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Focusing on the Marginalized: Representation and Application of Diverse and Inclusive  
Philosophies in Systemic Frameworks and Institutions - Reflection and Commentary

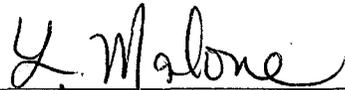
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**Focusing on the Marginalized:  
Representation and Application of Diverse and Inclusive Philosophies in  
Systemic Frameworks and Institutions – Reflection and Commentary**

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## INTRODUCTION

The problem and dissection of pain and plight in the Americas is the subject of various conversations on race, gender, orientation and otherwise. From educational institutions to primary care providers, and every imaginable place in between, there is a sense for life and livelihood to be hanging in the balance for the marginalized. Why, one could ponder for centuries which lives hang in the balance and when. In fact, whole charts of information could be constructed and deconstructed, at various points, without losing grip on reality or losing faith in a cause or group of persons. However, this problem of pain and plight persists with or without the allotment of another.

For myself, the problems of various isms are fresh and readily available. As an African American, as an LGBT identifying man, and as an impoverished person in America, I've seen and experienced the exact sting that comes from a lackluster philosophy of diversity and inclusion. Within the context of conversation, I have seen the failings of structures necessary for the creation of healthy philosophies that protect and provide for ethical and equitable treatment. Likewise, I've witnessed the implementation of poor philosophy that doesn't work for the good of the marginalized, creating imagery that could be superimposed onto items like affirmative action. In knowing this, I face a series of contemplative truths that must be held in order to continue.

The problems of race, of gender, of sexual orientation, of class, of culture, and so on continue without formal need for change or introduction into discussion. Unless, of course, thoughts and preconceived notions are actively addressed and processed by participants in discussion. In the current context of the United States, there is a divisive nature around these various isms that should be addressed as well. This stems from what

Bell and Roth could perceive as the problem of Racism for Blacks. This also stems from what can be perceived as an aversion to difficult conversation. A lack of central terms that are properly defined and kept consistent have not been respected or held. (By clearly defining terms, I will attempt to avoid this mistake.)

### **Key Terms and Concepts**

**Racism** will be defined outside of the traditional dictionary definition. The Oxford's, and Merriam-Webster's, old definition of racism as a feeling will not be sufficient for this thesis. This is primarily due to the lack of ability to know, with absolute certainty, what one person is feeling. Instead, this definition will work with the more tangible and provable structural and systemic ideas. This idea and concept stems from Bonilla-Silva's book regarding colorblind racism (four frames of liberalism, preference, cultural, and minimization – from Racism Without Racists)

**Sexism** will be defined based on Linda M. Alcoff's feminist philosophy and approach to sexism and racism. "The ideologies of sexism and racism [are] predicated on a claim of causality between physical features and intellectual, moral, and emotional attributes."<sup>1</sup>

**Classism** will be defined as Class Discrimination. It will be used only in an active sense, rather than as a statement of a distaste based on class. ["...an oppressive social structure or practice"]<sup>2</sup>

**Heterosexism** will be defined by Alcoff as well, highlighting in her personal blog that "a [metaphysical grounding was perceived] as a major player in the ideology of

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<sup>1</sup> (Alcoff, Personal Blog)

<sup>2</sup> (Critique, Action, and Liberation; Marsch)]

heterosexism, that human beings are naturally or properly exclusively heterosexual. A dualistic binary or oppositional system of categorization that divides us into male and female would seem to privilege heterosexual sex as the foundation of sexed identity.”<sup>3</sup>

**Utilizing an understanding of these topics, we will seek to answer one question: How do we form diverse and inclusive philosophy in a systemic environment such as Greenville University?**

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<sup>3</sup> (Alcoff, Personal Blog)

## ON THE “-ISMS” – IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Racism starts, for the majority of the western world, as question and quest for the continued exploration of interactions between marginalized communities and Europeans with regards to the institution of slavery. While this is consistently a highlighted reason for racial discrimination, we should begin first by remaining weary of allowing for the commonality of an experience to denote the whole of Racism’s dark and tattered past. We cannot reach back into time immemorial and locate the exact moment of discriminatory actions. However, we can look into some aspects of the history of isms as a method of guidance in dissection of information. For example, we should explore the reality that is colonialism.

The expansion of the European powers into territories not originally or immediately definable as being owned by their intruders – a word which is used only to denote that colonized lands are not initially owned by those who colonized, rather; they are owned by their natives – is a primary cause for racial dissonance. For some natives, the immediate result of this intrusion was cataclysmic. Death, destruction of land, rape, pillaging, and various other acts were committed upon people who, in most cases, were not equipped to defend or protect what they perceived to be their homelands.<sup>4</sup> As a result, different cultures such as the aboriginal culture of Australia and the Native Americans within the Western Hemisphere were subject to either extinction or forms of oppression. Likewise, Africans and specific religious minorities were subject to oppressive acts or literal enslavement along with the cultural minorities of the global south. This driving

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Charles, a guest lecturer at Greenville University highlighted the 90% mortality rate which works with Franz Fanon’s analysis in *Wretched of the Earth* (181-185)

force of colonialism, which shapes even the “destiny” of some aspects of the North American continental exploration, is central to the question of racial disparities for the likes of Franz Fanon, who moves into the question of colonialism with reflections on the state of persons within his psychological research.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, colonialism’s effect on the grander state of racial disparities is apparent in the Latin American continent, and pertinent to philosophy regarding the Americas.

On the topic of enslavement, we see a similar narrative played out for minority populations. Be they of religious or racial minorities,<sup>6</sup> persons are perceived as the lesser or property of another person. Bound by some form of contract, or by the power of a master, a servant experiences servitude for several years or several generations, depending on the extent to which one person has agency.<sup>7</sup> With respect to the institution of slavery within the United States, we see a clear and definitive lack of agency for persons who are in the enslaved minority.<sup>8</sup> Within this body of enslavement comes an understanding that the person without agency is subhuman, beneath a master or of the ability to be controlled. To be an African American, at one point, was to be inhuman, and incapable of rationalization.<sup>9</sup> This historical view of Persons of Color (PoCs) combines and manifests itself in the continuation of the institution under a renewed front –

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<sup>5</sup> Black Skins White Mask (64-66)

<sup>6</sup> From the Portable Hannah Arendt on rightless people 31-38

<sup>7</sup> Arendt 39

<sup>8</sup> As a contrary and counterintuitive thought, Hannah Arendt presents the Jewish persons of the holocaust as being of less value than the enslaved. This challenging comment will become of important later in the discussion on the agency of particular persons. (Arendt, 126)

<sup>9</sup> Observable in even the deepest roots of the Western Philosophical Cannon as it displays the truth of the “rational being”. (Kant expects *verstand* (*understanding*) from the *verstandeswesen* (*beings of rationality*))

colonialism's motion of enslavement leads effortlessly into a discussion on the plight of, specifically, African Americans. However, the accuracy and overwhelming power of this systemic issue converges on and in the work of all non-white Americans throughout the centuries.

Traditionally, the institution of racism structurally begins at the point of colonialism.<sup>10</sup> Be it in part because of the Eurocentric/Westernized narrative, or simply the lack of survivorship in other nations, the narratives of indigenous rights and freedoms are initially lost to the times and terror in which they are bred. Colonialism becomes the point of fracture as well, as persons of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds meet at a necessary intersection between what is definitively a problem for persons of color but may not definitively be for the colonized. This is best explained by the continued problems faced by indigenous communities before the introduction of slaves onto specific continents. The decimation of lands by different groups of European settlers created a problem for those who were Natives of the Americas. However, this problem doesn't persist within the community of the enslaved in the same way. This is because the Natives, arguably, "maintained" the ownership of lands and were maligned in death, but in the mainstream historical narrative, are never given the denotation of slave.<sup>11</sup> Historically inaccurate at its core, this narrative of the Native is problematic as it creates a visible juxtaposition between the problem of the Native American and the problem of the African American.

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<sup>10</sup> Implication of the work of De Las Casas' In Defense of the Indians 34-47

<sup>11</sup> Commerce Clause Article 1, Section 8 Clause 3

As it is well known, the African American population is brought to America through colonial means, following the trade of Africans by various groups of Europeans to the Americas after their colonization.<sup>12</sup> These lands, now colonized by the “western world”, begin receiving the first of many successful attempts to drain resources and destroy standing institutions for the creation and foundation of more powerful western institutions. This push and creation of overpowering infrastructures does damage, but the lack of concrete integration into the greater western structure means the further harm of the enslaved population over time.<sup>13</sup> Africans who enter America lose their autonomy and agency to subjugation, and eventually what little ties or memory they have of their originating continent fade with their integration into the culture and systems of their new country.<sup>14</sup>

Pushed and forced into their new society, or killed in the wake of colonization, the process of removing the culture, language, and order of persons of color breeds itself in the effects of Protestantism as well as the influence of Christian sects and denominations on the maligned. Theological points, for those persons of color who were considered demonstrably lesser than [white persons], conveyed a need for persons of color, in their respective native lands, to first experience the fullness of Christianity<sup>15</sup>. For Native

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<sup>12</sup> Implication of the work of Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses*, 11

<sup>13</sup> *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon, 181

<sup>14</sup> This leads to a question later of who qualifies as an African American, due to 21<sup>st</sup> Century integration of migrants from Africa as well as the current populations of African Americans who were descendants of slaves.

<sup>15</sup> To this day, a depiction of the Baptism of Pocahontas, as well as the Apotheosis of George Washington, arguably show our overwhelming lean onto theological underpinnings in the greater US societies. Likewise, the integration of the church into the legal matters of various colonial powers historically shows and demonstrates the active influence various aspects of Christianity had on the societal construct.

Americans such as Pocahontas, this problem and process of destroying and restructuring cultures around Western spirituality can be digested easily through the words of philosophers such as Bartolomé de Las Casas:

For Augustine, whom he cites, is speaking of those who had promised something useful for themselves and did not keep their promise, with damage or injury to others. Specifically, he is discussing heretics whom the Church compels to keep their baptismal vows, not only because they are useful for themselves but especially *because they have promised and vowed them to God and, from the promise, they are bound by a certain special obligation.*<sup>16</sup>

The initial problem of Pocahontas' baptism is, through this text, a promise and a vow to a God that she presumably didn't understand. This concern for the inability to fully comprehend the impression that this spiritual act has on one's life was a problem that wasn't addressed in the times in which baptisms of natives, or marriage of native groups, were conducted. Without the ability to read, hear, speak, or absorb in any way the bulk of Christianity, maligned groups of persons of color were overwhelmingly disenfranchised. Furthermore, "[the] colonized subject is constantly on his guard: Confused by the myriad signs of the colonial world, he never knows whether he is out of line. Confronted with a world configured by the colonizer, the colonized subject is always presumed guilty. The colonized does not accept his guilt, but rather considers it a kind of curse, a sword of Damocles. But deep down the colonized subject acknowledges no authority. He is dominated but not domesticated. He is made to feel inferior, but by no means convinced of his inferiority. He patiently waits for the colonist to let his guard down and then jumps on him. The muscles of the colonized are always tensed. It is not that he is anxious or terrorized, but he is always ready to change his role as game for that

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<sup>16</sup> Latin American Philosophy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Gracia & Millán-Zaibert, 47)

of hunter.”<sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup> To move on, we must accept the narrative of colonialism affecting those who are minorities, working chronologically forward from that underlying structure of colonialism that is founded on racism. Likewise, we must acknowledge the structures in place affecting heterosexism within the community.<sup>19</sup>

Heterosexism, within the greater Western viewpoint, again lacks a direct reference point, presenting itself within the world in correlation with traditionally misogynist institutions. Unfortunately, the actual reflection on heterosexism didn't come to light until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with some of its premises being outside of traditional norms.<sup>20</sup> In Alcoff's *Visible Identities*, we see that “[the] very formation of the Combahee River Collective was motivated by the founders' concerns with the racism in the white dominated wing of the women's movement, the sexism in the male-dominated wing of the black liberation movement, and heterosexism that was virulent everywhere.”<sup>21</sup> This commentary, though seemingly situational, builds upon a variety of principals that can be effectively unpacked in reviewing the statement and reconstructing the arguments that are made through Alcoff's “concerns” above: “the concern for racism in the white dominated wing of the women's movement” shows a clear and definable problem – serving as a good transition from focusing on issues of racism to heterosexism. During the standing of the Combahee River Collective, there was a question of racism as a central point. This line of thought allows for an answering of the question of overlap.

