

AN AFROCENTRIC CRITIQUE OF RACE DIALOGUES:  
AN APPLICATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN AFRICOLOGY

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## **ABSTRACT**

*An Afrocentric Critique of Race Dialogues: The Application of Theory and Practice in Africology* is a critical examination of race dialogues based on the Afrocentric paradigm's constructs of African agency, Afrocentric consciousness-raising and liberatory action. This dissertation critiques race dialogues based on Africology's mission, function and philosophy to determine its applicability as an educational approach to eradicate racism.

This dissertation explores the purpose, goals, motivations, process, impact and outcomes of race dialogues within Africology's theoretical scope and frames the analysis within the desires, challenges, and possibilities for African-Americans' relationship with European-Americans based on the major tenets of Malcolm X's political and social philosophy. Malcolm X's philosophy and activism provide the rationale for African-American liberatory practice, offer a historical critique of race relations in the United States, establish the terrain for productive, sustained and anti-racist race relations, and justify the need for interracial dialogues.

As a result of this approach, this research reveals the compatibility of race dialogues to Africology on theoretical and axiological grounds and challenges the value of resistance to racial collaboration given Africology's founding mission. While the philosophical and political tensions endemic to African-American-European-American relations continue to complicate educational strategies focused on improving intergroup relations, this critique acknowledges the possibilities that race dialogues can advance Africology's curricular and pedagogical goals.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

The quality of the communication between African-Americans and European-Americans reveals the political and social status of African-Americans in the United States. While the contemporary landscape reflects racial advancement on the part of African people in the United States, racial division, separation and mistrust continue to be the predominant characteristics defining the relations between African-Americans and European-Americans. A major thrust of the Africological enterprise is to develop approaches, models and theories to combat racism in all its forms, investigating the standing of dialogues between African-Americans and European-American remains an important academic, social and political project.

Within the last 30 years race dialogues have emerged as a significant response to racism in higher education in the United States. This dissertation will provide an Afrocentric critique of race dialogues for their relevance to the mission, scope and purpose of Africology and the Afrocentric paradigm. *An Afrocentric Critique of Race Dialogues: The Application of Theory and Practice in Africology* is the first Africological inquiry into the burgeoning field of study and practice of race dialogues. While the research on race dialogues is still in its nascent stage, dialogue scholars, researchers and practitioners have made significant strides on a theoretical, curricular and pedagogical level in demarcating the validity of dialogue as an effective approach for

creating intergroup understanding, elevating racial consciousness and advancing racial justice, particularly for people of African descent in the United States, the diaspora and Africa.

Emblematic of the struggle for African agency and victorious consciousness, African-American leaders have recognized that for racism to be eradicated, institutional and structural forms of racism have to be interrogated by both African-Americans and European-Americans. Malcolm X stated:

*I said that on the American racial level, we had to approach the black man's struggle against the white man's racism as a human problem, that we had to forget hypocritical politics and propaganda. I said that both races, as human beings, had the obligation, the responsibility, of helping to correct America's human problem. The well-meaning white people, I said, had to combat, actively and directly, the racism in other white people. And the black people had to build within themselves much greater awareness that along with equal rights there had to be the bearing of equal responsibilities. (X, 2012, p. 411)*

Confronting racism has been a consistent political and social concern of African-Americans. As President Barack Obama has articulated, fundamental to the confrontation against racism has been a desire and demand for Europeans to make the fight for freedom a collective, and collaborative, endeavor of Whites and Blacks. During his run for the presidency, in a landmark speech of March 18, 2008, "A More Perfect Union," Obama shared Malcolm X's sentiment:

*This was one of the tasks we set forth at the beginning of this campaign – to continue the long march of those who came before us, a march for a more just, more equal, more free, more caring and more prosperous America. I chose to run for the presidency at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together – unless we perfect our union by*

*understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction – towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren. (Obama, 2008, p. 2)*

For Obama, “to move in the same direction,” includes racial dialogue; an open, honest and authentic form of communication requiring both African and European peoples to collectively confront the racist nature of their historical, and contemporary, relationship.

Over the past several decades, politicians, educators and social scientists have formalized dialogues among racial groups as a strategy for eradicating racism and improving relations. Consequently, race dialogues have emerged in higher education as a formal curricular, and pedagogical, approach for ameliorating race relations. Because the adherents of race dialogues argue for their importance as an educational model for improving race relations within higher education, those within Africology should discern the applicability of dialogues based on the philosophical, theoretical and methodological tenets of the discipline. Due to the centrality of race and race relations to the founding and mission of African American Studies, all curricular and pedagogical approaches espousing relevance to the advancement and liberation of African people must be critically scrutinized by Africologists.

Race dialogues have been employed in movements for social change, including the liberation struggles of people of African descent in the United States; continuing to be offered as one solution to advance interracial understanding and

communication, especially when major national race crises are relevant to the national consciousness. However, as the former United States Attorney General Eric Holder states, while there is a great need for racial dialogues, Americans have been reticent to engage in them:

*Though this nation has proudly thought of itself as an ethnic melting pot, in things racial we have always been and continue to be, in too many ways, essentially a nation of cowards. Though race related issues continue to occupy a significant portion of our political discussion, and though there remain many unresolved racial issues in this nation, we, average Americans, simply do not talk enough with each other about race. (Holder, p. 164)*

Harold Saunders, a leading international figure in the dialogue movement, defines dialogue as a “distinctive way of communicating. It is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others’ concerns into her or his own picture even when disagreements persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other’s valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other. *Interaction* is a broadly applicable, probing way of talking—and listening—different from negotiation, mediation, debate, legal argument, diplomatic exchange, or normal conversation. It is the essence of relationship” (Saunders, *Sustained Dialogue in Conflicts: Transformation and Change*, 2011, p. 39).

Race dialogues are one form of intergroup dialogues; which are “designed to engage individuals and groups in the processes of exploration of divisive social issues, conflict resolution, decision making, and collaborative action” (Dessel, *Dialogue and*

Social Change: An Interdisciplinary and Transformative History, 2011, p. 168). Adrienne Dessel traces the history of intergroup dialogues to the work of Socrates and Plato, explaining that its Greek origins define it as “talking together and interchange of ideas that seek mutual understanding or harmony” (Dessel, Dialogue and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary and Transformative History, 2011, p. 168).

The United Nations Development Program defined dialogue as a process of

*genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other with such depth and respect that they change based on what they learn. Each participant in a dialogue strives to incorporate the concerns of others in their own perspective, even when they continue to disagree. No participant gives up his/her identity, but each recognizes the validity of the claims of other human beings and therefore acts differently towards others. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1016)*

Sarah Maddison says that dialogue is “designed to create a space for meaningful and potentially transformative engagement between individuals and groups who may otherwise struggle to communicate effectively with one another” and is “intended to engage people in divided societies in a process of listening to one another deeply in ways that enable them to ