

A Critical Race Analysis of the Gaslighting Against African American Teachers

Considerations for Recruitment and Retention

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If and when . . . [the Blacks] are admitted to these [public] schools certain things will inevitably follow. Negro teachers will become rarer and in many cases will disappear. (Du Bois, 1960, p. 163)

In a war there must be some casualties, and perhaps the Black teachers will be the casualties in the fight for equal education of Black students. (Ethridge, 1979, p. 220)

Introduction

In the midst of the celebratory advances of the Civil Rights Movement made during the 1950s and 1960s, these two sobering quotes illuminate the toxic effects of institutional and structural racism on the educational and economic vitality of the Black¹ community pre- and post-*Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Their sentiments underscore the seemingly systematic removal of Black educators² from facilitating the positive and healthy development of Black children, and from the teaching profession altogether. This occurred over an extended period of time, in which Black children were forcibly educated by White teachers either in predominantly White contexts, or in predominantly Black, underresourced contexts. Yet, today we are bombarded with news headlines that bemoan the nation's need for Black teachers. News articles and speeches continuously highlight a "search [for] Black teachers" (Brennan, 2011), and describe Black educators as "a tragically endangered species" (Daniels, 2012; Williams, 2012) and "a missing ingredi-

ent” (*Tri-State Defender*, 2009) in public schools. In a speech he delivered at the HBCU³ Symposium at North Carolina Central University Centennial on June 3, 2010 Arne Duncan stated,

Less than 15 percent of our teachers are black or Latino. It is especially troubling that less than two percent of our nation’s 3.2 million teachers are African-American males. On average, roughly 200,000 new teachers are hired a year in America—and just 4,500 of them are black males. It is not good for any of our country’s children that only one in 50 teachers is a black man. (Duncan, 2010).

We argue that it is not good for any of our nation’s children that only 7% of K–12 public school teachers are African American (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). While Duncan’s aforementioned words illuminate the dearth of Black male teachers in U.S. schools, his speech lacks attention to the sociohistorical factors that led to the disenfranchisement, marginalization, and overall invisibility of African American teachers writ large in the profession. In this chapter, we demonstrate how the professional isolation, dismissal, and disavowal of African American educators have worked together to create a false, normalized master narrative about their relationship to the profession of teaching. Throughout our nation’s history—and even present-day—a continual narrative of the limited presence of Black teachers in teaching has served as an abuse tactic to delude the American public into believing that the Black community is solely at fault for the country’s supposed disinterest in successfully recruiting and retaining Black educators into the teaching profession. The lack of realization by those in power that Black teachers’ presence in classrooms benefits *all* children is also a failure to realize that the demographic imperative should be vigorously addressed, because the nation’s student body has become more ethnically diverse. Our argument is grounded in the use of Critical Race Theory, Narratives-as-Identity, and a concept called *gaslighting*, as frameworks to aid in illuminating this manipulation of the American people.

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse where the abuser intentionally manipulates the physical environment or mental state of the abusee, and then deflects responsibility by provoking the abusee to think that the changes reside in their imagination, thus constituting a weakened perception of reality (Akhtar, 2009; Barton & Whitehead, 1969; Dorpat, 1996; Smith & Sinanan, 1972). By repeatedly and convincingly offering explanations that depict the victim as unstable, the abuser can control the victim’s perception of reality while maintaining a position of truth-holder and authority. We propose that a sociohistorical gaslighting against Black educators has yielded a culturally reified designated identity rooted

in rhetoric and practices that presume their (much like that of African American students) undesirability, incompetence, and general lack of interest in and/or commitment to education. We argue that this *designated identity narrative* gets constructed and reconstructed historically and contemporarily by broadly positioning Black educators as outsiders and as unqualified.

In the remainder of this chapter, we demonstrate how macro-level (i.e., *Brown*) and micro-level (i.e., state- and district-level) laws and policies have historically and contemporarily positioned the Black educator as “outsider” and as “on the margins.” We also describe how the normalized master narrative frames Black educators as seemingly “unqualified” in the face of racist practices that perpetuate White supremacy by historically privileging White educators and disenfranchising Black educators. We view Sfard and Prusak’s (2005b) narrative theory of identity through the lens of Critical Race Theory, as a way to argue the deficit master narrative about Black educators’ relationship to the teaching profession. Following this historical analysis, we explore critical considerations of Black and White educators, and present factors that contribute both to the maintenance of unstable learning environments for African American youth, and the perpetuation of defamatory narratives about African American educators. In conclusion, we suggest strategies for inserting critical designated identity narratives into educational discourse, and capitalizing on the proven dedication of African American educators.

Narratives as Identity

Before exploring the historical and contemporary treatment of African American educators, it is necessary to first discuss the two theories that inform the positions we argue: Narratives-as-Identities and Critical Race Theory. Sfard and Prusak co-signed with Holland & Lave (2001) in their consideration of identity as being “man-made and . . . constantly created and re-created in interactions between people” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005b, p. 15). Moreover, Sfard and Prusak (2005b) described identity narratives (collections of stories) as being “reifying, endorsable and significant” (p. 16). Specifically, narratives become reified as they are repeated, endorsable if the identity-builder associates the story with the then-current state of affairs, and significant if the story is central to the identity-builder’s understanding of reality such that any changes to the story would alter how they feel about the person they are identifying.

Within their narrative theory of identity, Sfard and Prusak differentiated between narratives about the “actual state of affairs” (actual identities), and those that address a state of affairs that is “expected to be the case, if not now, then in the future” (designated identities) (Sfard & Prusak, 2005b, p. 18). For the sake of this analysis, we focus on designated identities, in order to illuminate their

normalizing power. Whether designated identities become reified through subtle means, the muting of historical or present realities, or through the deflection of responsibility, we contend that the designated identity which marginalizes African American educators has become so infused in our national discourse that it has become nearly imperceptible in its alteration of reality. Furthermore, we posit that gaslighting against Black educators has allowed for this type of altering to occur. Although educational researchers and school districts could be targeted as (re)enforcers of these “othering” and deficit narratives, our intention is not to place the responsibility for the damaging discourse on any single entity. Rather, what follows is a call for a cross-sectional, critical consideration of the persistent designated identity assigned to African American educators. This call for critical designated identities is reflective of Sfard and Prusak’s (2005a) own declaration of designated identities’ rather nebulous origins:

Like any other story, it [the designated identity] is created from narratives that are floating around. One individual cannot count as the sole author even of those stories that sound as if nobody has told them before. To put it differently, identities are products of discursive diffusion—of our tendency to recycle strips of things said by others even if we are unaware of these texts’ origins. (p. 46)

It is our intention to not only discuss the dangers of uniformly accepting designated identities, but to (re)introduce “strips” of knowledge about African American educators that, when woven into the fabric of discourse, can lead to a more intricate and complicated tapestry of reality.