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<sup>17</sup> *Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon, 17)

<sup>18</sup> The entirety of this quotes has an essence that is steeped in traditional and toxic masculinity – a problem of heterosexism.

<sup>19</sup> *That's So Gay*, Nadal, 35

<sup>20</sup> Nadal, 29-30

<sup>21</sup> *Visible Identities* (Alcoff, 15)

One, reading these texts without any sort of context, could easily hypothesize that minority communities, in and of themselves, have a serious problem caused by the relevant majority communities. For racism, we see the Caucasian poised against the Person of Color. Likewise, with heterosexism, we see the straight cis-gendered male as being positioned counter to the LGBT community. However, the overlapping straight cis-gendered white male -emphasizing race- creates a problem for the acknowledgement of the structure at large.<sup>22</sup> This could be for a variety of reasons, with the dominant reality being that there is a clear social hierarchy at play.

This discussion of hierarchy is what a dissection of literature on the isms most often states as a forethought - a school of debate could argue that the hierarchy was created retroactively, with persons of color and/or LGBT identifying persons targeting their counters. This debate, while given room to exist in extreme political settings, tends to not refute the longstanding traditional values that were commonplace within the world's history. Alcoff's discussion targets those longstanding values, however, moving forward stating that individuals should consider the role that subordination played in their world. Heterosexism, with regards to the comment on analyzing subordination, in essence bends with similar historical curves to racism, though the effect on the minority populations are similar – and yet they remain distinct.

Both Heterosexism and Racism are brought on by minority status due to subordination by those who stand at the top of the current social hierarchy. In heterosexist environments, misogyny is usually found and coupled with the clear essence of homophobia. This problem of misogyny develops in the history and culture that

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<sup>22</sup> Visible Identities (Alcoff, 25)

surrounds sexuality's inherent femme/masc. contrast. For the homosexual encountering the slurs and bigotry that are often deemed as homophobic, the rhetoric stems out of the concept of being feminine or masculine in conjunction with a sex or sexuality.<sup>23</sup>

Femininity juxtaposes masculinity under the guise of simple discussions on the human sex. Male and female attributes are treated as total opposites,<sup>24</sup> on occasion showing a brazen disregard for those who are considered non-binary<sup>25</sup> or who do not fall into the easily digestible categories that often dominate the discussion.

Likewise, the definitive homophobic overtones seen within the social structure have been argued to have originated from the structures of sexism and misogyny within the greater western narrative.<sup>26</sup> As the term sexism stands defined, we see "a claim of causality between physical features and intellectual, moral, and emotional attributes".<sup>27</sup> The male/female dynamic contrast is presented again with masculine to feminine ideologies. Women, under the traditional view upheld by social constructs, are seen as being feminine, frail, and occasionally given the aloof or bossy moniker. In this discussion on heterosexism, however, we take on the problems of LGBTQIA+<sup>28</sup> individuals as being counter to the cis-straight body, rather than a specific sex.

These expectations of heteronormativity and misogyny, while interacting with each other in the current social structure, rarely come from a place of distinct categorization. Take, for example, the overwhelming use of negative slurs such as

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<sup>23</sup> Nadal, 28-31

<sup>24</sup> Nadal, 84

<sup>25</sup> Nadal, 84

<sup>26</sup> Nadal, 52

<sup>27</sup> Visible Identities, Alcoff, 164

<sup>28</sup> Nadal, 36

“faggot” or “slut”. These terms can often be attributed to LGBT persons within the global west, as well as women respectively. Faggot comes into view as a homophobic slur, that often is used to convey a sense of femininity and a lacking masculinity that some would claim ought to be present with men. Slut, as a misogynist term, is often aimed at females who aren’t necessarily viewed as being anything more than an object of sexual pleasure. However, these terms overlap within communities, with regards to women being called “dykes” or other terms highlighting negative masculinities, and “slut” being used again those within the grander LGBTQIA+ community<sup>29</sup>. One can often wonder, when encountering the sexism, about the institutions that keeps some of these thoughts and ideas alive within the social structure. These institutions, though there are many, rarely compare to the institutions of classism and the greater understanding of theology.

Classism, as it is defined, spirals itself around the distinction of persons based on individual or combined income, physical possession of items, and the greater accrument of wealth over time. Classes develop, within major political bodies, as an upper-middle-lower tier system, with those who are poor or impoverished on the bottom of the social structure. The distinct problem of classism, and its systematic oppression of specific groups in order to further benefit the top tier, is often seen in societies that have debatably inherent systems in place to further the disenfranchisement of specific groups. One of many examples falls into the capitalist system that is currently held in the United States.<sup>30</sup> This form of societal control, while not central to a discussion on socialism and

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<sup>29</sup> Nadal, 28-31

<sup>30</sup> While it is important for some philosophers to examine the socialist/capitalist dichotomy, only a brief understanding of classism is necessary to begin working on the overlap that is prevalent.

capitalism, is prevalent in the overlap of Classism,<sup>31</sup> as it occurs with Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism. These four isms are often combined and culminate the major aspects of humanity's social structure for both the marginalized and the esteemed. Furthermore, they reveal a connection to a fifth problem, which is based in the heart of Protestant and Catholic traditions the world over.

The first point, when beginning to engage with theological underpinnings that relate directly to the four isms of focus, is that the vast majority of Christianity inevitably fell prey to the colonial thought that engulfed the global West. Protestants, well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, have experienced portraits of central themes and characters in the bible as being like them. Whiteness, in this sense, actively affects the greater scope of Christian movies; depictions of historical and biblical events. By gaining actors and illustrations of Jesus, for example, as a white male, individuals living within the Western Hemisphere are actively depriving themselves of racial contexts that were present within the whole of Christianity. Furthermore, the depiction of God often is full of the paternal archetype already present within the bible. A God free of gender and conformity to human standards is seen as the man above all men- an issue highlighted when discussing the problems of women and pagans in biblical contexts. Whether the description of God is of a gender, or of no gender, the reality of biblical context remains. Without hesitation, prominent authors recognize that a collection of books written within the time frame of thousands of years rarely loose themselves of the shackles of the isms.

Racism, for example, is treated as a part of biblical history. Again, without hesitation, it is shown that slavery is an ages old tradition that continues to this day in

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<sup>31</sup> Twenty Theses Dussel, 96-98

different regions of the world. Be it indentured servitude or black slavery or Jewish slavery, historically accurate representations of slaves are commonplace within the Christian tradition. The biblical verse condoning slavery, often quoted as tangible Levitical law, encourages the exact ideals of slavery that once plagued the North American and Central American lands. Individuals sold into slavery were put to work on farms and in fields with the backing of the religious portions of the United States. Now one may ask why that was done, “when current theology often lends itself to slavery being unchristian?” However, the problem of servitude in the United States, well within Christian circles, remains as part of the greater defining portions of theology. The Church, with regards to this, has grown, acknowledging that past attempts to enslave people were inherently bad. Nevertheless, this change in discussion on slavery had little-to-no impact on the greater American populace. Enslaved persons of color, from this point were actively hinging on the integration of faith into their work. Pastors would preach from pulpits with authors such as Cone noting the correlation that persons of color saw within the stories of the Cross. Their individual experiences leading the charge towards a liberation theology that actively affected hundreds of thousands of persons of color enslaved within the North American continent. And yet, the gained theological ground formed in the age before persons of color had personhood- a time before representation was plausible.

Individuals of color did not have representatives, for decades, that could speak from a similar pool of experience that is often codified into law. On the contrary, persons of color often were overwhelmingly misrepresented in the greater election systems due to

Jim Crow laws and other effective voter suppression techniques.<sup>32</sup> Without active representation, black and brown people began the work of protesting and marching in the civil rights movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century within the United States. People of color, in educational environments, continued to be devastated by both the lacking educational tools that were present within the segregated school systems and lacking representation within the governmental body.<sup>33</sup> Persons of Color were prohibited from interracial marriages, interactions with persons of the opposite race, and were disenfranchised with regards to items such as pay and housing. Furthermore, the continued pressure of traditional understandings of biblical concepts, legal limits, and morals had a negative effect on persons of color, well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>34</sup>

Those impacted by the continued derogatory language and aggressive counter protests of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fought aggressively to be represented in issues such as *Brown v. Board of Education*. However, these fights have yet to truly come to an end. Incarceration rates, by and large, have increased within black communities,<sup>35</sup> and, though information regarding their incarceration can be varied, the reality of high rates of incarceration due to mandatory minimums is a correlation that authors such as Michelle Alexander highlight often.<sup>36</sup> This high level of incarceration, as it is noted, also stands the potential of regular increase in conjunction with the political atmosphere leading from the

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<sup>32</sup> In 1868, John Menard became the first African American to be elected to the US Congress, but he was not seated, and could not represent his constituency.

<sup>33</sup> *Twenty Theses Dussel* 66-67

<sup>34</sup> *Racism Without Racists* Bonilla-Silva, 23

<sup>35</sup> *New Jim Crow*, Alexander, 6-9

<sup>36</sup> *New Jim Crow*, Alexander, 60

20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> This atmosphere is, in the opinion of Andrea James of the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, primarily seen as a shift from one representative in a democracy to the other. She noted, at one point, that she saw a pattern emerging as the presidencies of Bush, Obama, and Trump showed radically different enforcement of mandatory minimums as they pertain to persons of color.

This dissection of the dialogue of race, as it intersects with the problem of incarceration, further highlights the support beams that lie within the social construct. As the state of play changes within individual racial groups, we see an uptick in the level of incarceration for the respective group. In one set of data, we see the stereotypical inner-city dialogue that often plays across news outlets, where African Americans are depicted as thugs or gangsters. In these same data sets, we see low incomes, and higher rates of drug abuse leading to sentencing. From birth, the African Americans in this discussion are placed at the bottom of the racial structure, and, likewise, experience this issue of classism in one form or another.

