire populace—both white and people of color. He also predicted that the “problem of the colorline” would define the entire 20th century, manifesting itself in many forms and intermingling with issues such as economics, class, gender, nation-state identities, and other characterizations of mainstream culture. He emphasizes that the existence of this colorline is due to the problem of inequality as it pertains to power and privilege.³⁴ It is the discrepancy of power and privilege that falls along racial lines. While this discrepancy of racial power and privilege has been mitigated in some overt forms, it remains manifested in other ways and must be acknowledged in all settings including CPWIs.

Double Consciousness

DuBois defines double consciousness as one constantly looking at one's self through the eyes of another; it is the preoccupation of a person of color constantly trying to perceive one's self through the eyes of the white person, thus compromising one's own authentic self-identity.³⁵ It is the process by which white society causes the person of color to internalize his/her identity as a polemic choice between two worlds. The first world is the person of color's own original world composed of family, traditional cultural practices, and customs (much of it conceived by the white world as countercultural, uncivilized, strange, and inferior). The second world is the mainstream white world presented and then perceived as civilized, powerful, advanced, and conforming to societal norms. DuBois attributes the cause of this concept of double consciousness to the lack of a true gain of justice and/or power for black people following the Emancipation Proclamation through the Reconstruction period.³⁶ DuBois' work was prescient in predicting this cycle of racial injustice continuing in the 20th century as it did through the era of bigoted Jim Crow and now in the large incarceration rate of people of color in America.³⁷ It is also evident in terms of educational access for people of color in comparison to white people. DuBois advocated for the need for greater dialogue on these complex issues of double consciousness, both inter- and intra-culturally in terms decreasing and eliminating systemic racism through the constant pursuit of racial identity.

Data Results

Introduction

The results were presented in a narrative that provides a specific account of the subject's first year teaching at the CPWI. This includes providing background information as well as an epilogue of some of the aftermath that occurred for the subject after that first year. There were epiphany experiences that stood out and had a major effect on the subject, which will be presented more specifically in the data analysis. The narrative and the epiphanies will be presented in first person form in the words of the subject.

There were several drafts of the narrative data as all the events were chronicled in depth by the subject through journal entries taken in real time. The original narrative, therefore, was significantly longer and has been condensed through several rewrites and coding for some common themes. This process went through several rounds and was completed with three epiphanies being selected. Once selected, the epiphany events themselves went through further rewrites and reflective coding.

Background Context of the Subject

As I interviewed and then subsequently was hired at this Catholic Jesuit high school in the spring before the following school year, nothing about my racial or cultural identity was mentioned at any level of the interview process. I was not asked about it from a personal or professional standpoint. There was a school diversity director, but he was not included in the interview process nor was I introduced to any people of color at the school. No one asked me where I was from, if I had a family, or where my parents were from or lived. These things might have been assumed, or perhaps people were already aware of my background. I, likewise, did not mention it, though I was prepared throughout the interview process in case the topic arose. I remember observing a class during the interview process and noticed two students of color in the class. Up to this point, I had been in CPWIs all my educational life dating back to when I was a student. I was a student of Jesuit education in CPWIs through high school, college, and graduate school at three different Jesuit institutions. The job interview came as a result of a connection that I had at the previous CPWI Catholic Jesuit high school I had volunteered at for a year. I had little concern about being able to coexist in such an environment since I was quite accustomed to it. I thought it would be a similar experience.

New teacher orientation began during the first part of August, lasting approximately ten days. A new Hispanic teacher joined me as well. During the orientation there was no mention of racial or cultural diversity except for one facilitation session conducted by the diversity director of the school. He was African American, the only one at the entire institution at the time. He was a teacher and

coach for over four decades at the school. He was also an alum of the school and a legendary athlete. I remember a remark made by one of the veteran teachers that he was one of “living legends” of the school, which I remember being happy to hear.