Speaking Back to Designated Narratives

In this analysis, we take up the challenge of extending the notion of designated identities by calling their very nature into question. We are not of the opinion that designated identities, as described by Sfard and Prusak, do not exist; rather, that they have the ability to alter the collective understanding of the masses while oppressing a selected few for the purpose of diminishing or altering narratives that could significantly change the way the identified are viewed. Although we recognize the ability and desire of individuals to act on their own behalf as participants in their identifying discourses, the actual ability to “play decisive roles in determining the dynamics of social life and in shaping individual activities” is often curtailed by the stratifying structures, beliefs, and practices of any given society (Sfard & Prusak, 2005b, p. 15). If indeed, then, individuals have great difficulty countering their childhood designated identities, and if “tales of one’s repeated success are likely to reincarnate into stories of special ‘aptitude,’ ‘gift,’ or ‘talent,’ whereas those of repeated failure evolve into motifs of ‘slowness,’ ‘incapacity,’ or even ‘permanent disability’” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005b, p. 18), by extension, col-

lective groups may encounter challenges in refuting uninterrogated and unwarranted third-person identities constructed to portray these groups as weak or as out of touch with the demands of reality.

Likewise, although we agree with the notion that the “difference between identity as a ‘thing in the world’ and as a discursive construct is subtle,” to focus on identifying narratives or “stories as such, accepting them for what they appear to be: words that are taken seriously and that shape one’s actions” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005b, p. 21), could encourage a form of historical amnesia where the oppressive actions of yesterday are divorced from the subsequent narratives as they may appear today. In other words, an uninterrogated acceptance of contemporarily designated identities may render the identified persons or collective groups as unstable, while simultaneously removing the burden of responsibility from the narrators who materially and discursively oppressed them. The case of African American educators is an example of sociohistorical gaslighting, in that the disparaging discourse surrounding their qualifications and commitment to the field of education is generally void of critical considerations about the systematic dismantling of the Black teaching force following *Brown I* and *II*, their continued willingness to work in settings others deem undesirable, and the exodus of White educators from predominantly non-White schools.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) serves as a response to power imbalances protected by the unquestioned acceptance of designated identities. CRT has its foundations in Critical Legal Studies, and began to take noticeable shape from the 1980s with works by Bell (1989), Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas (1995), and Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, and Crenshaw (1993). At the forefront of its critiques of *Brown*, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, and more contemporary social ills, CRT asserts that racism is “normal, not aberrant, in American society,” such that its political, economic, and educational practices that structurally advantage Whites are barely perceptible (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). As such, CRT utilizes historical analyses and the voices of marginalized people of color to provide counterstories to master narratives shrouded in meritocracy, colorblindness, liberalism, and race-neutral policies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, CRT’s focus on counterstories and antiessentialism allows us vehicles by which to argue for the complex personal and professional experiences of Black educators over time as impacted by racism. It also creates an avenue for a move away from a single story that can depict their entrance into and dissipating presence in the teaching profession. Thus, CRT and Narratives-as-Identities both promote narratives as important parts of individual and collective identities. The use of CRT as a part of our call for a more critical, nuanced understanding of Sfard and Prusak’s Designated

Identities is appropriate, given CRT's recognition that a common occurrence in discussions about race is a tendency not only to render the complex simple, but to disregard the historic conflict in which it was spawned. This amnesia may not be deliberate, but reflects the ordinary narcissism of each generation, or the worry that dwelling on the past may inhibit our ability to move beyond it (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Sanctioned Discrimination and Designated Identities

Mainstream U.S. White Americans have, at different times, to varying degrees, and in multiple ways, either been the perpetrators or victims (explained later in the chapter) of gaslighting around the legitimacy and very presence of African American teachers. Through the establishment and enforcement of a dual school system that geographically marginalized African American teachers to all-Black schools, a designated identity was created that positioned African American teachers to be as professionally and socially distant and "othered" as the neighborhoods in which they worked. Professionally, the dual school system situated Black educators as best suited to teach Black youth, in accordance with the country's historical tradition of maintaining a separation between White and non-White races. This specific structuring of the educational system reinforced the "natural order" of segregation by both marking and confirming that Black teachers were singularly qualified to, and thus should, teach students that looked like them. Consequently, the lived possibility that African American teachers were professionals in the same right as White teachers, and that they, too, could effectively educate White children was one that was legally denied. The enforced designated identity of African American teachers as professional "others," then, was a practice in sociohistorical gaslighting, because the effective hiding of African Americans from the schooling of White Americans supported the notion of the educators' social incompatibility and questionable professional status.

With the greatest legal threat to the dual school system on the horizon, the ideological, social, and legal conditions that fostered the gaslighting against African American teachers were also facing a perilous future. A poignant example of how the *Brown* decisions posed a threat to the designated identity of African American teachers can be seen in a 1953 letter written by Wendell Godwin, then the superintendent of Topeka's public schools, to Miss Darla Buchanan, an African American teacher in the same school district. The letter, written just over a year before the Supreme Court ruled on the *Brown* case, in part stated (quoted in Tillman, 2004, p. 280):

If the Supreme Court should rule that segregation in the elementary grades is unconstitutional our Board will proceed on the assumption that the majority of people in Topeka will not want to employ negro teachers next year for White

children. It is necessary for me to notify you now that your services will not be needed for next year. This is in compliance with the continuing contract law. . . . You will understand that I am sending letters of this kind to only those teachers of negro schools who have been employed during the last year or two. It is presumed that, even though segregation should be declared unconstitutional we would have need for some schools for negro children and we would retain our negro teachers to them. I think I understand that all of you must be under considerable strain, and I sympathize with the uncertainties and inconveniences which you must experience during this period of adjustment. I believe that whatever happens will ultimately turn out to be best for everybody concerned.