Minority status throughout the world has an etymological truth, meaning “lesser” or “smaller” and often referring to those who are either (a) small in numbers compared with the majority or (b) actively oppressed by the social structures at play.<sup>38</sup> There has

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<sup>37</sup> The Obama Administration actively fought this trend - New Jim Crow, Alexander, 252-257

<sup>38</sup> This distinction is important because, for groups such as women, the reality is that their minority status is more social than actual, with 1.017:1 being the ratio of women to men. In countries like Ukraine, Russia, Latvia, China, and Portugal, women outnumber men by few points. Likewise, the amount of people who aren't in the upper/[upper]middle class – who make up the 1%, or even 10% - are definitively not the majority. Yet, the effect of classism runs through several veins.

often been discussion amongst scholars about the source of these oppressive social structures as well as the human tendency to categorize. From a historical point of view, there has often been a push to change the minority into more than a lesser “human”, though the argument as to exactly *why* the human distinction is necessary varies from subject to subject. Returning to the medical commentary of non-white people being closer in race to the “ape,” for example, shows the scientific desire to reclassify others as being inhuman. Scientists before and at the birth of the modern western world gave this classification to humans as a way of distancing themselves from those who were “lesser” [minorities]. Even though these homosapiens<sup>39</sup> are definitively human by modern standards, those standards were not present in the necessary social setting that influenced the observation of nature at the time. This same problem occurred in the discussion of the gender and sexual minorities that inhabited the western world. However, the problem that occurred could seem diametrically opposed to what could be the expectation

For example, women have been considered by men, to be necessarily human. A variety of reasons for this understanding could populate a discussion on what exactly a woman “is”. By definition, woman centers itself around the new concept of “man” as being “male”, straying away from previous iterations that left “man” as a neutral term within the English vocabulary. Women were categorized, within the scientific and social framework, as being human contextually. (People of color who were women, however, were not human at the time, falling prey to the “only a drop” mentality that racial disparities created in the western world.) To some degree, this acceptance of women as

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<sup>39</sup>It is imperative to use this scientific nomenclature in contrast to the “race” commentary.

human could debatably provide a system for them to achieve and grow in a way that people of color could not. However, binary males<sup>40</sup> of the time remained in constant control of the environment and social controls that so often shifted the classification of minority groups. This was done in the scientific community, by limiting the scope of a woman's education, and basing their life around a singular purpose. According to Dr. Max Gerson, actions that women take, "cause a shift in the position and a loosening of the uterus as well as prolapse and bleeding, with resulting sterility, thus defeating a woman's true purpose in life, i.e. the brining forth of strong children." By relegating women and effectively making them child bearers alone, medical professionals and scientists of the time continued propelling the stereotypes that plagued the western world and most of human history. Women, in their subservient posture, were wrapped around and attached to their husbands, or remained unmarried and died.<sup>41</sup> This inequality for women, and their required acquiescence, brought a fear to the gender that would last for centuries. Women are often documented as being more than hassled or chided for their remarks, with literature and texts of the time detailing the mistreatment of women as legal and expected.

For the LGBT population, there is an overlapping of the work that has expressly dehumanized the population. With laws going back centuries preventing the expression of LGBT people, the population of this community retains a similar status to the aforementioned. People who identified as LGBT were low in numbers, with murder and injury of community members as a high factor. Unlike women and people of color, the

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<sup>40</sup> Men who identify and present as "male" (Nadal, 49)

<sup>41</sup> It's a dark turn based upon the constant murder of unmarried women who were deemed prostitutes, harlots, witches, sinners, and so on.

ability to physically see their being was, and is, nonexistent. People living in areas that were hostile or threatening to those who chose to identify with homosexuality could, if they so choose, not disclose their personal life. In fact, the likelihood of people within communities living with homosexual people was high, with estimates rising to 4.5% of the US population<sup>42</sup> Individuals would remain celibate, or attend conversion therapies and meetings late into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, with religious and social standards pressuring identifying people to make steps towards normalcy [or God]. This population experiences the issue of subservience as well, in correlation with the plight of many women. Inferences from the slurs and commentary<sup>43</sup> thrown at this particular minority community lend themselves to both the dehumanization and subordination features of minority status. In the act of dehumanization, these comments are derogatory and often, used to infer “[stupidity]” or unnatural action<sup>44</sup> that shouldn’t be. Humans, in effect, don’t make these mistakes. Likewise, the subordination<sup>45</sup> of these roles often centers around the feminine characteristics that are either heightened or missing. Slurs used against

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<sup>42</sup> Gallup News, Frank Newport

<sup>43</sup> Nadal, 105

<sup>44</sup> “That’s so gay campaign”

<sup>45</sup> The term subordination does not even begin to fully define the problems that persist within the world of heteronormativity – the representation of normal as being heterosexual and cis man-woman – with prior countries and kingdoms allowing for sexuality to bend in service to men of great power. Servicing these men, while not necessarily making one more or less heterosexual, was intertwined with a myriad of other problems such as rape, child abuse and molestation, theft, etc....

presenting<sup>46 47</sup> men were often feminine in nature, noting the apparent hyperfeminization and lack of masculinity. Presenting women, on the other hand, were hypermasculine – lacking femininity – and therefore out of place. The promotion here, scientifically, was of the impossibility of action and emotion outside of the sexual norm. Many doctors, scientists, and medical professionals of most centuries pointed to the sexual organs and chromosomes as determinants, cementing the demarcation of gender roles, sex, and sexuality (or lack thereof).

Finally, the work of institutions has created societies that invariably host a top and lower tier financially, socially, and geographically. People who exist outside of what is often referred to as the “1%” or “upper class,” while comprising the majority of every country, are the minority in the evaluation of social status. In part, some argue, because of the economic styles that entrench the western world<sup>48</sup>, creating a vacuum of wealth that resides in the hands of those who may not necessarily need it. Upperclassmen, unaffected by impoverishment or economic downfall within their respective country,

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<sup>46</sup> Heretofore this term presenting will be used to mean people that should appear to be “Cis gendered straight men”

<sup>47</sup> The genders here are loaded terms, precisely because the ideas of gender and sex have not been effectively distanced from one another. Gender as a social construct, though originally detailed in the previous chapter, is propped around what sexual norms exist in our reality. Sex is descriptive of the body, denoting a particular sexual organ which correlates to what one’s gender should be. The debate about this topic continues on to this day, with the introduction of out trans, queer, and androgynous people into more western contexts. People who identify in those groups, and those who are intersex or dual sexed, for example, continue to shift the sex/gender dialogue. However, gender is also bent around the culture expectations, as allude by the use of the term “social construct”, with Native American groups changing our layout, introducing the terms “two-spirited” into the conversation. These dialogues with those who claim no gender, a plurality of genders, and the spectrum in between make this conversation difficult. With that being said, this is also an area worthy of further research in and of itself.

<sup>48</sup> Capitalism, Twenty Theses Dussel, 92-93.

don't have to worry about the problems of the country they live in. Often supported by the work of employees, wealth is accrued and, in some cases, redistributed by these wealth holders. With some people in the western world holding [40%] of the United States' wealth, and over [20%] of the world's total wealth<sup>49</sup>, citizens in both the past and present hold in their hands power to effect communities and whole segments of populations. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the House of Saud<sup>50</sup> holds roughly [\$x] worth of wealth, controlling the country and, via its business, several powerful nations. The family controls the movement of funds, the laws of the country, and the actions of the government. In other countries, similar activity is found. While countries like the United States aren't named for their current leaders or highest earning citizens, their governments are often lobbied by companies and people in control of a great percentage of the nation's wealth.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the proximity of those who have wealth to areas that are impoverished often create a problem in and of themselves.

With infrastructure funded by the collection of taxes, efforts to avoid taxation are just one example of effective disenfranchisement of the lower and middle classes. Homeless populations and lower-class populations are often affected by laws that displace them, seeking to eradicate the presence of this minority population<sup>52</sup> without

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<sup>49</sup> Washington Post, "Analysis | The richest 1 percent now owns more of the country's wealth than at any time in the past 50 years"

<sup>50</sup> The House of Saud is the family controlling most of the nation's wealth, from whom the country receives its name.

<sup>51</sup> Within the United States, the argument among more leftist groups is one that promotes the integration of socialist ideologies to reverse the effect that capitalism has on this country. Removing the wealth gap and changing the economic status of American's were some of the items brought forth in bills such as [the Green New Deal] in the 116<sup>th</sup> US Congress . While these items are definitively "anti-capitalist" in nature, studies don't deny the efficacy of

<sup>52</sup> Based in a Narrative, perspectival

providing escape from impoverishment. When combined with social handicaps, including the inability to receive compensation or work without a physical address, ability to commute or transport one's self, or ability to be hygienic, those who are of the lowest class are demonstrably harmed. These people are also collectively barred from areas such as restaurants, business, and even some shelters and churches in both large and small communities. These actions are often promulgated by a mixture of social stereotypes and factual biases<sup>53</sup> that cause business and organizations to ignore or push away the poor and impoverished. When combined with political activity<sup>54</sup>, these same social stigmas create problematic exclusionary tactics such as physical and political divisions between classes.

These four categories, as they have been laid out in the creation of their respective history, with the identities of their membership in mind, are already seemingly and actually critical. People who so often consider themselves judgement free, or those who provide fodder for the "color-blind" racism<sup>55</sup> or sexism, or heterosexism, or homophobia may interact with membership in these group without a second thought. Readers, in one brief research text, are presented the question in the title, "[why] do all the black kids sit together?"<sup>56</sup> cycling around the question and looking at the proximity that one black experience might have to another. However, the older text regrettably can't capture the important question of the overlap between the experience of marginalized groups. To

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<sup>53</sup> Such as "homeless people aren't clean"

<sup>54</sup> Politicians are often held to account by people residing in their area of influence or representative districts. If those constituents are continuing to uphold the stereotypes that create exclusionary factors and are consistent in providing that comment to their representative, legislation on the state, local, and national level is created. (Dussel, *Twenty Theses*) That legislation in its passing is clear proof of the social institutions that hold power over the minority communities therein.

<sup>55</sup> *Racism Without Racists* Bonilla-Silva, 8-12

<sup>56</sup> Work by Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum

some degree, this is connected to the expectation that black people, in experiencing the same types of discrimination, may inevitably find themselves resonating with the story of another person of color. However, the spectrum of color within the experience of a “black” person bubbles to the surface. Examples of people of color definitively having different experiences could be simply based on the difference of location, availability of parents, type of education, likelihood of incarceration, drug use, experience with work, friend groups, [the list is eternal]. However, those differences of experience are intersecting with the spectrum of color within the “black community.”<sup>57</sup> Latinx Americans vary in their experiences in the same way as every individual does, with no two people living the same life. However, the visible differences between Latin Americans, African Americans, Indian Americans, and so many other people groups within America is their lack of true connectivity. With Black America, there is a conversation on colorism<sup>58</sup> continuing to bloom that disconnects light and dark-skinned Black Americans with the same experiences. Likewise, the ability of Latinx people to speak their language fluently, appear white or Latinx, or immigrate properly into countries like the United States can create a rift between communities.