As with all new teachers, I was assigned a formal mentor. This mentor was born in the city, Caucasian, younger than I was, and an exceptional teacher/scholar. He had been awarded the teacher of year award by the student body the previous year and would leave shortly to get a doctorate. It would be his coursework that I would inherit as he moved on to teach seniors. While this assigned mentor was helpful in terms of curriculum and did connect me to some of the social life at the school, he was extremely distant. As was becoming an ongoing theme of this first year, there was absolutely no discussion of diversity or even care to ask me who I was, where I was from, and so forth. Consequently, I would discuss theology and classroom issues, but little else in terms of personal life, thus the distance.

It was a distance that I also contributed to as DuBois’ double consciousness in me began to take root. This double consciousness continued with other colleagues and remains to this day. During that first year, if I had personal concerns or challenges I would go to certain people based on their level of expertise and the level of trust in them for that expertise. I would be extremely cautious and well prepared for anything to happen during these interactions. Even the most casual interaction I treated with the utmost care and professionalism. I always felt on stage and for me the private was always the public. This included my wardrobe and overall appearance. I learned the importance of appearance as a volunteer at another Jesuit high school, where an African American who was the Dean of Students was applauded by all as the best dressed person in the building. I emulated that and this was in clear contrast to what I wore off campus in my private life—another form of double consciousness reinforcing the distance or veil. Another example was in going out socially with faculty and colleagues. Initially, I would freely comment on social and political culture in certain social circles outside of work. I quickly realized that these comments could be interpreted in a manner that affected the perception of me in overly dramatic

ways and perceived as arrogant. There was a notion that I was rich and a colleague expressed surprise when he found out I did not own a cell phone at the time. So, I became more cautious in these social settings. For example, when movie and musical tastes were discussed, I remained quiet and restrained when expressing my views, often pretending those that were espoused were familiar or that they interested me. This was all in an ability to feel included on my part, but also to blend in and go unnoticed.

The pattern in that first year of teaching, of no one discussing (including myself) my cultural and racial identity, continued. While race was not an issue in my everyday life, working at the school and interacting with students and colleagues, it was an issue that I was forced to deal with in strange, unpredictable ways. The first major example came at the start of the year, when the activities director and an assistant principal strongly insisted that I become the faculty club moderator of the Multicultural Alliance Club for the school. The club was intended for students of color. I resisted at first and resented this pressure to be the club moderator. A Jesuit priest, whom I had known as a college student, warned me that this was not appropriate and was racially motivated. I agreed with him, but felt powerless to reject it due to the pressure. I was also indifferent enough about it not to fight it too strongly. I wanted to make a good first impression and try to fit into the school. I did not want to create any tension or start any trouble. I also tried to see the other perspective that after all, I was one of only three people of color in the school and they needed someone in this role. So OK, “I am fine with it.” I spoke to the former club moderator, a Japanese woman who had moved on from the school the previous year. I was given her contact information by the activities director and spoke with her for more than an hour. This woman gave me some sound advice not just about the club, but also about the school climate in general. The advice was unsolicited, heartfelt, and uncensored—the first real chance I had to hear an authentic voice that I could resonate with. I really appreciated it then and remain grateful to this day.

Teaching the students went very well for me from the start of the school year and continued throughout the year. The students were respectful,

kind, and funny. The relationships between some of the students and myself would become special and last long after their time at the high school. I taught sophomore theology and helped coach freshmen basketball. I really enjoyed both experiences and my work at the school. Later on that fall semester, I also began engaging the students of color more intentionally through the Multicultural Alliance Club. This happened organically as they just gravitated to me and vice versa. The club meetings would take place once a week during lunch. After trying to have a meeting agenda the first month of the school year, I realized it was more important to allow the students to interact with each other and simply be with each other eating lunch. For me, this social aspect became the basis for having the club rather than creating school programming, in spite of complaints and rumblings from some school officials, which would grow louder in the coming months. As I began socializing with students through the club, I also began to establish a regular routine of socializing with my colleagues. After a few weeks of trying to figure this out, I sat with a veteran group of staff whom I had first met through a close friend (and a former alum of the school). I remain good friends with this group to this day. I found them very genuine, authentic, and down to earth.