A generous reading of the letter would suggest a cognitive dissonance on the superintendent's part concerning the appropriateness of Black teachers being at the helm of a classroom of White students. A closer, more critical reading would render Godwin as an executor of the gaslighting project that restricted African American educators to the margins of proper society. Godwin justified the nonrenewal of Ms. Buchanan's contract, not based on her qualifications or professional outcomes, but rather, because "the majority of the people in Topeka" believed that although the color of her skin made her an undesirable teacher for White children, she remained an ideal teacher for Black children. Ironically, even though Godwin declared that school segregation should be declared unconstitutional, the idea that African American teachers had as much of a legal and moral right to maintain their professional standing in those same, would-be desegregated halls was unconscionable, and was a notion that he, by virtue of the preference of other White Topekans or his own volition, did not support.

While Godwin's letter can be considered a local historical artifact simultaneously representative of White Americans' rhetorical ambivalence concerning desegregation, and of the designated identities used to support the gaslighting project to ideologically and physically maintain the segregation of African American teachers from White students (and by extension White society), the scope of the gaslighting project can also be seen at the federal level. In his policy statement, *School Desegregation: "A Free and Open Society,"* President Richard Nixon (1970) invoked the *United States v. Montgomery County Board of Education* (1969) decision when he stated:

Pupil assignments involve problems which do not arise in the case of the assignment of teachers. If school administrators were truly color blind and teacher assignments did not reflect the color of the teacher's skin, the law of averages would eventually dictate an approximate racial balance of teachers in each school within a system. (p. 16)

Segregation of teachers must be eliminated. To this end, each school system in this nation, North and South, East and West, must move immediately, as the Supreme Court has ruled, toward a goal under which 'in each school the ratio

of White to Negro faculty members is substantially the same as it is throughout the system. (p. 21)

Nixon's public stance on the desegregation of the country's teaching force is further evidenced in a *Chicago Tribune* article that announced his administration's \$3.2 million funding provision to retrain 1,500 African American teachers that had been demoted or fired ("U.S. to Aid Black Teachers in South," 1970). However, Nixon's sympathetic words and gestures take on a different tone when one attempts to square them with his opinions about African American educators expressed during a private conversation, and the details surrounding the funding. Although Nixon's policy statement on school desegregation officially positioned him as favorable to the desegregation of the nation's teaching force, he claimed in a 1972 Oval Office conversation that,

Black children are not equal to white children and black teachers are not as good as white teachers. Now goddamn it, that happens to be the truth. So why the hell do you [buck?] against the truth. Isn't that the problem? Now you can't tell them that. That's the problem. (Nixon, 1972)

In the same conversation, the former president went on to say that "racial equality is something that is a figment of the imagination" (Conversation 685-003, 14 March, 1972, Miller Center Transcript). This not only counters his statement on desegregation, but also his 1969 inaugural address, when he stated:

No man can be fully free while his neighbor is not. To go forward at all is to go forward together. This means black and white together, as one nation, not two. The laws have caught up with our conscience. (*Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States*, 2001, p. 136)

Nixon's careful crafting of public, political speech to either garner public support or to avoid the condemnation of his fellow Republicans (for a discussion on Nixon's use of the Southern Strategy and school desegregation, see Friedman and Levantrosser, 1991) is not unique to him, but it does speak to a presidentially sanctioned gaslighting project of intentionally manipulating national discourse for political gain, with the result being the (backdoor) continuation of conditions that supported mainstream, White Americans' designated identities of Black teachers as being unqualified and socially and intellectually inferior.

The aid allocated to help displaced Black teachers is an example of the manipulation of speech and action to avoid criticism while still protecting the status quo—a demonstration of interest convergence through color blindness and abstract liberalism. While the disbursement of \$3.2 million to retrain Black teachers and principals who had been fired or demoted is in direct alignment with Nixon's public speech and nominal support for the desegregation of the teaching force,

the specific channeling of the funds, and the assumptions embedded in the funding goals, are much more closely aligned with his private speech concerning racial equality. Don Davies, Associate Commissioner of the Bureau of Educational Personnel Development, indicated that as part of the aid program “teachers, to be trained at Negro teacher colleges, would get extra or refresher courses in reading, mathematics and English. Many would be trained to teach English as a ‘second’ language, to supplement Negro or Spanish-American dialects” (Waldron, 1969), and that the program “will insure that children in desegregated schools will not be denied an opportunity to be served by educational personnel of talent and experience” (“Fired Black Educators Offered Retraining Aid: Administration Declines to Challenge Negroes’ Ouster in Southern Schools” 1970). Davies’s comments offer a glimpse into how Nixon’s private ideologies around race found their way into the actions of his administration. The program’s assumption that the 1,500 African American teachers chosen to receive the funds were in need of “extra” or “refresher” courses in the core subjects both assumes and suggests that the firings and demotions were the result of the teachers’ insufficient/inadequate training or unsatisfactory work. Furthermore, their preparation to teach English as a “second” language, versus Language Arts, would not only work to maintain the order of White teachers remaining in the “upper” or “standard” courses where they would be more likely to teach White students, but also to confirm the notion that African American and Latino students were (a) linguistically deficient, and (b) most appropriately taught by non-White teachers.

Perhaps the greatest indication that the supposedly benevolent retraining of those 1,500 African American teachers was a gaslighting exercise was the fact that the program failed to account for the root cause for the teachers’ firing or demotions—the racist actions of White individuals and of school districts. Newspapers across the country noted the contradiction between the retraining program’s assumption that African American teachers were losing their jobs based on subpar qualifications, and earlier Senate committee reports by the National Educators Association and reports released by the U.S. Office of Education that the primary cause behind the firings and demotions was in fact racial discrimination (Delaney, 1970; “Fired Black Educators Offered Retraining Aid,” 1970; “Ousted Black Teachers,” 1970). Ultimately, the aid program allowed the Nixon administration to rhetorically feign concern for racial and professional equality while functionally deepening segregation in the ranks of the nation’s teachers and, by virtue of their loss of authority or outright removal, prolonged the delusion that African American teachers were ineffective and undesirable.