With thousands more examples that could be outlined for racial, sexual, gender, and class-based differences, the likelihood of conversations on minority status being

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<sup>57</sup> I use the term black community here because there is a shift in the modern discussion of what blackness is. Some treat blackness as a visibility. However, other people of color and Caucasian people are faced with the “one drop” mentality that was brought forth by the racial dialogue of previous centuries. In either event, the notion of someone being black is constantly shifting, with an ever-growing Latin American population, the introduction of African Americans (being from Africa) and Asian and Indian Americans being introduced into the framework.

<sup>58</sup> Racism Without Racists Bonilla-Silva, 230-231

universal has an erroneous nature. Each minority group has the potential to segment and shift within subcategorization and integration of new members. People of color are being faced with the question of what it looks like for a “mixed race” person to be considered a person of color. The identity struggles and crisis<sup>59</sup> fuels writing from prolific authors. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, and Asexual people, on the other hand, experience erasure within their own communities. Bi erasure and its commonality among both homo and heterosexual communities is just one of many prominent examples of dissonance within the minority community. Women feud on blogs, nationally syndicated shows, and in academia<sup>60</sup> over every aspect of feminism and the rights of women to be seen as equal. Traditional understandings of social structures, religious experiences, and many other factors compound on each of the individual communities to such a degree that, in the attempt to categorize a grey form within each category. However, the mass of single people creating difficulty in translation of information and transformation of discussion is only a portion of the seemingly thick miasma that one may feel is clouding the discussion.

Intersectionality, the next layer of murkiness, is a topic covered by several identity philosophers, gender studies professors, critical race theorists, philosophers, educators, and most working professionals. This word describes the entanglement of factors that plague simple categorization. In the analysis of just a small portion of the underlying concerns within the four minority groups of focus, and their respective isms, there are clear lines that connect each individual to their category. One person is black,

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<sup>59</sup> Alcoff’s Visible Identities

<sup>60</sup> These conversations and debates occur specifically within the media, and high powered media outlets such as Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN

one person is trans, one person is impoverished, and no one shares the same identity. In a world brimming with only the simplest separation between beings, the analysis is correct. People have separate lives and live within their context with no overlap, bearing no consequence to our categorization. Yet, the simplicity of leaving this categorization alone, and tearing apart the individual minority groups have already been done. Communities have been outlined, simplified, and consequently debriefed, with a final force pulling them back together while still acknowledging individuality. Even still, the realization of individuality requires the acknowledgement of the doubling and tripling of overlapping outside of the barriers between minority groups. Writers have focused on this for decades and centuries, peeling away the layers of fog to see the rubber bands so tightly wound into a ball. One band is blackness, another is bisexuality, another is a middle-class family, and another is the title of female, with thousands more factors woven together to create a singular human being and body. Again, this is a simple interaction, with explanations abounding. Written on paper, intersectionality reads as it looks: all aspects of your life work in concert, with none disconnecting, to form you. Pieces of identity are inescapable, and, therefore, incapable of being unchained from the remainder. The problem, however, lies in the conflict between minority statuses, majority statuses, and conflict within social structures and expectations.

In one setting, for example, a person of color may be deeply woven into the protestant faith, leaning into the tenants of the Christian faith that lie around sex and

sexuality.<sup>61</sup> Taking into account some of the negativity that springs from the Black community, in some cases, may be contrary to whatever sexuality that person of color may ascribe to. Moreover, their cis-female status may play into their objectification by men, even if they are in a well-to-do family.

In another setting, an older transgendered man may have a problem going to the appropriate restroom in a certain part of the United States, after years of being out on the street due to his HIV+ status. He could be white and living in an area where he has grown up or living within a homeless shelter from time to time. A young non-binary white straight person, who presents as “male”, in a middle-class household may never encounter an issue in his lifetime, even though he is part of a community that is often stereotyped and part of a community that is made invisible.

All of these people have overlap between the groups that are mentioned above, and, again, only begin to crack the surface of the isms at play. Those same people of color in the first example of potentially conflicting intersectionality could be sent to jail for any number of reasons related to their race, beaten by loved ones for their orientation, or killed legally<sup>62</sup> in some states. Likewise, the young white straight person could accidentally say something about their gender and be harmed. The impoverished white man can be targeted by teenagers and cussed out from any point on the side of a road. Strong, study individuals within the purview of an ism are susceptible to the plight of any

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<sup>61</sup> It important to note that there is a difference in the “black” and “white” church when it comes to the concept of Christ. People of color within a church that leans towards the words of James Cone may feel differently from those in a church not yet adapted to liberation theology

<sup>62</sup> Gay panic defense notation in states such as Texas, reported by NBC

majority in any place.<sup>63</sup> This relation of intersectionality places every minority with even one visible status at risk of harm. Be it in legislative harm via bills and processes that disempower community members, or potentially irrevocable consequences of openness, minorities learn to keep to themselves, and to become close to likeminded and identifying friends.

Texts on identity, philosophy, society, race, gender, and politics often point to problems of identity as correlating to the problem of social categorization. A brief reading of any of the supplementary or central texts on racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism reveal the inclination that we have to surround ourselves with those who are like us in experience, appearance, opinion, and the like.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, we avoid the challenge of exploring themes outside of our social status.<sup>65</sup> From one perspective, the inclination to surround one's self with those who have a similar experience or identifier is self-sustaining. However, the self-sustaining quality that is apparent in the surrounding of self with an identical "self" is molded into the risk of encountering and enhancing bias. According to studies on the creation of bias in humans<sup>66</sup> the primary factor in the continued presentation of stereotypes and expectations is the lacking interaction between the bias holder and the stereotyped. In broad terms that have been the subject of political

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<sup>63</sup> Even in situations where there is a minority majority – civil rights protests, sit ins – those people are no match for a police force that stands to “protect” by enforcing those isms.

<sup>64</sup> It is important to outline that all sources are imperative to this discussion. Without the multitude of voices agreeing, it is easy to deem the thought one that is politically left leaning or ungrounded. The voices here are utilized by both conservative, liberal, and moderate people, and their words are crucial to both the philosophical cannon and the respective concentrations of each of the authors.

<sup>65</sup> Dr. B. Tatum “Why do all the black kids sit together?”

<sup>66</sup> We All Do It: Unconscious Behavior, Bias, and Diversity by Ronald Wheeler

and social debates, these stereotypes are also pushed forward depending on media consumption. Moreover, a study of major media bodies<sup>67</sup> confirms that the perception of racial, orientational, and gender bias among media consumers can be directly correlated to the representation and discussion of stories surrounding those minority groups.

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<sup>67</sup> Covered in Studies by Stefano DellaVigna, Ethan Kaplan, Tim Groseclose, and Jeff Milyo respectively.

**ON THE “-ISMS” – RELEVANT PHILOSOPHIES AND ETHICAL  
COMMENTARY (LYONS, 2018)**

Philosophers have been marked by their discussion on thought and implementation of concrete and abstract idea. The integration of important considerations into day-to-day life become the central purpose of those practicing *philosophia* within the western world. Consistent with that theme, major voices within Philosophy and Critical Race Theory (CRT) have found themselves bombarded with primarily ethical inquiries on the isms. These inquiries tend to be corroborated by the wider consensus view of the perspective from which the isms should be unpacked. That view: isms should be avoided, and their underlying premises have no place in common culture. Now, that consolidated statement is an oversimplification of compounding arguments against the upholding of biases that manifest themselves as -isms. Within racism, heterosexism, sexism, and classism the bias placed against the minority population is problematic for core ethical philosophers such as David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Aristotle, and Friedrich Nietzsche. With these philosophers as anchors for what the Western Canon’s stance on the isms comes from, a contextual analysis of each individual philosopher is required. This is, in part, because the structures that have been detailed (a) have even more intersectional components, (b) contain contradictions via contextualization, (c) are at times difficult to combine, and (d) inadvertently create a negative disposition in conservative and liberal spaces.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> There will, inevitably, be a political set and statement included in the discussion on the isms not because the problem has been necessarily political in the cultural sense, but because the discussions have become political in a more overt way.

These ethical philosophers, though seemingly dated and entering their second editorial inclusion, provide a candid approach to the staging and status of identify philosophy within the Western Canon. Their work, however, also is within the realm of critique. As centuries old white males, they are part of the reality of philosophy, and are the creators and shapers of this longform dialogue. However, shifting to a diverse and inclusive philosophy means working within diverse realms and utilizing different voice<sup>3s</sup>. This begins, in the transition from wholly ethical considerations to considerations of humanity, with the work of Levinas. A proponent for the use and acceptance of the existence of the “other,”<sup>69</sup> he worked to give beings an innate response to self and formed rational that encouraged the decisive introduction of the other as a self-lying outside of the self. This decision to acknowledge the presence and being of the other, while also acknowledging the presence and being of those who experience the other, produce identity both conceptually and actually. Without acknowledging the other, Levinasian argumentation would have no ability to retain individuality of self or another, thereby creating an illogical framing. For Levinas, there is purpose and meaning in the ability that individuals have to retain their being, and it provides necessary space for both majority and minority communities. However, the impact of Levinas creates a more tangible systemic lean when corroborated by the actuality of the term “other”.

As Levinas has defined the other, the reality of being outside of the self is inherent. For interpersonal or one-on-one relationships, the single tier dichotomy is one of person to person. A single human being can by sight or sense recognize the existence

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<sup>69</sup> Totality, the Other, the Infinite: The Relation between Ethics and Religion in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas – Thomas Tjaya

of another being with relative ease in physical interactions. Excluding the complications that come with an increased use of technology and methods of distancing a singular person from another singular person, humans exist as social creatures who are often aware of their ability to note and notice other humans. However, the otherizing of a person, on a systemic level, is considerably more challenging, and at the heart of Levinas' other within the context of this dialogue. Furthermore, there is a requirement for differentiation between the details that lie in the other as "similar" and the other as "dissimilar".

The similar other, within the context of a racialized discussion, is first initialized in the understanding that the person existing outside of the self is the other. By defining that entity as an "other," the ability to learn, investigate, and observe becomes a logical next step for the self to the other. In analysis of the other, commonalities and differences are noted, providing the self ample opportunity to translate their otherness to a social hierarchy or integrate their being into a psychosocial category based on experiences, prejudices, and encounters. The other who may share a geographic connection, a similar class, or appearance may, in this situation, be otherized and humanized. On the other hand, an ever-growing distance between the self and the other provides an otherization that may be devoid of humanization for the other. In either event, the acceptance of the other transitions itself into the realization that the other has an "identity". This identity can be found in the course of social investigation, visible and easily deduced, or invisible and incapable of being grasped, and, in holding the work and observations of Levinas to

be true, the next steps of exploration are into the identities that are applied to this social hierarchy.<sup>70</sup>

As stated in previous portions of this chapter, class, sexual orientation, gender, and race are defined identities. Under the work of writers such as Ofelia Schutte and Linda Martin Alcoff the discovery of identities and the power to identify becomes an important, final, and crucial role in restructuring and developing a solid foundation for different social groups. The structure of identity objectively houses similarities that have formed communities. Groups of friends often form around something as simple as shared gender, experience, or social status “naturally”<sup>71</sup> though the requirements for entering these social groups are either stringent, nonexistent, or debatable.