From a work and social standpoint, things were settling in nicely that first year, but there were occasional hiccups. The first experience came at the fall parent-teacher conferences when I was sitting next to a female colleague and a school administrator came up to us. The female colleague (for some strange reason) mentioned that the way we were seated next to each other made it look like we were dating. Without any thought, the administrator replied: "Nobody would ever think you two would be dating." While I did not appreciate the comment, I also did not give it too much thought and attempted to quickly move on from it. The female colleague's reaction was to retell this story several times that night and the next few days in a variety of school settings. My reaction was always the same: I tried to not to comment or react at all even though it was embarrassing.

On February 11 of that year it was the school's annual Cultural Heritage Festival. It was the

"diversity" event of the year overseen by the diversity director and a parent diversity committee. Together, they spent months planning for it. It consisted of exotic food and entertainment from various ethnicities, cultures, and nationalities. Since I was the moderator of the Multicultural Alliance Club, it was expected that I not only be there, but also bring the students from the Multicultural Alliance Club (yes, the students of color) to the event to represent. I did as was expected, but nature intervened. There was a major snowstorm on the Thursday and Friday before the Sunday event. As a result, there was no school either day, which made the promotion of the festival difficult. This contributed to lackluster attendance at the Cultural Festival. I did make an appearance with my cultural garb deemed appropriate for the day, but the numbers in attendance did not meet the standards of certain leaders of the school. In any case, the following day I received an email from an administrator to be at an early morning meeting with him and the activities director later on that week. I was concerned about it and had no idea what to expect. No agenda items were mentioned, further exacerbating my concerns. Was I in trouble? Did I do something wrong? I went to the activities director and asked this person about it, who replied that they did not know what the meeting was about either. The meeting took place at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 15 in the principal's office. Both the administrator and the activities director held me accountable for the lack of student attendance from the Multicultural Alliance Club. In essence, there were not enough students of color at the event and the two school officials held me, a person of color and the moderator of the club, responsible. I was also stunned that there was so much concern about the cosmetic appearance of these students of color at this event since the school was a CPWI. I recall tuning out a bit after the first ten minutes of the meeting when I realized it was better for me to say nothing and remain silent (something else that I tend to do to this day in tense situations at the school). I do recall one moment looking away from both of them outside through a window in the office to which the administrator at the time remarked, "I know what you're thinking, (name)." The subject did not remember what he said after that, but did recall thinking, "I am so mad right now I don't

know what I am thinking.... How you could know?"

The activities director and I left the one hour meeting together to go to our respective homeroom classes. After the first period of class on the same day, I went to the diversity director's office and had a sincere conversation with him. The diversity director was unaware of the conversation and was disturbed by what had taken place. He told me to document the series of events including every detail I could recall of the meeting. He then proceeded to have several conversations with the people involved. There was no resolution, other than him reassuring me that everything would be alright. In two days, I told the assistant principal and the diversity director that I would not be the club moderator after the school year. Both were disappointed, yet they understood. My goal at this point was to stay as far away from issues of school diversity as possible, focusing only on teaching theology and coaching basketball; I would not discuss this with anyone else.

After this incident, the diversity director took me more intentionally under his wing and we began what would be a very close relationship. He would be a confidant and mentor for me. We shared a love for basketball and sports in general. He made it a point to check in with me on a regular basis and attended all of my student Multicultural Alliance meetings for the rest of the school year. During one of these meetings, while the students were eating lunch, the two of us and the other first year teacher of color unexpectedly began to have an honest and brutal conversation about race and racism at the school. Certain colleagues were named as having some challenges in engaging with us. This conversation was a revelation for me. What stood out to me was how similar our perspectives of certain colleagues and experiences at the school were—whether it was a look, or other forms of body language, the lack of inclusion in conversations or social events, or a false perception of certain behaviors or opinions—we all shared similar experiences with honest candor. The veil of the colorline was alive and well, but it was gone for this thirty minute period of lunch between the three of us, and I was very grateful.³⁸