The question could be asked: How are mainstream White Americans the targets of gaslighting, when African American teachers were so clearly the ones paying the price of the manipulation (alluded to earlier in this chapter)? Before explaining why African American teachers should be more aptly described as col-

lateral damage in this sociohistorical gaslighting project, a preview of the psychological texts describing the phenomenon of gaslighting (Akhtar, 2009; Barton & Whitehead, 1969; Dorpat, 1996; Lund & Gardiner, 1977; Smith & Sinanan, 1972) may prove instrumental. These texts reveal five basic and recurrent elements of the practice:

The Gaslighter: The person or group who is not only actively manipulating reality but stands to directly benefit from said manipulation. Examples include spouses, romantic partners, psychoanalysts, administrators of health-care facilities, political figures, etc.

The Gaslightee: The person or group whose perception of reality and/or lived experiences are intentionally and surreptitiously distorted through the manipulation of the gaslighter. By virtue of their possessions, influence, presence or absence, the gaslightee represents a desired reward for the gaslighter. Examples include nursing home patients; spouses; patients undergoing psychological therapy; voters; social, political, and economic strata, etc.

The Object(s) of Manipulation: The physical objects or third parties that are manipulated by the gaslighter to distort the gaslightee's touch with reality and lived experiences. Examples include medication, doctors, historical facts, rhetoric, associates of the gaslightee, colleagues of the gaslighter, etc.

The Consequence(s) Experienced by the Gaslightee: The detrimental effect suffered by the gaslightee as a consequence of the gaslighter's actions. The effects can be physical, financial, psychological, or social. Examples include the loss of property, confinement to psychiatric wards, suicidal thoughts, defamation as an insane individual.

Reward(s) for the Gaslighter: The benefits received or experienced by the gaslighter as a consequence of their manipulative actions, and the resultant advantage gained when the gaslightee is disavowed. Like the consequences experienced by the Gaslightee, the gaslighter's rewards can be physical, financial, psychological, or social. Examples include acquisition of the gaslightee's property, the freedom to marry a secret lover, the advancement of a theory, absolution from the responsibility of being the Gaslightee's caretaker, etc.

The texts reveal gaslighting's primary goal to be the acquisition of a benefit through the intentional distortion of facts, objects, people, etc. The objects of manipulation are inconsequential casualties of the gaslighting project, and only serve the purposes of hiding the gaslighter's guilt and providing them with some form of advancement or gain acquired from the gaslightee. Barton and Whitehead coined the use of the term, *gaslighting*, as a form of psychological manipulation in 1969, and provided the example of a woman who became at odds with an administrator of her nursing home facility (see Table 5.1). The administrator, frustrated by the woman's presence, secretly served the woman a laxative, and used

the patient's incontinence to support her request that a local psychiatric hospital admit her on the grounds of her being in a "confusional state" (Barton & Whitehead, 1969, p. 1259). Smith and Sinanan (1972) offered a more complex account of a husband who began an affair with a homeless young woman who had befriended the man's wife. Following the husband's dismissal of his wife's statements to hospital authorities that her children lived abroad (he claimed that the children were deceased), and the discovery that he had written letters to his children that their mother suffered from leukemia and was near death, an investigation by the hospital revealed that the mistress had seduced the man to the point of collusion, and that after being exposed, the woman broke all ties with the husband. In each of these cases, the objects of manipulation (medication, human emotions, perceptions of one's health condition, children, and doctors) are means to an end.

Table 5.1. Corporeal Gaslighting Projects

| | Corporeal Gaslighting Projects | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | <i>Barton and Whitehead</i> | <i>Smith and Sinanan—Project #1</i> | <i>Smith and Sinanan—Project #2</i> |
| <i>Gaslighter</i> | Nursing home administrator | Mistress | Husband |
| <i>Gaslightee</i> | Nursing home patient | Husband and Wife | Wife |
| <i>Object of Manipulation</i> | Medication/ Doctor | Husband's affections toward his wife/ Wife's perceptions of her health condition | His children/ Wife's doctors |
| <i>Reward for the Gaslighter</i> | Absolution of caretaking responsibilities | Stable housing | Freedom to be with the mistress |
| <i>Consequence for the Gaslightee</i> | Committal to a psychiatric ward | Loss of wife/ Referral to a psychiatric ward | Referral to a psychiatric ward |

Barton and Whitehead's nursing home administrator could have opted to alter the patient's food intake, or have given her a water pill in place of a prescribed medication—both of which could have potentially convinced the doctors that the patient was ill. The mistress in Smith and Sinanan's account could have chosen to manipulate the husband's understanding of his health, resulting in his admission to a psychiatric ward. This form of manipulation could have also opened a door for the mistress to find housing. In this instance, too, the specific object or form of manipulation is not nearly as important as the probability that the chosen object would successfully help the gaslighter achieve their selfish goal. In other words, the single greatest value of an object of manipulation lies not in the inher-

ent value, nor in the specificity of the object itself, but rather in its distinct ability, when manipulated, to make the delusion believable, and thus bring the gaslighter closer to their anticipated reward.

Given the need to consolidate schools following the *Brown* decisions, an adjustment in the size and distribution of the nation's overall teaching force seemed plausible. The specific reduction in the number of African American teachers, and the narrative of deficiency advanced through the biased execution of policy protected segregationists' interests and endeared the gaslighters to their support base. Thus, African American teachers were not the targets of the gaslighting project, because in the eyes of the gaslighters, they did not possess the political clout, social advancement, nor professional expertise they sought. For example, John Ehrlichman, Presidential Assistant to Nixon on Domestic Affairs, is credited with urging the segregationist agenda upon then Health, Education, and Welfare Undersecretary, John Veneman, stating, "You know, Jack, the Blacks aren't where our votes are" (Friedman & Levantrosser, 1991, p. 146). Because the Black community did not represent a supportive group of voters, it stands to reason that Black teachers were better suited to be used as a tool to be manipulated in order to gain the favor of other voters. Ultimately, despite the tremendous damage done to the nation's Black teachers, they are not the gaslightees in the sociohistorical project to maintain racial inequities, but a mere object of manipulation, not only because they were aware of the injustices being imposed upon them (Ethridge, 1979; "Ousted Black Teachers," 1970; "U.S. Warned on Firings," 1971; Waldron, 1969), but also because they were considered to be politically expendable.

Consider the clear contrast between Superintendent Godwin's and President Nixon's approaches to gaining the popular support of the individuals whose interests they valued: Godwin used nonhiring to reduce the number of African American teachers, while Nixon used policy statements and funding to purportedly increase the number of African American teachers (see Table 5.2).