In the work of Latinx philosophers centered around liberation and racial reconciliation, the inclinations of the writers are often towards a gaining and growing acceptance of those who come from a similar racial background. However, Latinx culture diverges, with much of the same intersectionality and pluralism<sup>72</sup> leading citizens of different countries with similar heritages to differentiate themselves. In the writings of *mujeristas* and Latin American philosophers, the overarching narrative of colonization plays a grandiose role in the interpretation of identity. People hailing from Spanish speaking areas of Europe experience a connection linguistically and historically with Latin Americans. However, identity is reshaped by the lack of shared experience, with

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<sup>70</sup> With the limitation in scope and research available, the full breadth of opportunities for further study will be included in the conclusion of this paper.

<sup>71</sup> Natural as a scientific term that is mildly outlined by

<sup>72</sup> I would like to point heavily to the work of Jean Luc Nancy with regards to pluralism. I won't be able to fully cover the topic within the context of this thesis, but his work is particularly foundational for pluralism. (On Pluralism, Nancy)

some Latin Americans ascribing to native languages and cultures that are just outside of the common western view publicized in media outlets. Latinx philosophers are also found at the intersection that People of Color with the United States, creating a dual identity that forces conformity to another area of identity that is often equated with the racial diatribe that is “mulato.”<sup>73</sup>

The concept of mixed [racial] identity is a secondary, but steadily growing portion of identity philosophy. For Latinx philosophers, the primary concentration is on the ability for Latinx identifying people to be able to claim their identity. Yet the discussion on mixed identity becomes clouded by discussions of appearance, language, and social awareness within this category for Latinx people. “White passing”<sup>74</sup> Latinx people may be considered part of the Latinx community by virtue of their family or knowledge of culture, but when placed as the Levinasian other, they become defined as being “white” or “latinx” based on the color of their skin or their visible and audible characteristics.<sup>75</sup> Novelists and commentators, when dealing with identity problems, are then poised to respond in affirmative or disaffirming ways, or opting not to respond or correct at all. People of color who are not Latinx, on the other hand, become part of the debate within communities on “blackness” and what qualifies as “black”<sup>76</sup> with the same physical and social hurdles remaining present. In both events, identity philosophers are often writing about more than the thoughts and ideas that cloud the judgement of those in power. On the contrary, writings are often full of emotive or experiential statements explaining the

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<sup>73</sup> A term, derogatory, used to define those of mixed racial identity

<sup>74</sup> Passing for White, Passing for Black, Adrian Piper

<sup>75</sup> i.e. stereotypes.

<sup>76</sup> Piper, 8

confusion that is either caused or felt, and the lack of definition that comes from the grey area created by interraciality.

Within the context of sexuality, gender, and class, identity is outlined with the same hard lines that provide issues for the racialized identity. Sexuality, first and foremost, becomes equated with a lack of naturalness, presenting Alcoff with questions on “heterosexism” and “heteronormativity” that place biography at the center of mind.<sup>77</sup> Within sexuality and gender, definitions are belonging to the individual, but subject to the social expectations of those around the individual. Outside of the LGBTQIA+ Community, for example, identity is based around the common culture, and debatably forced onto youth during their formative years.<sup>78</sup> This constant pressure to deny self has often been placed on longstanding institutions of faith that encourage, fund, and promote widely discredited methods of psychological correction and analysis.<sup>79</sup> With theological concerns backed by years of what has been credible scientific inquiry the entire process becomes demonstrably linked to theological concerns within major belief groups such as modern Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism.

### **An Interjection – Theological Consideration**

Christianity within the western world has developed, over the course of centuries, out of a host of religious openings. With Protestantism and Catholicism as major voices of the church, with ties leading back into Jewish history and tribulations, it would be improper to concentrate on the religion’s history and action alone. This particular

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<sup>77</sup> Nadal 34

<sup>78</sup> Nadal 92-110

<sup>79</sup> See DSM-5 Gender Dysphoria Shift from DSM 4

religion, however, finds itself at the center of several major debates and discussions regarding the isms under investigation.

Reflectively, the institution stands bound to a group of core beliefs, with the common thread running through every version of Christianity being an adaption of Jesus Christ into the theological framework that Judaism does not. Accepting Christ as an essential part of faith and accepting his teaching and standing as the “logos”<sup>80</sup> as real, means considering the trinity, the standing of God, and the concepts of sin, resurrection, and forgiveness. While the debates within the church vary on topics, the Church remains one of the marks of colonization of the Americas and exterior lands. Christianity, and the evangelization of those who didn’t know of God was the premise for murder, destruction, and theft of lands from native peoples on every affected continent.<sup>81</sup> Past the evangelization lies the enslavement of individuals, the killing of those who did not choose to adhere to the Christian faith, and the death of those who chose not to assimilate or relinquish lands.

Considered savages and beasts, the Christianization of the population began with the understanding that none of the populations of the continents in questions could be educated, and that their humanity was nonexistent. As Christianity continued to grow in popularity and relevance to different racial groups, gender minorities, and classes, those who were outside of the sexual norm were killed<sup>82</sup> after being subjected to brutal torture. In addition, the lacking humanity of people of color remained biblical, with the church pointing to biblical enslavement as a practice worthy of continuing. As civil rights

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<sup>80</sup> Meaning the word or reason (Greek Λόγος)

<sup>81</sup> De Las Casas; Bonilla-Silva, 31-35

<sup>82</sup> Nadal, 21-47

progressed, this same text was used to continue the disenfranchisement and subservience of women as minorities, cultivating an environment in which women were relegated to the acts of childbirth. These women, who had the ability to learn about God received a dual sentencing to subservience, with biblical norms and upholding of traditional values pressing the man to act as the head of household and spiritual intercessor for the home.<sup>83</sup>

The prominence of these biblical characterizations continued well into the twentieth century, with lynching attended by church goers as a common thread in American life. LGBT individuals and people of color were hanged, along with those who elected to indulge in interracial marriage, protect, or act as friends of people of color. Moreover, lynching occurred at the hands of groups such as the Klu Klux Klan, which held a consistent biblical ideology and theological standing. Killing other humans became acceptable, pushed forward by doctrine and Christian influence within the “gallant south”<sup>84</sup> and promoted as a social gathering of high standing within communities innumerable. In this sense, the entirety of Christianity is also interwoven into this discussion on the isms, and the longstanding institution remains critical to discussing what and how the isms operate in a western culture that is predominantly Christian.

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<sup>83</sup> Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Corinthians 11:3 create this combined feeling. (Add bible info)

<sup>84</sup> Words of Abel Meerpool’s poem Strange Fruit, made famous by Billie Holliday

### **Concluding Presentation of Methodology**

All of this information, and so much more, directs a discussion on the isms that are being observed and encountered. Accepting these discussions as more than base opinion, and treating them as facts, however, has an insurmountably more powerful effect. With political ideologies in current dissonance over the existence of these isms and the history therein, the plethora of sourcing, the corroboration of evidence, and the presentation of factual information is critical to continuing to process the isms. Without considering the analysis of prominent ethical thought, portions of the complex dialectic, and the multitude of interlocked concepts and themes, it would be impossible to begin to introduce the concerns that continue to present themselves in society, as well as to probe and create a pathway to a solution. I conclude, based on history alone, that Greenville University is presented a challenge in theological and secular contexts, and must overcome those issues in order to form diverse and inclusive philosophies

## **CASE STUDIES**

As a student pacing towards graduation, I have found a home and ideological space for growth in the world of journalism. As a result, it is best to incorporate the interviews and reporting that corroborates the information given in previous chapters. However, in highlighting these issues, philosophical assessments and ethical standards can be applied, creating a holistic set of examples of what the isms look like in both silence, dormancy, and activity. These interviews and reports act as Case Studies of Greenville University

### **Case Study 1 – Resources for LGBT Students in Christian Higher Education**

Students who, mind you, will be graduating in 2019 are interacting with a constant barrage of change. I would argue, with the might of an opinion writer at the New York Times, that change is a mortal inevitably, and that it comes with subjective notes of positivity or negativity. I enjoy the change from a more taxing general education requirement to the lighter credit load, whereas the growing silence regarding the various isms (racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and so on) gives me chills and keeps me wondering about the future long into my Sunday night. Be that as it may, a necessary shift for one group of individuals is being treated less as a reality and more as a distant problem.

LGBT students are in a prime area for harassment, and primarily affected by some of the policies that the institution, and modern church, have instilled over the course of generations. Some of these problems are, while not easily solved, easy to determine or diagnose. The lack of student openness and transparency, due in part to the tenants of the Lifestyle Statement, as well as social constructs, makes the projection of a non-problem easy to do. The institution can say, while not condoning the non-traditional relationship - I'm speaking of non-heteronormative intimacy - of certain student, that it portrays only the best wishes and hopes of American Christianity and, more specifically, their denomination. But the institution isn't quite ready for the problems that stem out of a lack of resources, with some students saying that, "we don't need it."

Whilst in Residence Life, I was of the opinion that I got the opportunity to change and effect lives in ways that may have never been imagined before the introduction of an LGBT student leader. I stand today, glad that I had my position when I did. I've talked to

people about their beliefs, and challenged common thought through methods that I learned in my degree and through my own trials in higher education. However, my constant public complaint has always been for the plight of LGBT people in a system devoid of resources. Counsellors with specific gender identity training, or LGBT specific experience are hard to find, but necessary for some students. Likewise, the availability of counselors outside of the Christian tradition can be helpful for the formation of healthy spirituality - I personally subscribe to this experience, though Christian counselling may be just as helpful.

But the entirety of our institution doesn't even house safe spaces such as Biola's "The Dwelling".<sup>85</sup> We have students, working through sexuality and gender identity on this campus who are looking for help and guidance in their time of need. Moreover, we have a growing population of out individuals on campus (I love this trend deeply. When I initially came to Greenville, I knew of 2 out students on campus. Now, there are several, and a slowly forming community!) who may be growing ever closer to fully understanding themselves.

The institution can help with that.