A few weeks after this conversation, the diversity director, who was now firmly my established mentor, informed me that he was leaving the school to take another position. I was devastated. I had gained tremendous admiration and affection for this person. My thoughts jumped from him to how I would be able to survive at the school without him. As these thoughts were quickly surfacing, he told me he wanted me to apply for the diversity director position and succeed him. I was stunned. Abruptly, I told him I was not interested at all. I had just been through the debacle with the Multicultural Alliance Club and it had never crossed my mind that I was in any way suitable for the job. I wanted to teach theology and coach basketball, not be a diversity director. He listened intently and said he understood, but told me to at least take a few days to really think about, which I honestly did not.

In the weeks that followed, there were special celebrations and receptions for the departing diversity director along with much discussion about who was to follow him in the position. Names were thrown out—mostly veteran teachers who had been there for over ten years would be applying. During this time, no one suggested that I consider applying for it. With my few new friends, I had casually thrown it out there to get feedback, and none thought it worth considering or gave me an encouragement to apply. Many suggested other names to me as more viable candidates. Up to this point, I agreed with their assessment.

The last day of the school year, one of the most intelligent students in the class remarked that all of the wives of East Indian Hindu husbands would commit suicide should their husband pass away before them. I was flabbergasted with the commentary and proceeded to get away from the subject of theology for that day to ask the student where he learned this. The student replied that he got it from his American History teacher. I tried to convince the student that this was inaccurate, but to no avail. I even sent the student to the library during the class period to research this question. He returned with a more accurate answer more relevant to the 21st century. Later on that same day, the American History teacher came to me and vehemently denied that this was ever discussed in her class and walked away. This last day of class, classes were abbreviated and the

afternoon was devoted to food and games for all the students to partake in. Even though the event was inside, I wore my Ray-Ban sunglasses; I did not want anyone seeing my eyes or any hint of how I felt. After school, I went to the mentor and said that yes, I would apply for the position. The official end to my first year of teaching at the Jesuit high school ended the following week with final exams, yet the application process for the diversity director position was just beginning.

Epilogue

The interview process for the diversity director position proceeded throughout the summer. There were four candidates in total, with me as the only person of color and with the least experience and overt qualifications. Two women and one white man, all veteran teachers, applied for the position. One of the women was the activities director and the man was the varsity basketball coach whom I coached with and considered a friend. The interview process was nondescript and does not stand out in my memory. Following the interview, a few weeks passed. Finally, on a Tuesday morning, I received a phone call from the principal (the same one who reprimanded me for the Heritage Festival fiasco in February) offering me the position. The principal attributed the job offer to the success I had had in the classroom. He and the president of the school offered their complete support of me in the position. After this, one faculty member who had applied for the position called me and left a voice message of congratulations. It was a wonderful, kind gesture and one that I continue to learn from and remember; we became good friends and she would be a confidant for me during my time in this position. We have remained friends ever since. The other two candidates did not have a similar reaction. The basketball coach was very upset. He expressed frustration at the choice and told me I could keep coaching for him, but that our conversations would focus solely on basketball and nothing else. For the activities director, this was understandably a bitter pill to swallow (something I admittedly did not understand fully at the time, but do more so now in hindsight). This person was furious. After avoiding my repeated overtures to meet in person, we finally met in a public place in the school and this person proceeded to berate me loudly, voicing

their displeasure for my selection, my lack of qualifications, and his/her intention to not support me in the position. We agreed to disagree and moved on. After the meeting, a couple of faculty came to me to express their support and advised not taking what she said too much to heart, which I appreciated.