In both cases, the employment status of Black teachers functioned as the object of manipulation. Whereas Godwin called upon the collective strength of the designated identities rooted in the presumed objectionable nature of Black teachers to block their employment in desegregated schools, Nixon invoked color blindness to promote the fair entry of Black teachers into all schools, while privately endorsing narratives grounded in justified racial stratification. In both examples, the inherent undesirability of Black teachers was associated not with their qualifications or effectiveness, but with their Blackness. Furthermore, both men were engaging in the practice of gaslighting by concretely and ideologically reinforcing the relegation of African American teachers to all-Black schools, by virtue of popular consent or the supposed natural order of society. In contrast to traditional psychological or emotional gaslighting projects, the sociohistorical gaslighting project, using the marginalization and removal of African American

teachers from public schools to retain a visage of the long-standing separation of races, acted as a manipulative form of interest convergence. It thus awarded its perpetrators social and political support, with the resultant consequence being the deceptive appearance of racial equity, when in fact the progress made toward the protection of civil rights was being covertly stalled or attacked. Ultimately, by actively removing African American teachers, opting to not hold authorities responsible for biased hiring practices, and branding African American teachers as professionally substandard and ill-fitted to teach White children, conditions were created that made the absence of African American teachers normal, expected, and a justified part of the identities specifically designated to them.

Table 5.2. Sociohistorical Gaslighting Projects

| | Sociohistorical Gaslighting Projects | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Gaslighter</i> | <i>Godwin</i> | <i>Nixon</i> |
| <i>Gaslightee</i> | White Citizens of Topeka | U.S.A. Citizens |
| <i>Object of Manipulation</i> | African American Teachers | African American Teachers |
| <i>Reward for the Gaslighter</i> | Retention of support from segregationists | Political support from segregationists/ Documented support for civil rights legislation |
| <i>Consequence for the Gaslightee</i> | Subjection to educational and social environments that foster the continued ideological and professional marginalization of African American teachers | Subjection to educational and social environments that foster the continued ideological and professional marginalization of African American teachers |

In the mid-1980s, a call for the increased presence of African American teachers began to be sounded, and continues even in more recent times (Goodlad & Soder, 1994; Graham, 1987; Irvine, 1988, 1989; Su, 1993); yet in the 2007–2008 school year, African Americans represented only 6.7% of the nation's (public and private school) teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). This obvious imbalance in representation is often laced with deficit-laden narratives, hearkening back to a belief that Black people are less qualified to serve as equal contributors to society. Consider in 1987, the assertion made by the Dean of Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, that

Black teachers can serve that function [role models] only if they are successful (and, for teachers, that means *academically* successful, so that they can, indeed, contribute to the education of the young). If black teachers, as a group, are

substantially and noticeably weaker than White teachers, their effectiveness as role models is dramatically diminished for students—both Black and White. (Graham, 1987, p. 599)

Not only do Dean Patricia Graham's comments indicate a belief that Black teachers conceived of success as something other than academic, that they were not already functioning as role models, they also reflect an apparent belief that Black teachers were not making meaningful contributions to children's education. Furthermore, her comments fail to acknowledge the fact that by 1952, 72% of all Black teachers held a college degree (Fairclough, as cited in Karpinski, 2006, p. 248), and that a national 1964 NEA report indicated that 55% of non-White versus 44% of White teachers had four years of collegiate preparation (as cited in Karpinski, 2006, p. 248). Dean Graham thereby perpetuated the master narrative that Black teachers were academically deficient, in spite of the fact that they have historically earned the necessary credentials at higher levels than their White peers. Ultimately, however, Graham's comments leave gatekeepers such as legislators, university teacher education programs, states, and school districts with "clean hands" in the drastically diminished presence of African American teachers and administrators.

Reintroducing "Strips" of Narratives

Although the underrepresentation of Black teachers is commonly known, it is our contention that what we see today is not an isolated incident to be solely accredited to a lack of competence or interest on the part of Black teachers. Instead, one should also consider historical restrictions to the profession, those imposed upon Black educators, in order to gain a more critical understanding of the state of Black educators.

Keeping this description of Black teachers' qualifications in mind, how was the Black teaching force impacted with the passing of *Brown I* and *II*? Samuel B. Ethridge estimated that between 1954 and 1965 over 38,000 African American educators in southern and border states lost their jobs due directly to the *Brown* decisions (as cited in (Hudson & Holmes, 1994)). Principals received the brunt of the dismissals. Between 1963 and 1970 roughly 50% of Black principals in Georgia were dismissed, and administrators in Kentucky and North Carolina fared worse, as 90% and 95% of their force was eliminated (Karpinski, 2006). Evidence of the resistance to school integration abounds with images of National Guardsmen escorting Black students into schools, and Governor George Wallace standing defiantly in front of a University of Alabama building. Less commonly known are the efforts taken to block Black teachers and administrators from integrating all-White schools. Legislatures and government officials took direct action to prevent this additional form of integration. Civic engagement was

targeted by the Georgia State Board of Education in 1955 when they proposed to permanently revoke the teaching licenses of any teacher with membership in the NAACP (Perkins, 1989). The Alabama legislature in that same year entertained a bill which would have permitted local school boards to fire teachers without proof of justification, and would have blocked those dismissed Black teachers from appealing the decision (Haney, 1978). Fultz addressed the intentional isolation of Blacks from the education profession in his reference to an NEA report stating that the systematic elimination of tenure laws and the nonrenewal of contracts inflicted the greatest damage (Fultz, 2004). Outright resistance continued, and by 1957 some Southern states eliminated state requirements for public education, and passed legislation withdrawing financial support from schools that chose to integrate (Fultz, 2004). What these pieces of legislation reflect is a common, immediate, even preemptory and staunch reaction blocking Black educators from finding employment in previously all-White schools. These intentional and overt forms of resistance to retaining and hiring Black educators were characteristic of institutionally endorsed racism against African Americans, and flew in the face not only of the steadily increasing interest of African Americans in becoming educators, but in their higher levels of qualifications over their White peers.

In spite of the *Brown II* decision of 1955, and, according to Fultz and Haney, in great part due to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and especially the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, integration dissenters gained a stronger foothold in their attempts to dismantle the Black teaching force. On the heels of these landmark acts, the Race Relations Information Center produced a 1970 report exposing the persistent disenfranchisement of Black educators due to three dominant trends:

1. The practice of districts hiring White teachers in significantly higher proportions than Black teachers,
2. The use of the National Teachers Examination as a gatekeeping instrument to disqualify prospective Black educators, and
3. The liquidation of Black principals (Fultz, 2004).