I don't believe that another student worker or student leader should be tasked with defining and describing themselves to the detriment of themselves and their mental health. On the contrary, I think that it is the responsibility of a school devoted to the "holistic development" of each individual to truly take up the yoke that is here. I've been non-binary, gay, black, and proud on this campus for nearing four years, and I have been unapologetically so for only two or so. I believe that being yourself, taking on the

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<sup>85</sup> ["The Dwelling"](#)

fullness of who you want to be, is an ascension; momentum towards becoming God's authentic creation. Obviously, becoming what God created is a key portion of how Christian Higher Education should work (at least, that is my hope). It's not controversial, the presence of this marginalized group, but it is unexpectedly difficult to see the institutions providence of truly helpful resources. As students come forward, and rise to leadership positions from minority statuses, I urge you to encourage the institution to provide what it should: "Focus on the development of the whole person so that each student thrives spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, relationally, and physically."<sup>86</sup>

Since the original creation of this posting, Greenville University had a short term posting for "CONTEXT", a group modeled after the original *Sustinere* group at Biola University. The group conducted initial research about student involvement and created a preliminary event. Some students, when discussing this particular subject, prompted that Mosaic could also take up this mantle, but that, "[LGBT] students need their own community."<sup>87</sup>

This first report is aligned with the expectation that any institution of higher education should have both the space and the ability to improve and support minority communities and cultures in theory and practice. Whether or not an institution of higher education is actually committing itself to this process, the reality is that these communities exist within any and all higher education spaces. The argument therein, although encrypted by most theological aspects of private institutions of higher education, is plural. Is it ethical for institutions with some type of theological or moral

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<sup>86</sup> ["Focus on the development of the whole person so that each student thrives spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, relationally, and physically."](#)

<sup>87</sup> Student 'A' Interview

commitment to create policy and procedure that disconnects that community from some aspect of itself? Is the inaction of policy and procedures that support the institution's stance problematic if it sequesters that group? Does a policy or procedure at the institutional level affecting one community qualify as disenfranchisement or "discrimination"<sup>88</sup> of that community? Does the visibility or actions of that minority change the framework of the discussion surrounding this group?

### **Assessment of Case Study 1**

In the initial statements of this report, it was reported that LGBT students are "in a prime area for harassment," with the institution of Christianity being noted as common denominator at Christian educational institutions.<sup>89</sup> Over the course of this research, several notes had been made by previous and current students about the social problems being a result of the systemic and institutional policy. These social and policy based issues reflect poorly on that institution's LGBT minority population in the form of lacking resources. The creation of the policy encourages heterosexism by annulling the "experience" and "being" of those students implicitly. That heterosexism manifests itself in the social space, creating a lack of communication between minority communities and an institution. That institution then doesn't have the representative voice and doesn't hear the request of the minority community resources.

Christian Universities have, to a small degree, experienced some success in challenging these topics when providing these resources, which are necessary items to

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<sup>88</sup> This term is placed in quotations primarily because it has legal consequence for institutions and for those who are being affected by any administrative efforts at institutions or businesses.

<sup>89</sup> CCCU 2016 Study

consider with regards to healthy higher education experiences. That minute experience is reflected in the data and recorded experiences of Greenville University students<sup>90</sup> and the greater population of Christian Universities across the western hemisphere. However, institutions that are approaching these conversations in earnest, without any sort of resource for those students, create a space in which students must provide their own support in place of the institution.

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<sup>90</sup> Studies Conducted by

## Case Study 2 – Hiring of Diversity Officers at Greenville University

On my radio show “On the Pulse”, I noted and reported the visit by Chief Diversity Officer candidates to Greenville University<sup>91</sup> in the month of November. Often, I try to make sure that my reporting on particular events is devoid of a direct correlation to my bias, be that internal or external. This article, however, covers a question that I have been hearing from particularly keen students, whispers of faculty, and key staff. That question is quite simply this: what happened in this hiring process?

Initial thoughts from the colloquium and breakfasts are scribbled down in my notes, and gave me a feeling of euphoria. Both candidates, that made it to this point in the process of a campus visit, were black educators in their own rights. In their colloquium, the experience and perspective of those individuals shone through the presentations that they gave, and in the questions they received about diversity on campus. Some of their ideas were small, and based entirely around shaping dialogue and discussion on campus. Others were bigger community ideas, that would transition the institution to a more positive environment, empowering marginalized student groups in a way that has yet to be attained. These two were authors, administrators, spiritual guides, and leaders that stood the potential of really improving the campus culture.

Since the writing of this article Greenville University has announced the hire of Terrell Carter,<sup>92</sup> who has presented himself before the university with courage and clarity. However, I believe it is imperative to focus on two points, as students, that may present a counter-narrative to the decision at hand.

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<sup>91</sup> [visit by Chief Diversity Officer candidates to Greenville University](#)

<sup>92</sup> [Greenville University has announced the hire of Terrell Carter](#)

**Qualifications were not explicitly in Carter's favor.** In my original article, I noted the qualifications that both individuals had with regards to *diversity* at Greenville University during the time of their interviews and colloquium. The other candidate brought eleven years of diversity experience to the table, and a wealth of relevant knowledge about changing and crafting diversity plans. They also held a deanship and focused on diversity and inclusion in their dissertation. Carter, objectively, did not hold this direct set of qualifications. Indirectly, he had years of experience in areas of community building, as well as experience in spiritual leadership, a doctorate in congregational health, and international work that could be helpful to the institution in the realm of diversity. However, it is hardly disputed that the other candidate's qualifications and *direct* experience far outweighed the years of *indirect* experience gained at the university level.

It's also important to note that, while both of the candidates held excellent positions and degrees in fields helpful to Greenville University, the other candidate also held a degree in Higher Education Administration, which is a vastly different educational degree path from a Doctorate in Congregational health.

**Carter has an interesting connection to police officers, at a time almost immediately following campus protest years.** After a growing fervor between student and staff groups regarding the plight of people of color on campus, we saw the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement. Now, this movement has, indeed, quieted itself to some degree. However, that doesn't make the institution's move any less visible to students who have participated in that movement. There was care and caution made in this decision that provides a sense of clarity or demonstrable certainty about the

institutions decision. Students, faculty, and staff were all given access to critical points of the hiring process, as well as the opportunity to ask questions of the people being interviewed. Even so, this willingness to be open to ideas is critical. Though we can assume that Dr Carter will continue to be willing in discussion on diversity and inclusion at Greenville, the inherent biased towards a particular group is visible, whether or not it exists in actuality.

**Carter continues the type of administrative style that has been at Greenville University.** As a person who has been able to observe the administration's style since 2015, I can tell you that there has been a visible shift towards appealing a traditional conservative understanding of the institution. This, in and of itself, is not inherently good or bad. On the contrary, taking a position is something that this institution has seldom done discernibly. (According to sources from the beginnings of protest movements on Greenville University's campus, the problem of a lacking institutional stance on most issues is what powered the movement against the administration from within the student group.) The lack of positioning, in the case of the University, has created a definitive "feel" to administrative work. High level administrators are often defined by students I interview as being focused on "listening but not doing".

This state of the institution is something that may, to some, necessitate change in order to propel discussions on diversity forward, as the institution is often described as needing "change" not "reinvigorating". In the colloquium, I asked questions of both candidates that had an underlying theme of whether change would be accessible. For the other candidate, the question was focused on the difficult topic of LGBTQIA+ students disenfranchised by the institution. In order to combat that problem, change is more than

necessary. On the contrary, it is critical to the survival of an already maligned population. They took that challenge and stated that the institution would “need to gain resources for that student group”. Carter faced the same question typed, when I asked about “doing more than listening to the student body,” by asking the question, “who do you listen to first?” Now, the answer to this question may seem a bit obstructed to some, as my question gave the option of “students, alumni, and faculty or staff members.” Most faculty and staff, who I’ve asked this question, instinctively state that the students are who should be listened to when it comes to discussions on any sort of campus problem. Carter, however, did not state that. He stated an open ear to every part of the discussion. When pressed on inaction by the institution, his response was statement, “all we can do is listen.”

Dr. Carter will be the Chief Diversity Officer, tasked with the representation and application of good institutional diversity policy, and the creation of a diversity plan for a community of over one thousand people. Without a moment's pause, I state that these positions need to be made plain to the students that will be represented on the highest level by Dr. Carter. While I will not be here to be personally affected by this hiring decision, my concern for community and continuity matter so much more. I hope that the institution will supply him with the staff, funding, and overall support necessary to create long lasting positive impacts on the community for students of all races, genders, classes, orientations, [and nationalities.]”

This article, both in its inception and its continued relevance to the student body of every university, is predicated on the understanding that diverse segments of the student body require representation in the upper echelons of administrations. With the effects of

discrimination most notably found in higher education and employment<sup>93</sup>, portions of administrations and human resource officials have been increasing<sup>94</sup> the number of representative officials for minority communities in high level positions of companies. This change to the makeup of administrations, contrarily, has provided a series of relevant inquiries voice within the body politic. Do institutions broadly have an initiative to represent minority communities with respect to those communities, or are they beholden to their institution? What is the purpose of an administrator who's tasked with the implementation of a diverse and inclusive philosophy? Should an administrator be locked into an ethical standard above or outside of their administrative tasks? Should the ethical standards of minority representatives be higher than those of their counterparts? Where should institutions focused on diverse and inclusive philosophies, and their implementation, begin formulating their theories? Likewise, should gender decisions be made in accordance with the hiring of diversity candidates? To what degree are institutions affected by the problems of gender minority populations? How often do institutions, in hiring practices, reflect the needs of representation by minority communities? Is the decision to hire a problem of actual intentionality or perspectival? What purpose does perspective serve in introducing difficult problems in the implementation of diverse and inclusive philosophies?

### **Assessment of Case Study 2**

Within this report, we see an intersection of both a racial and gender categorization that is prominent in hiring processes of majority white institutions that are

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<sup>93</sup> Comparative Analysis of Reported Income of Graduate Assistants and Faculty/Staff (Appendices)

<sup>94</sup> Based on Early 2000's study by Brandon Wolfe, Ph.D. and Sydney Freeman, Jr., Ph.D

beginning to integrate diversity positions into their administrative positions. As they do so, often the attempt is made to hire individuals that are of a minority status, and that diversify the institution numerically by virtue of their identity. In the context of Greenville University, this hire was baffling to interviewees and students who were given the opportunity to follow the events and procedures leading up to the announcement. The following assessments were made regarding this specific report:

- The decision to hire a minority is simply a fragment of diversity and inclusion decisions made in higher education. It can be one of many reasons but making it the lone reason is what creates social chaos among personnel and other potential hires. The decision to hire a person of color can be an additional consideration, but shouldn't overshadow experiences, education and equality and equity in the hiring process – especially between multiple minority candidates.
- Diversity efforts by the institution should still be considered within the context of the institution's history and future. Hiring another male to lead diversity and inclusion in a majority white male institution creates one problem, but another is highlighted by the relationship that the candidate has with a group at odds with student groups at the University. There could be intentionality abounding in that hiring choice, but the reflection that perception of choice has on the student body is making that intentionality less-than-visible.
- Picking a less qualified candidate that continues to empower the traditions of an institution does not promote change.
- Changes orchestrated by an institution that houses no space for conversation and communication for those affected are unlikely to have success.

- Institutions have a lower rate of retention and happiness within their organization when they don't have representation on the administrative level.

### **Case Study 3 – Reconciliation in Christian Higher Education**

Students, alumni, and staff at Greenville University confirmed the departure of Provost Edwin Estevez, a high-level person of color within the upper administration over the course of the past year. In that person's stay in the administration, inarguably grand strides had been made for minorities and international relations throughout the entirety of the institution's framework. Without much warning, Estevez announced his departure, citing definite career motion, and his decision was followed with praise and admiration by faculty, staff, and administrators alike. This departure came a short while after another staff member within the diversity field abdicated their position. (The institution actually has that particular administrator's title still attached to their Greenville.edu biographical information.) While that diversity staffer did not officially leave the institution or create a public statement, many student leaders and faculty/staff members have suggested that his resignation was due to racial tensions and tendencies within the upper administration.