Upon hearing the news from the principal, I was cautiously happy. I knew at that moment that my life would change forever. I did not know specifically how, but I knew and felt what was inside of me, the family I came from, and the place I was working at would all prove to be quite a potent combination leading to a transformative journey. The August before my first year of teaching, my ambitious hopes were to teach theology and coach basketball. This vision now would be transformed. I would eventually coach only one more season, while teaching two or three theology courses for the next four years with my work as diversity director taking the majority of my time and energy, ultimately consuming me. I would leave the high school, burned out, and would work at a university in the provost's office, once again on issues of diversity. I would work for an African American woman who would serve as another important mentor in my life. She would encourage me to pursue a doctorate in educational leadership, while teaching me how to lead on issues of diversity, inclusion, and community engagement. During this time, I also served on my former Catholic high school's Board of Trustees, where I tried to avoid issues of diversity to avoid being pigeon holed. I wanted to be recognized for the other gifts and talents I had.

After a few years, during which I got married to someone working at the same Jesuit high school, I returned to this same high school to teach theology full-time. Before I made my return, rumors began to surface on my possible return to diversity work. Upon my return, I tried to avoid all issues of diversity publically, serving only as a quiet confidant to the current diversity director. In addition, I continued to do my own research on these issues and CPWIs, including at Catholic Jesuit high schools, and I practiced my own version of activism. At this same school, I was recently named Acting Assistant Principal for Ministry, Mission, and Diversity. In this position, I

will once again attempt to get the institution in to delve into these very complex issues.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the critical race theoretical framework consisting of DuBois' veil, the colorline, and double consciousness in the form of epiphanies that arose from the autoethnographic data. Three epiphanies were selected based on how transformative the experiences were to me, the subject, on both a short-term and long-term basis and in terms of my own racial identity and the concept of race within the CPWI where these events took place. This was based on my initial journal entries composed in real time when the events occurred and were just recently reviewed for further analysis. The analysis is organized into three epiphanies that focused on the impact of working at CPWI, particularly in that first year. It is important to specify that this narrative and the point of view is mine alone. It does not represent the points of views of anybody else and therefore, conclusive judgements or assessments should not be made. It is simply a record and analysis of one person of color's personal experience at a CPWI. Collecting and reflecting on this and other narratives from teachers of color working in CPWIs is necessary in addressing issues of racial justice at these institutions. In the following analysis, the subject will continue to be referred to in the first person and not as "the subject."

Epiphany: The Importance of a Mentor of Color

At the end of that first year of teaching, it became very clear to me that I needed a strong, influential mentor who was a person of color. I did not give much thought to this at the start of that first year, but as the year progressed, I noticed the emergent sophistication in my conversations with people of color colleagues in contrast to my white colleagues. This is not to devalue my white colleagues and friends. There was simply an inability or a lack of perceived safety for me in attempting to articulate and communicate some of the professional and personal complexities in that first year of teaching. Much of this was due to being a person of color and the existence of the veil of the colorline.³⁹ Through building

relationships, trust, and solidarity with my mentor and other colleagues of color, I was able to acquire a deeper understanding of the veil that existed that first year between me and some of my white colleagues. It was a veil that was not overtly racist, but subtly manifested itself in established cultural norms that were not norms to me, but instilled in me a feeling that I needed to assimilate. I felt I had to choose to between either establishing polemics of difference or intentional cultural assimilation within the CPWI, neither of which have much to do with communal inclusion. The emphasis appeared to be solely placed on me, the person of color, to make the decision whether to culturally assimilate or not. Since the CPWI majority did not feel the need or inclination to acknowledge (much less make this choice) it felt incumbent on me to make the choice. Through my conversations with my mentor, I was able to reject this oversimplified choice and chose another direction to proceed. The direction I chose was complex, combining my role as diversity director and issues of social justice, diversity, and inclusion while also incorporating my Catholic faith, specifically through the example of Jesus as a model of hope in addressing these issues of division. I also had to come to terms with the extensive and systemic sexist, racist, and homophobic history of the Catholic faith and institution that I had been a part of since birth. This process of making peace with these paradoxes continues and is an ongoing spiritual journey for me.