Haney makes a more direct connection between the Education Act of 1965 and Black teachers in his reference to Coahoma County, Mississippi. In this instance, the jobs of Black teachers and aides in Coahoma were reclassified, so as to place their positions under a category funded by Title I monies. The school board then failed to comply with federal regulations governing those newly reclassified teachers, which resulted in the cessation of funding. Even after these teachers were dismissed, they voluntarily taught for the remainder of the year while pursuing litigation against the Board. Ultimately, the Federal court found the Board's actions to be unconstitutional, and ordered that the educators' jobs be reinstated (Haney,

1978). Other successful cases contested teacher dismissal for civil rights activities, and those executed without reasonable “good faith.” The 1970 *Singleton v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District* ruling was extremely direct in its order for “objective and reasonably nondiscriminatory standards” to prevent displaced teachers’ positions from being filled by teachers of another race until all qualified applicants of the displaced teachers’ race had been duly considered (*Singleton v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District*, as cited in Fultz, 2004, p. 32). These victories did not fully abate the tidal wave of Black educators dismissed from their positions; however, the dismissal of Black educators was garnering greater recognition.

The disproportionate dismissal of Black teachers and principals denied these men and women their right to practice their profession and thus make a living. As educators formed a significant percentage of the Black middle class, collectively losing nearly \$250,000 a year (Tillman, 2004) inflicted unspeakable damage on the economic stability of the Black community. Their disenfranchisement also affected Black children, as it was the Black educators who were systematically removed from the decision-making processes governing the “tracking, placement, suspension and expulsion of Black students” (Karpinski, 2006, p. 257). Holmes further explicated the impact on the Black community by attributing a decline in self-esteem and aspirations, and remedial tracking of Black children to the drastic loss of Black teachers after *Brown* (cited in Hawkins, 1994). Although the current state of Black students and educators cannot be completely explained by the aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decisions, the loss of Black educators cannot be denied. Intentional, covert, and systematic efforts against these honored figures in the Black community are indeed shameful, and have had undeniable effects. These statistics and tactical methods indicate that the narrative Graham (1987) used to describe African American teachers in the late 1980s was not grounded within the context of their long-standing legacy of dedication to the profession of teaching, nor did it acknowledge the decimation of the Black teaching force due to White fear and discrimination following the mandates of *Brown I* and *II* to desegregate public schools.

As described by Sfard and Prusak (2005b), designated identities are narratives that represent an anticipated or “expected” state of affairs (p. 18). We propose, however, that expectations (for good or bad) are reached based on individuals’ responses to identifying narratives they have heard, borne, or themselves designated in the past. Therefore, to accept these narratives “for what they appear to be”—without holding the identifying person accountable for critical self-reflection, for investigating their narratives’ origins, and for possibly inflicting harm on the person they seek to identify—will yield damaging repercussions, especially in matters of race (p. 21). Wellman’s (1977) description of racism, in fact, reads like an eerie byproduct of Sfard and Prusak’s defense of narratives as identity. Wellman defined

racism as, “culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages Whites have because of the subordinated positions of racial minorities” (p. xviii). Again, Sford and Prusak asserted that identities are the products “of our tendency to recycle strips of things said by others even if we are unaware of these texts’ origins,” and that they should be accepted “for what they appear to be” (Sford & Prusak, 2005b, p. 21; 2005a, p. 46). This is not to say that designated identities are by definition racist, but that when exercised in racialized contexts with power imbalances, they can become master-sanctioned, uninterrogated narratives that lead to oppression.

The natural consequences for accepting designated identities as they are, include:

1. Stalling the advancement of equity and social justice agendas due to the power of repeated narratives to move from designated to actual identities,
2. Minimizing or ignoring the perpetrators of past injustices, and
3. Silencing those who have been victimized by earlier discriminatory narratives, leaving them less able to call oppressors into question.

In the case of African American teachers, their lack of representation in the field must be narrated in a way that honors their long-standing pursuit of education—even when banned from doing so, prevented from entering institutions of higher learning, or systematically barred from their profession. Failing to do so would allow the gaslighting against African American teachers and their commitment to education to continue, by blaming them alone for the current state of affairs, and failing to take into consideration the fact that they officially and effectively had severe restrictions placed upon them as students and as educators.

African American Educators of Today

Focusing on the sociohistorical marginalization of African Americans from the collective identity of the United States could lead to a more accurate narrative about African American educators but, arguably, may also distract from the urgencies they may be experiencing today. As such, our attention will now turn to more contemporary considerations. The proposed goal of equitable distribution of resources, as represented by the mandated desegregation of U.S. public schools, was premised on the elimination of racially identifiable schools. Table 5.3 reveals that in many ways, the classroom remains a site of racial separation, with Black and Latino students attending school in urbanized, principle cities, and the majority of White students in schools at least 10 miles away from urbanized areas. These urban schools are typically located in residential areas with low tax bases, and primarily educate students of color and those with limited English proficiency. Teachers working at majority Black and Latino schools, and/or large numbers

Table 5.3. Public Elementary and Secondary Students and School Locales: 2007–2008, 2008–2009

| | Total | Ccity, large | Ccity, mid-size | Ccity, small | Ssuburban, large | Ssuburban, mid-size | Ssuburban, small | TTown, fringe | TTown, distant | TTown, remote | RRural, fringe | RRural, distant | RRural, remote |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Black | 16.9 | 30.0 | 29.3 | 19.0 | 15.6 | 10.8 | 10.7 | 8.6 | 13.7 | 10.9 | 12.3 | 8.4 | 7.6 |
| Hispanic/ Latino | 21.5 | 39.6 | 28.2 | 22.9 | 22.0 | 17.7 | 16.4 | 15.5 | 14.6 | 17.3 | 13.9 | 6.9 | 7.7 |
| White | 54.9 | 21.2 | 35.0 | 50.3 | 54.7 | 65.6 | 67.6 | 72.8 | 68.4 | 64.8 | 68.8 | 81.7 | 76.1 |