According to seven faculty and alumni sources, Estevez, during homecoming weekend, had a family member allegedly accused of theft. The uproar, be it true or false, resulted in a less-than-public-relations-friendly issue between a student worker and the senior administration. Two witnessing alumni stated that this incident occurred in The Panther Clawset during Homecoming, and stretched out over the course of several weeks. According to those witnesses, the administrator, and various secondary sources, this incident was also viewed as racial, based on the predisposition that the student worker had.

Multiple sources, including family members present in the store, acknowledge a minor verbal altercation between the student worker within the store and one of the

family members. This verbal altercation did not include any expletives or disruptive language, according to sources close in proximity to the incident. However, the language was mildly aggressive to those onlookers from just outside of the Panther Clawset doorways.

Following the accusation, institutional conduct procedures were triggered, resulting in a conversation with that senior administrator and the student. That same conduct process was approaching a conclusion when the student and administrator met in the Armington Center's Dining Commons. That afternoon, physical contact between the student and administrator (a hug, according to alumni sources, that was “preceded by a request for consent”) was interpreted as being an attempt at sexual misconduct. Some of these same sources claim that, in that interaction with that student, a secondary Title IX investigation was prompted.

At that point, several faculty sources stated that connections to Greenville University's Board of Trustees were used effectively against the administrator, and that a meeting was held between a board member and administrator. That meeting, according to several sources from within Greenville University's upper administration, produced a less-than-stellar reaction from the University President. According to several current and former administrators, a variety of student, faculty, staff, and alumni, this action was taken by the President with high regard for Free Methodist Superintendent Ben Tolly. Tolly, the aforementioned board member and relative to the student, allegedly had discussions with the President that caused him to pressure Estevez to depart.

Furthermore, according to one alumni source, the Free Methodist denomination's election of leadership during the year of this administrator's withdrawal from Greenville

University's board was affected by the incident substantially. During his election, a letter from key faculty and staff was drafted to press Tolly out of his board position at Greenville University. This letter, that I have since obtained from two faculty and staff members, called for the resignation of the board member immediately following the resignation of the administrator. According to the staff members who shared this letter, their work helped to clear Tolly from serious accusations of misconduct in the University.

I have asked Estevez for comment about this incident, and he spoke of a drive towards the same reconciliatory ends that he works towards in The Estrategia Group, a strategic diversity group working towards reconciliation. "I don't [seek to] harm the institution," he said. "It is most important that we achieve true reconciliation in the creation of works centered around the problems. I don't want to feel like the telling of [my story] is sensationalistic."

When asked about how the creation of an article highlighting the details of this story would affect the institution and the community, Estevez was straightforward. "I am not sure how to best make light of the situation without causing additional pain or damage to the positive momentum achieved as a result of my departure -" My curiosity peaked, as I wondered if the University may have asked him to be quiet, or placed him under some sort of Non-Disclosure Agreement. The reply? "No, GU has not silenced me, but I have chosen to deal with structural and systemic issues first."

The institution's public comment on that administrator's departure, on the other hand, was one of sadness, with the president stating that, "he has been such an invaluable collaborator to me and the mission and vision we've been putting together for the institution." However, the institution effectively omitted the details of his departure at a

time when diversity and inclusion was extremely important. Transparency wasn't what made it to the surface, and truth was not apparent to the community members who would have benefitted from the open reconciliation that comes from lucidity. On the contrary, it has magnified the perceptions of certain student leaders of color, who have said they have, "lost a voice of color in the administration." (It's important to note, however, the addition of the Chief Diversity Officer position in Greenville University.)

Recently other prominent administration or faculty/staff members rose to the defense of the administrator in question, and stated that their particular circumstance was, "most obviously connected to racial bias." The details of this incident, while seemingly unclear, weigh heavy as social justice continues to gain prominence throughout Christian academia. This particular report weaves threads throughout all parts of our discussion on the isms. At first glance, racism is the identifiable lead in this narrative, providing the reader with a reality that can also act as a façade for the other isms at play. The questions that we can ask relating to these are, first and foremost, what isms, of those described in this context, are at play and discoverable by diving into the text of this report? What ethical standards are being upheld in this discussion? Is there an ethic that should be applied to this interaction that has not been applied? What diverse and inclusive philosophies have been installed by this institution to combat this issue?

Conclusively, there are a myriad of problems present in this report, stemming from a host of issues that are hard to define. Either party has to be willing to admit that their position is based in a mindset or action that they deeply feel was or was not present. This report highlights a problem within the institution, which seems to have not applied a philosophy of diversity and inclusion that was capable of contextualizing the situation or

investigating without what the accused provost defines as a bias. Consequently, the reporting becomes murky, and collides with the narrative that the institution may be displaying.<sup>95</sup>

### **Assessment of Case Study 3**

This case study is a sign of what could happen within an institution that has a diversity and inclusion administrator at the highest levels. That administrator, with power, connection, and education abounding within the institution suffered a major loss and created a hole in the institution's administrative staff. The point of this report is to break the myth that people of color can achieve power and privilege within a context and somehow escape the social expectations that create and maintain racialized, sexualized, and classist ideologies.<sup>96</sup>

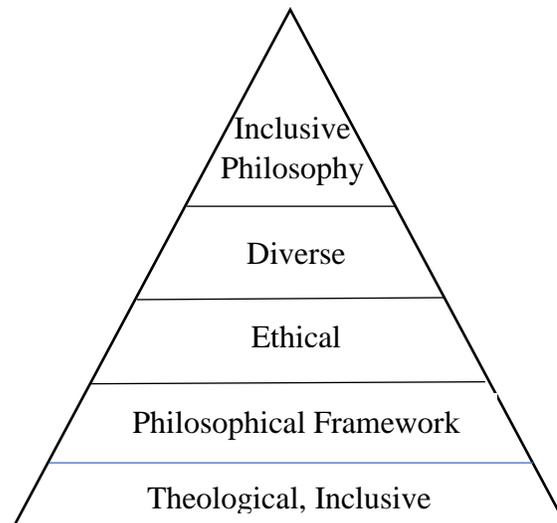
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<sup>95</sup> The institutional problems that are present, arguably, are the result of a lackluster philosophy of diversity and inclusion (Noted by a Diversity Staff Member at the University)

<sup>96</sup> Noted in Bonilla-Silva's 4-6<sup>th</sup> Chapters, including expectations set forth of a post-racial society via the existence of America's first black president.

## THE POSITED FRAMEWORKS

All of the considerations made in the prior chapter stem from the understanding of a necessary framework being at play when it comes to the introduction of diverse and inclusive philosophies into any area or system. Understanding and realizing that the condensing of this discussion to just four relatively close examples from the same local, the response is not unlike that of other political commentators, social commentators, ethicists, and citizens<sup>97</sup>. In being similar to the work of those commentators, it also falls prey to the same accusations of bias that are promulgated by different media outlets within journalism. The ethical considerations that are made in the questions following reports, research, and relative journalistic efforts achieve one purpose – it explicates the particular opinions that stem from ethical or moral expectations. The other purpose they achieve is allowing a reversed look into what exactly the creation of a diverse and inclusive philosophy does to a writer or commentator.



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<sup>97</sup> Twenty Theses, Dussel, 21-50

### **Theological, Inclusive Framework**

Excluding any considerations that may be made by psychologists, it is understood that humans maintain a core belief set entirely based around what knowledge they gain in the first few years of their existence<sup>98</sup> and experience with their parents. As a result, it is impossible to simply look at questions of philosophical import without acknowledging the anchoring perspectives that help to form the human mind. This first level of the philosophical framework is, as such, the theological, inclusive framework<sup>99</sup> of human understanding. Akin to the work of theologians such as Niebuhr and John Wesley, the preponderance of historical and contextual evidence leads us to believe that humans can be most directly affected by theology. The following reasons are provided for that evidence:

Placed squarely at the start of our conversation is the fact that any shift in theological grounding as a Christian could be helpful, and I would argue “crucial” to the development of a diverse and inclusive philosophy. This is, first and foremost, because there is an accepted understanding of what the psychological and philosophical community see as paramount to philosophy. Being raised within a sect or portion of Christianity, within [again] the context of the western world, is a considerable note, putting one in the religious majority. Accepting that that religious majority has had centuries of control over various legislatures, kingdoms, and castes means accepting the long standing ability that a shift within that religion has on the socio-political atmosphere. I contend, based on that history alone, that theological grounding, and ideological shifting

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<sup>98</sup> Modification of Core Beliefs, study by Amy Wenzel

<sup>99</sup> Inclusive is included in this nomenclature because, using western dynamics, theology attempts inclusion

is the pivotal point for the continuing diversification of America, of the religion, and of the evangelized world. Without changing, and taking the steps towards aligning the ideological and theological necessities within the by agreeing on what is tertiary and what is primary to definitive Christianity, the aforementioned isms gain freedom from moral and ethical chains.

To this point, these isms must have the power to at least challenge the socio-cultural norms and theological stereotypes that have been built up over centuries and millenia. Heterosexism, for example, challenges some of the [debatably] secondary beliefs of Christians. I argue this, in part, because Christianity doesn't cease to be, and a Christian doesn't cease to be, if they suddenly have a particular identity. On the contrary, the ability to identify one's self as Christian – or Atheist or Agnostic or Satanist or any form of religion – requires the believer to have defined and existed in their belief. One can, in their youth, be baptised and raised within the confines of the same church for the first twelve years of their life, and they may have been spiritually formed and developed

by those years of immersion within that church or culture, but they must profess to their Christianity to themselves.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> I say that they must profess to themselves because the idea of a Christian being “Christian” is built into the complexity of religiosity. People announce in life a number of things for safety and security. Humans lie, cheat, steal, and participate in everything from what Christianity calls, “sin” to what society would deem “purity.” In either case, being of a religion is an internal reality, rather than a concrete concept. For example, a slew of Christian Americans live in countries and lands that are not necessarily friendly towards Christians, or are hostile towards Christians. Those people, in videos published by terrorist groups or dangerous actors, have been tortured or forced to denounce their Christianity at the cost of their lives. While biblically problematic, in part due to the posture that some Christians take regarding their willingness to accept martyrdom, living Christians who denounce Christ and claim a connection to another deity may still, in fact, hold a belief in that deity. Likewise, people who are deep within church leadership and control various avenues of the church could, just as possibly, have a great distance from their deity that is touted as a deep closeness. Again, in either event, the ability to identify one’s self within a religion is an issue of identity – which is the prime focus of any anti-ism writing – deserving of protection and focus. With this in mind, we recognize that identity is self-definition. However, this problem is doubled over by encounter with the other. In Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s Master Slave Dialectic, it is posited that humans gain consciousness, and thereby formation of identity, by encountering another mind. Including the input of Nietzsche, this means that forming identity and identifying requires knowing of what you are not. Accounting for those statements, it follows that identity is still self-defined. In knowing what you are, or what you are not, you are knowing of yourself. It is impossible to know the innermost thoughts of anyone besides yourself, and you can define another person, based on your context. However, the identity that someone has for themselves is influenced by others (at times) and upheld by themselves at all times. LGBT people must identify themselves as LGBT, people of color must identify themselves as people of color, the classes must identify themselves based on their class, and so on. I could guess, based on a variety of notions and observations the sexuality, gender identity, sex, race, class, and so many other identifiers. By speaking or sharing those observations and notions, I can influence the subject, and I can those around the subject. However, if a blind man is told he’s black, and he is never seen skin color, he has to believe that he is black. LGBT people must believe that they are LGBT in order to step into their being. This is best described in the discussions of Austin Channing Brown to a person of color at Greenville University in 2019. That statement, “you are black,” stems from the belief that the person of color had that they were not truly a person of color. That lack of belief caused them to refer to themselves as white, and to note that they had been raised within that white context without acknowledging any sense of skin tone. This is because identity is an anthropological, sociological, philosophical, and psychological construct (just to name a few of its connective parts. Identity, in all fields, however, necessitates a sense of being.