This was the first of what would become several mentors of color for me throughout my career at CPWIs, which have greatly benefited me in my professional and personal growth. This particular mentor helped me shed light on the existence of the veil, the colorline, and double consciousness in every day examples and experiences during my first year teaching. Whether it was the aftermath of the incident at the parent-teacher conference or people attempting to hold me accountable for lackluster attendance of people of color at event, he helped me to articulate my reflections on those experiences where there was a dissonance of interpretation of events between me and the CPWI. My mentor also made me realize that I was not the only person of color going through this and that the dissonance I felt was in fact real. I was not at fault or crazy. It was simply the

existence of the veil based on the colorline that needed to be acknowledged by others as well as myself. Not acknowledging this does not lessen the power of the veil or the existence of the colorline. My mentor also reiterated the need for a safe space for people of color to process and the importance of doing reflective processing on a regular basis. I was able to endure by voicing the reality of my experience in a safe space rather than repressing it. Silence is one of the key oppressors in CPWIs, which leads to isolation and loneliness. While this mentor, encouraged me to become diversity director, another person of color mentor would later encourage me to pursue a doctorate, which I did. In an effort to “pay it forward,” I have been a formal and informal mentor to many first year teachers of color over the last few years, inspired by my first mentor during that first year of teaching. At the college I currently work at, I created and lead an annual faculty and staff of color retreat and hope this will continue.

Finally, my mentor showed me how to selectively lower my own veil and thus lessen my tendencies towards double consciousness. It can be mentally and psychologically exhausting to always feel like you have to be “on” or to “represent.” I desperately needed this genuine engagement in a safe space and many teachers from underrepresented populations require this engagement as well. Not all teachers of color in their first year are at the same place regarding these issues and it varies from individual to individual. This simple fact must be acknowledged in CPWIs. For me, it was very helpful to have a mentor of color who could relate, be simply present, and to be able to have these conversations allowing for the space when and if these issues come to the forefront.

Epiphany: Multicultural Alliance Club Moderator

Another pivotal experience for me was being forced to be the club moderator of the Multicultural Alliance when I first arrived at the CPWI, and then being held accountable for paltry numbers of students of color who attended the Cultural Heritage Festival. First, my perceived lack of agency to freely choose to be or not be the moderator of this club, several months before, foreshadowed the unfortunate events to come.

Though I knew there was something wrong with being forced to moderate this club at the time, I did not take it seriously enough. I also could not articulate effectively the reasons why I felt it was wrong at the time. I did not consider the implications that would follow me in my decision not to choose what I wanted to do, but to instead simply go along with being the moderator of this cultural club. My tendencies towards double consciousness and not being honest about how I truly felt was unfortunate in this situation. I also ignored the veil or the colorline that was being perpetuated in this instance. In the aftermath of the Cultural Heritage Festival, for school leadership to be focused on cosmetic appearances and not the actual needs of the students of color at the school further fueled the existence of the colorline. Using a person of color like me as a scapegoat for not having enough students of color for an event was an expression of the veil that existed between me and the white people in the situation. We saw it as tokenism; they saw it as a negative assessment of the club moderator who was not doing their job. That being said, I should have trusted my instincts and listened to those close to me who told me clearly that it was improper at the time. I also needed to learn to better articulate what made these actions improper, namely acknowledging the veil and the colorline that existed rather than fall back to double conscious behavior and trying to perceive how my white colleague would react. However, at the time, I wanted to avoid conflict and simply wanted the situation to go away (again, indicative of double consciousness on my part). At CPWIs, it is not the responsibility of a person of color to “represent” the CPWI community as a display of tokenism, nor is it their responsibility to educate the CPWI community on these issues all the time. As a diversity director, this becomes more difficult to negotiate given the importance of that role in the CPWI. Nonetheless, the diversity director (or any person of color) must give himself or herself the freedom to choose to use such moments as a teaching opportunity for the CPWI, but in a way that retains their own personal agency and dignity rather than at the expense of it.