11) Located inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population of at least 250,000.
 12) Located inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population of at least 100,000, but less than 250,000.
 13) Located inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population less than 100,000.
 14) Located inside an urbanized area and outside a principal city with a population of 250,000 or more.
 15) Located inside an urbanized area and outside a principal city with a population of at least 100,000, but less than 250,000.
 16) Located inside an urbanized area and outside a principal city with a population less than 100,000.
 17) Located inside an urban cluster that is 10 miles or less from an urbanized area.
 18) Located inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 but less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.
 19) Located inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area.
 110) Located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster, but 5 miles or less from an urbanized area, or 2.5 miles or less from an urban cluster.
 111) Located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster, and more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, or more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
 112) Located outside any urbanized area or urban cluster, more than 25 miles from an urbanized area, and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.
 NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2008–09, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2007–08 and 2008–09; and "School District Finance Survey (Form F-33)," 2007–08. (This table was prepared November 2010.)

of English language learners, report challenges in filling vacant teacher positions, and poor facility conditions (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Table 5.4. Percentage Distribution of Public School Teachers by Race/Ethnicity and Select School Characteristics: 2007–2008

| | Black, non-Hispanic | Hispanic, regardless of race | White, non-Hispanic |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| All public schools | 7.0 | 7.1 | 83.1 |
| Community type | | | |
| City | 12.0 | 13.1 | 71.0 |
| Suburban | 6.3 | 6.2 | 84.6 |
| Town | 4.1 | 4.7 | 89.0 |
| Rural | 4.6 | 3.3 | 90.3 |
| Student enrollment | | | |
| Less than 100 | 7.8 | 5.4 [!] | 84.0 |
| 100–199 | 6.2 | 2.3 [!] | 88.4 |
| 200–499 | 6.9 | 5.4 | 85.2 |
| 500–749 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 85.5 |
| 750–999 | 7.8 | 8.9 | 80.7 |
| 1,000 or more | 7.9 | 9.8 | 78.9 |
| % of K–12 students who were approved for free or reduced lunch | | | |
| 0–34 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 91.9 |
| 35–49 | 6.4 | 5.9 | 85.4 |
| 50–74 | 9.2 | 8.9 | 78.6 |
| 75 or more | 16.2 | 17.0 | 62.6 |
| SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Teacher, BIE School Teacher, and Private School Teacher Data Files,” 2007–08. | | | |

What, then, can be said about the choices teachers make when looking for employment? In short, the pattern revealed in Table 5.3 of Whites concentrating residentially where people of color are not (White flight) is similarly reflected in

African American and White teachers' employment distribution patterns. Table 5.4 describes a similar employment profile among Black and Latino teachers; they tend to work in large urban schools with percentages of students on free and reduced lunch. Conversely, White teachers are more likely to work in small schools located in towns or rural areas with very low rates of students receiving free or reduced lunch (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b).

Although this data is only a snapshot of where teachers are currently working, and does not account for potential district-lead channeling of particular candidates to specific schools, Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) suggested a possible link between teachers' residency and work site preferences: "if there is extensive residential segregation and teachers prefer to work closer to where they live, Blacks may rank predominantly Black schools much more highly than Hispanic or White" (p. 340). Furthermore, a study on New York City teachers' mobility within and outside of the district estimated that teachers who lived in New York City, three miles or less from their place of employment immediately prior to starting their position, were twice as likely to stay at that school. Whereas those living outside of New York City before starting their duties had a 20% chance of staying at the school for a minimum of five years, and a likelihood over 30% of leaving the district altogether (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005). These findings suggest that a promising way to fill those seemingly perpetually empty teacher positions could be to recruit and cultivate a school's teaching block from within the building, or by conducting direct recruitment in the areas in close proximity to the school. Careful and innovative recruitment efforts are essential to urban schools, not only because during any given school year White teachers (who constitute 83% of all public U.S. schools) demonstrate a preference to work away from areas most in need of teachers, but because over time, and even through school and district transfers, race remains a factor in the tendency of urban teachers to walk away (Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004; Jacob, 2007; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). Thus, recruitment alone is not the answer. Districts must also determine ways to retain the teachers they acquire. It is our belief that the persistence of residential and professional segregation is a critical point for future investigations about African American teachers' continued marginalization. Together, the two patterns are potentially indicative of lingering racially divisive hiring practices and/or employment preferences, and could be instrumental in not only filling the many teacher vacancies in urban schools, but also in ensuring that all students will learn from teachers that reflect the brilliant mosaic of our nation's diversity.

So how do race, achievement, and retention intersect? First, we consider the impact of the students' race on the retention of teachers. Knowing the factors that lead to greater rates of retention can help individual schools identify their teachers' and students' priorities, and can help retain the qualified and effective

teachers working with students who are acutely vulnerable to the long-term effects of poor academic skills. Boyd et al. (2005) found that it is highly qualified teachers who are most likely to quit teaching in New York City Schools, especially if they work in low-achieving areas. It was also observed that teachers who worked at low-performing schools with students of color, and who were male or lived outside of New York City before beginning employment were the most likely to either leave the district or to transfer within the district. The work of Hanushek et al. (2004) in Texas schools led to their observation that whether a teacher was moving from an urban to a suburban district or moving within an urban district, the tendency is for teachers to move to schools with better student achievement scores and fewer students of color. More specifically, for teachers transferring from large urban schools to suburban schools, there was not only a substantial increase in average test scores, but also a 14–20% fewer African American and Latino presence in the teachers' new schools. This trend, though to a lesser extent, was also noticeable among moves from one suburban school to another. A key finding was that the trend to seek out schools with fewer students of color only held true for White teachers, whereas "for Black teachers, the reactions to varying concentrations of Black students are almost exactly the opposite than for White in both sign and magnitude," although a far more modest level of test score increase was still evident (Hanushek et al., 2004, p. 347). Perhaps most striking was Hanushek's estimation that in order to negate the influence of student race on White educators' decision to leave, they would require a 25–40% increase in salary.

Statistics about the constant traffic of incoming and outgoing teachers should be supplemented with teachers' indications of why they enter the profession. This would have ramifications for those who recruit students into teacher education programs, and for those hiring teachers in our schools. Su's (1997) conclusions revealed a consistent social justice motivation among preservice teachers of color, especially among the African American participants. Some of their responses included:

"I love working with kids. A lot of problems that exist in poor areas can be greatly reduced by intervening when the kids are young."