Likewise, the ability of the church to both acknowledge, encourage, and protect the growth of identities, while recognizing that each Christian gets to identify and profess themselves as Christian. By shifting to this method of identity, based on the history of the church, and the research preceding, I believe that a theological framework can be established that is strong enough to build upon a diverse, inclusive, and applied philosophy.

### **Philosophical Framework**

Simply put, a philosophical acknowledgement is required to dive into the problems that exist in the creation of the isms, as well as the destruction of the isms within the human mind and any institution. A strong statement made primarily because the argument just above the moral and psychological is the ethical one.

Different branches of government, employers, and types of institution are often require to install a worker who's main job is to question and uphold ethical standards within the institution relative to whatever body controls both the written and unwritten rules of ethics. Most notably within the span of 2018, the ethics of lawyers and those certified by the state and national bar have come into the public arena. In part, this is because the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Donald J. Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen was discovered holding video tapes of conversations with interviewees and clients. His actions were frowned upon within the legal community<sup>101</sup> and in the national media.<sup>102</sup> Those actions, while not illegal within the state in which he practiced law, nor contrary to any particular ruling, were part of the cause for him to be stripped of

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<sup>101</sup> According to the American Bar Association Journal Writer Debra Cassens Weiss

<sup>102</sup> According to Washington Post Journalist Deanna Paul

his certification by the American Bar Association. The ABA and a host of other legal scholars and analysts were adamant that this act was contrary to the ethical standards that a lawyer should uphold<sup>103</sup> for their clients. These ethical considerations, like all ethical considerations, come from a concern with morals, and are formed out of philosophy's leaning towards humanity and the consideration of other beings. The philosophical assertions from which this ethic will be built will center upon the following statements:

While realizing that the racial construct has created racism, we understand that race is intrinsically found within a variety of institutions and at multiple levels. This is due, primarily, to the upkeep of the historical trends, stereotypes, and expectations that remain present in the social discourse and the racial dialogue, placing people of color at the bottom of a frame, allowing for proximity to a particular shade or texture<sup>104</sup> to embolden and empower the racial structure even more.

The heteronormative construct creates an unfortunately powerful adversary for the LGBT+ community, because it create an abnormality in supporting a normality.<sup>105</sup> Normality is, in fact, social at its core. Within the confines of simple definition, normality is commonality and therefore bound to the common. Social expectations, language, and culture help us define what is normal, and what isn't. It is, in one sense, inclusive, and in another exclusive. The philosophy we should hold is that normalization is useful, but should not be used to exclude, indoctrinate, or force conformity.

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<sup>103</sup> ABA Journal, Weiss

<sup>104</sup> Colorism according to Bonilla-Silva, 24, 100-134; Proximity according to Work by Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum

<sup>105</sup> Nadal, 23, 44-47

Since people exist in a multitude of communities in their intersectionality we cannot limit or block their ability to access their community. Likewise, no one minority community should be forced into unnecessary conflict with another unnecessarily on the basis of their minority status.

- Contrary to assertions made by the majority, space must be made for minorities to thrive in community with one another.

Institutions are organizations, and by definition built upon a body of people, and form goals that support a form of sustainability for themselves. As such, an organization has the responsibility to support all those people who may interact with that organization. A philosophy that includes awareness of problems of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and creates space for a minority voice requires activity on the part of the institution. This means that having a simple thought or list of policies that protect and defend the rights of any minority group, while useful and perspectively actionable, should not allow for a lack of action on the behalf of any one arm of an institution.

Inaction is an action in and of itself.

All people have the ability to achieve some privileged position, be it over a rock or over millions of citizens. However, not all privilege is the same. Women, for example, did not have the privilege of voting before all males in America did.<sup>106</sup> However, white women were capable of more social power by that same point in time<sup>107</sup> than people of color in general.

- Development of a diversity philosophy that is effective requires an ethic.

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<sup>106</sup> National Voting rights for all Men in the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment (some states allowed for women to vote for state legislatures before national voting power was given)

<sup>107</sup> When faced with conflict against people of color

## Ethical Framework

The statements within the philosophical framework will act as building blocks with which to develop a full ethical framework. This framework must seek to correctly determine what is “correct” and “incorrect”, rather than what is morally acceptable or unacceptable. This is, in part, because morals are not shared – often this statement is most problematic because the concept of universal morals seems accurate, but it is simply not possible.<sup>108</sup> With entire people groups agreeing that there are circumstances under which it is morally acceptable to kill, or morally unacceptable to help certain people groups, it would be inaccurate and inadequate to limit ourselves to the term “morality.” With information and reporting defining this conversation, we will develop morals based on what is factually harmful or helpful to a minority community.

- All people have an essential responsibility to themselves, and should not seek to harm those around them, as they should not welcome harm upon themselves.

As an institution or group, there is a plurality of ideologies and beings that stand the potential of entering into conflict with one another. Conflict, in and of itself, is not necessarily harm done to another being. On the contrary, honesty and civility are likend to the essential responsibility that one being has to another. The philosophical theme of treating others as you would treat yourself becomes crucial at this point. As a human, you are deserving of:

- Health and happiness.

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<sup>108</sup> There is no universal (Aristotelean)

- Equality in name, deed, and title. In the same manner that the constitution seeks to make all men equal under the law textually, the application of ethics should seek equality as and when possible.
- Equity, when equality does not sufficiently lead to health and happiness.
- Consideration and contextualization. Without considering every angle of a problem or considering the thoughts and wellbeing of every inch of an individual, you cannot make a decision that follows the first ethical rule. As a person, either under scrutiny or approbation, you seek a response that is specific to you, and intentionally crafted. Without consideration of your being, and contextualization of your experience, this is impossible to do.
- An institution has a responsibility, as a coalition of individuals working towards any goal, to develop policies and procedures that promote and provide for holistic growth, development, and sustainability of people groups that are marginalized.

### **Diverse Philosophy**

Diverse philosophy, in its conception, is inherently the result of an ethic. Without an ethic in existence, several layers of issues can arise. For the minority, we see the rise of revolutionary action. Take, for example, the work of protest groups such as “Black Lives Matter” through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The group impacted the media landscape and communities across the nation, and gained notoriety and infamy within liberal and conservative circles respectively. On either side of the debate, the awareness that this group arose out of racial issues within the western world is definite. Likewise, civil disobedience and the rise of what has been noted as such have been reported in both big and small cities around the United States. This leads me, and other critical race theorists

and political theorists to believe that the United States doesn't have a philosophy of diversity as a country. Institutionally, this reflects on the prison population, the training of police officers, the distribution of stories by media outlets, and countless other institutional issues. On the opposite side, members of social majorities often may react or act in counter protests, blind -isms, and application of derogatory terms to the minority population.

A philosophy of diversity and inclusion that is truly acting to provide for the minority communities it seeks to protect observes ethical considerations that we have listed in our previous section. However, it also takes into consideration a necessary addition to the equation with which diversity can be handled: power.

Power is culminated in privileges of different types and is, by itself, an actionable concept. Power, even within science, can't exist without impact – power requires a jolt; comes from a source to an object; is an action and consequence – and is often held, within our context, by institutions. In this sense, the power that one individual has over another is tantamount to the power that an institution has over its membership. That power is the critical need for creation of diverse spaces, and the creation of diverse philosophy. Without a philosophy that accepts this power, there is no ability to accept the responsibility that so follows. The responsibility, within every institution, being the fact that the implementation of our ethic leads us to amplify the voices of the minority within our sphere of influence.

Conclusively, the questions that spawn out of a strong diversity philosophy are the ones that are most formative for an institution. By committing to self inquiry, utilizing these questions, we become aware of the surroundings that are present, and begin the

process of working towards implementing diversity. Those questions are: Who is missing? Who can't we see? Who can't we hear? What are we doing to provide space for them? Are they receiving equality and equity within their context? Answering these questions requires knowledge of the other, and a willingness to act in service to other; to take on a learning posture.

**Taking on these postures, while remaining aware of the various issues that have preceded the writing of this thesis, and applying the philosophies and ethical considerations moves us into inclusivity.** Well applied diverse philosophy lies hand-in-hand with inclusivity, transcending to that particular level. However, diverse philosophy with know action remains just that – a set of thoughts and statements on diversity. An applied philosophy of diversity, answering the questions on diversity and applying an ethic includes because the questions seek and the institution seeks to fulfil the notions set forth by that ethic. Applying philosophies of diversity and inclusion can be as simple as shifting hiring practices, or as complex as devising an entirely new diversity plan for a long standing company with a history of disenfranchisement. However, it is the culmination of these efforts – the recognition of a foundational aspect, the building up of an ethic from that theological and/or philosophical point, the creation, and implementation of diversity philosophies to inclusion – that create a sustainable environment for those minority communities.

## **AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

There are several areas that could be ventured into for further study with regards to the representation of people and the application of diverse and inclusive philosophies. Some of those topics include:

- Investigations into the world of media correlation to increased or decreased institutional racism within organizations.
- Media ethics and the ethical coverage of race relations throughout the western world
- The degeneration of diverse and inclusive philosophies within majority spaces
- Historical recounts of racial reconciliation and areas in which reconciliation is found
- Educational implementation of diverse and inclusive philosophies
- Sexuality and Gender Theory with regards to diversity and inclusion efforts across the continental United States
- Sexuality and Gender Identity in collaboration with diversity within Christian circles; Christian higher education
- Commentary and dissection of the Western Framework and its Correlation to Post Modern Christianity
- The concept of Normality, and the correlation between ethical decisions and “common sense”
- Race and Power Structures, the difference between privilege and power
- A substantive analysis of the intersection of particular isms and minority groups, such as LGBT individuals who are “racist,” people of color who are heterosexist, and so on.

- The particular influence that the white church has on the black church, its concept of sin, and the speed with which the black church accounts for systemic change in the white evangelical space.

This list, of course, is not substantive, and shifts within the current social climate change the relevancy and availability of sample matter for the individual topics. With regards to sex and sexuality, as well as psychosocial analysis of that particular category, new information is being documented on a day to day basis. The field is relatively new, and information from that segment is suggested highly by this thesis as a starting point for continued conversation on the lesser documented occurrence of heterosexism.

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