Epiphany: Social, Informal Situations within the CPWI

During that first year, I felt very comfortable in the classroom interacting with students, coaching basketball, or in structured professional settings with my colleagues. It was the informal social situations, which could be challenging for me at times, when the veil revealed itself and the tendency to resort to double consciousness would emerge. Examples of my tendencies of double consciousness emerged more in these situations because there were no clearly defined rules of engagement; things were more free-flowing for all involved and thus unpredictable. It was in these social, informal situations where my true cultural identity was likely to emerge. I had mixed feelings about this in terms of safety and vulnerability with these CPWI social settings, which usually took place off-campus at someone's house or a bar or a restaurant. These places were usually predominantly white and I stood out. In these instances, I resorted to alcohol to relax myself and ease the tension. In these situations I often resorted to participating in customs (such as playing games) or conversation topics that normally would not have interested me otherwise. Depending on the situation, alcohol also helped me either fuel my mode of double consciousness or to be vulnerable to being often lacking the proper balance.

Examples of the veil and instances of double consciousness continue to be an ongoing struggle for me at the CPWI today. The veil in the form of informal social and cultural practices includes jokes, references to certain types of music and clothes, going out to social places that I normally would not go to, and engaging in social activities I am not necessarily comfortable doing but feel compelled to partake in to feel included or to maintain social capital. Yet, I believe retaining one's personal agency is very important regardless of the power or privilege being exercised. One such example of exercising my agency was to wear my Indian clothes at work when I wanted and intentionally avoiding wearing the clothes on days when others might deem the dress more suitable, such as a "diversity day." When I was diversity director at the CPWI, I always felt conflicted about these situations, but obligated to participate. I am no longer conflicted, and in fact, feel it is an

important position for me to take to stand against cosmetic efforts towards diversity versus those efforts that are substantive. These small examples empowered me and gave me a sense of dignity. In the past, I would get concerned that these situations would result in sacrificing my potential social capital at the CPWI. However, I have learned to rely less on capital and more on my attributes, trusting they cannot be ignored in spite of my lack of social engagement at times within the CPWI. It also requires that I place greater faith and trust in my colleagues and friends, giving them the benefit of the doubt. My wife has been a big assistance in this regard. Of course, this is much easier for me to consider some two decades later, when I have accumulated my own status and credibility to thwart other forms of it thrown at me. This was not the case my first year teaching or the subsequent years in a CPWI as diversity director.

Finally, I have learned that some of these situations at a CPWI are simply not worth expending stress and energy over. It is important for me to trust and depend on allies at the CPWI for support. Two years ago, a sign was posted as a professional goal in our faculty lounge that stated "spicy food smell in the office should no longer be allowed." I was not aware of this sign until the end of the school day, when another person took it down and showed it to the rest of the faculty in the office voicing her anger. She saw to it that it was addressed, and I did not have to do anything. That person was my wife. The point is, I do not have to fight all these issues by myself. Yes, I do have allies whom I need to trust. I am not alone.

These patterns of double consciousness were formed within me during my years teaching at the CPWI and remain engrained in me to this very day. Regardless of how long and how much a part of the school community I have been a part of, there are times when I do not feel a part of the CPWI and I seek to branch out. There remains a conflicted view for me of whether I truly want to be a part of this CPWI community or not. I have learned to live with these paradoxes relying on my Christian faith, my love for Catholic education, my friends, and my hope that the CPWI will continue to slowly make progress on these issues and to gracefully accept this reality.

Conclusions

Findings

For the reasons stated throughout this study, CPWIs are very motivated right now to include faculty and students of color into their institutions. It is in the best interest of American Catholic education and for its long-term sustainability that CPWI institutions become more inclusive and cease being CPWIs. This major paradigm shift must involve having honest conversations on these issues, including the few people of color who work in these CPWIs in this process and at all levels of leadership. These diverse voices must be included and utilized.

From my perspective, as a person of color working in a CPWI, there is a diversity of experiences from people of color working in CPWIs that needs to be tapped into. These experiences need to be chronicled and revealed. This is not only important for CPWIs to garner insight from, but for the few people of color working at these institutions to form community with each other to minimize feelings of alienation and isolation. CPWI need to consider alliance groups and safe spaces for dialogue or having an annual retreat of color that can combine the faith/mission of the institution to racial justice.