"I will go where the poor minority populations dwell. Because there is a lot of negativity in textbooks. I will make it a point to supplement with my own knowledge to make the students feel validated. . . . Teachers have to take it upon themselves to solve the problem. You can't wait for the state to change texts or the district to change learning material. I will take it upon myself in one classroom." (Su, 1997, pp. 332, 333)

Overall, Su found that the preservice teachers of color were driven to favor working in urban settings by their critical awareness of social inequities, and by

envisioning themselves as change agents in the transformation of schools and society at large. In contrast, “none of the White candidates expressed concerns for the conditions of education for the poor and minority children and what they could do for them as teachers” (Su, 1997, p. 331). Su’s participants indicated that the study’s interviews were the first or only time during their program of study that they were given an opportunity to speak about their self-perceptions of being change agents in schools. This is indicative of the continuing need for teacher educators and educational researchers to see the value of narratives, not only as data, but as tools necessary in the proper preparation of educators that are critically self-aware and socially conscious.

These studies and statistics about the present state of African American preservice and in-service educators reflect a more nuanced and accurate actual identity of African American educators. In sum, they acknowledge that although African American educators are grossly underrepresented in the U.S. teaching force, they:

1. Choose to work and remain in schools others prefer to leave, namely those with students of color, lower-achieving students (the commas separating these characteristics is intentional as none should function as a proxy for the other), and students from impoverished backgrounds who come from segregated urban areas,
2. Are motivated by the desire to be change agents against forms of social oppression, and
3. Are electing to do so while sacrificing the salary increases their colleagues often pursue by moving away from urban schools.

Challenging the Narratives

Returning to our call for a rejection of carelessly derived designated identities, we return to the words of Sfard and Prusak (2005b):

In addition, although narrative osmosis goes mainly from designated to actual identities, one cannot exclude the possibility of influence that travels in the opposite direction. As implied by the common wisdom that “success begets success and failure begets failure,” stories of victories and losses have a particular tendency for self-perpetuation. On their way into designated identities, tales of one’s repeated success are likely to reincarnate into stories of this person’s special “aptitude”, “gift” or “talent”, whereas the motifs of repeated failure would take the form of narratives on anything from “slowness” to “permanent disability”. (p. 18)

There is much to say, then, about the actual and designated identities of African American teachers, but what is more important than sharing the narratives is that they be crafted responsibly and critically. A mere “responsible” designated

narrative could very well only tell of their absence, supposed lack of qualification, and apparent disinterest in teaching. A critical view, on the other hand, would acknowledge that although White people in the United States have and continue to have limited exposure to African American teachers, due to long-standing *de jure* and *de facto* segregation in our communities and schools (and thus are less likely to experience the osmosis Sford and Prusak speak of), African American educators are qualified, resilient, and committed to educating the youth of our nation. The reclamation of African American educators' actual identities, and the reconstruction of their designated identities are needed in order to end the more general practice of gaslighting against African Americans, where the ever-mutating construction of otherness and deficiency is rendered invisible, while African Americans are regarded as suffering from pathologies of anti-intellectualism, laziness, and poverty.

Next Steps

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) highlighted CRT's tradition of naming one's own reality (consider Sford and Prusak's A_A form of identity where the story originates and is told to one's self) by noting that by creating our own narratives, we can heal and preserve our moral selves against oppression, and can disrupt master narratives by creating social dissonance, bringing awareness to oppressors. To work toward this end, it is imperative that all educators, regardless of race, become familiar with the history of Black educators in the United States. This type of education will likely be new to many teacher education students, and should be presented by faculty members who are intellectually and socially well-acquainted with African American history, and can apply the critical lens needed to address the ingrained issue of power struggles in contemporary sites. In order to meet this goal, it will be just as important that schools and colleges of education recruit and retain knowledgeable African American faculty members with sound backgrounds in social criticism, so as to train future K–12 teachers. School district officials and principals should be held accountable for the active recruitment and retention of a diverse body of teachers that is fairly and equitably distributed across the district, as well as professional development and student-centered initiatives that acknowledge and support Black communities' desire to be involved in the education of their youth. These interventions at the K–12 and higher education levels will be bolstered significantly by forming true, reciprocal collaborations with Black community institutions, including neighborhood associations, civic organizations, churches, Greek letter sororities and fraternities, professional organizations, and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Finally, educational researchers' historically and socially critical contributions that illuminate the experiences and professional and academic contributions of Afri-

can American teachers, successful practices in the recruitment and retention of African American teachers, and push-out factors at various stages along the professional trajectory should not be underestimated. While the historical and contemporary considerations presented in this chapter have been discussed according to a conceptual framework, careful examinations of the effects of the privatization of teacher preparation and schools, traditional university-based teacher education programs, various teacher incentive and evaluation programs, district and state-level employment policies and practices, and the effects of school and district consolidations on the diversity of the corps of teachers and administrators could yield key information about the marginalization and siphoning off African American teachers.

Sociohistorical gaslighting projects, such as the one being carried out against African American teachers and administrators, can be deflated when the acts of manipulation are brought to light in ways that

1. Remove or significantly diminish the benefits gained by the gaslighter,
2. Convince the gaslightees of their own victimhood, and motivate them to disrupt the acts of manipulation, or
3. Position the objects of manipulation in ways that increase their agency and empower them to prevent or to circumvent gaslighters' manipulation.

We believe that various stakeholders (including preservice and in-service African American educators, parents, and educational researchers, among others) can, in effect, short-circuit this gaslighting project by not only naming their own reality, but by using the tools they have mastered to engage in their own brand of praxis against individual and systemic gaslighters, in order to name the real consequences of policies and practices that have been used to disenfranchise African American teachers, and by extension, the families and communities they represent.

Notes

1. This quotation is taken from Du Bois's essay, "Whither Now and Why," originally delivered in 1960 as a speech given at Johnson C. Smith University. The essay was later published in the book, *The Education of Black People* (Du Bois, 1973; H. Aptheker, Ed.).
2. We acknowledge the common use of *African American* to refer to Africans enslaved in the United States of America and their descendents, as well as the use of *Black* to refer to the members of the African Diaspora, including those from the U.S. context. In this chapter, we have used both terms, not because they are interchangeable in all discussions, but rather, in recognition that a historical and contemporary consideration of educators affected by gaslighting would include individuals who could be described by either or both terms.
3. In this paper, we use the term, *Black educators*, to refer to Black teachers and administrators in U.S. schools. We use the term, *Black teachers*, to refer to Black individuals who teach students in the classroom.
4. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

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