This study reveals the tremendous complexity of one experience, but there is a tremendous diversity of experiences among people of color working at CPWIs, therefore there is no simple “one size fits all” answer. The benefit of Catholic education is that there are resources, such as Catholic social teaching that provide support and expertise in addressing issues of racial justice and how to proceed in genuine community engagement with underrepresented populations.⁴⁰ Catholic Jesuit justice organizations such as the Ignatian Solidarity Network are making concerted efforts to be more intentional in addressing racial justice issues not only on macro global scale, but in the day-to-day experiences taking place within their own institutions. The challenge is to link these efforts to CPWI leaders and institutions who are not as well-informed, well-equipped, and, as a result, are simply fearful to address these issues.

There are conversations on racial diversity taking place in boardrooms and leadership rooms all over CPWIs education today. The challenge is there are very few (if any) people of color who are part of this conversation. This discrepancy creates a situation in which people are talking about people of color rather than with them. To counter this, it is important to make an effort to include voices of people of color in these conversations at every level and to bring these stories to life in the hopes of garnering some much needed insight.

There is a history as to why there are so many CPWIs in the United States, which has been chronicled in this study. Perhaps an honest accounting and acknowledgement of the sinfulness of some of these historical efforts needs to be chronicled and revealed for the purpose of reconciliation. Perhaps people of color will then be more open to being a part of these CPWIs and their long-term sustainability. The process has begun at several Catholic higher education institutions such as Georgetown, St. Louis University, and others. This work needs to expand, be more inclusive, and continue within the Catholic high schools as well.

Religion is a complex combination of charity, justice, and evangelization. Issues of diversity and culture have and will continue to be staples of Catholic education. Greater consideration and attention needs to be given to the imbalance in power dynamics and the structural inequalities that existed within these CPWI institutions. Traditional Catholic Jesuit institutions that endeavor to do diversity work still appear to embrace the American meritocratic models that enhance economic inequality, racial stereotypes, and colonial tendencies. This is despite the Catholic social teaching, which seeks to engage and be present with the poor and marginalized.⁴¹ CPWIs require some serious soul searching and reflection on their efforts towards racial justice and inclusion.

Implications for Future Research

The goal of this study was to share a personal narrative in thick textured detail of one’s experience in a CPWI to initiate and provoke a much needed dialogue in CPWIs. These narratives are essential in revealing the complexity of these

issues faced by people of color within these CPWIs. Future research needs to explore the quantitative data in these CPWIs interweaving it with the qualitative narrative data to determine an appropriate strategic institutional way of proceeding towards greater inclusion, diversity, and equitable institutions.

Another goal of this study was to introduce critical race theory (CRT) as a necessary way to explore concepts of racial justice within CPWIs. CRT was introduced in the form of autoethnographic and the work of DuBois, but further delving into these frameworks, particularly looking at Derrick Bell's interest convergence theory and Kimberly Crenshaw's intersectionality, is essential. Bell's interest in convergence theory could deconstruct the motives and incentives behind why CPWIs today are so invested in issues of racial diversity and the justice implications. Crenshaw's intersectionality could incorporate the exploration

of gender issues along with race, exploring the role of women enduring challenges of inclusion and empowerment within a patriarchal, hierarchical Catholic context.⁴² Stories allow for particularity and specificity, rather than universality and generalization. CRT argues for situatedness in viewing these issues instead of universality in terms of politics, legal, and moral analysis.⁴³

When looking at CRT as it pertains to American CPWIs, one must look at the contemporary issues of racial justice in consideration of the history of American Catholic education that contributed to the current CPWI demographics, and set in motion an extensive process of racial reconciliation, including an acknowledgement of transgressions of the past.⁴⁴ This study has proceeded to bring some of these issues of racial justice to light in Catholic Jesuit education in order to work towards this reconciliation process, which is necessary and long overdue for CPWIs. HJE

Notes

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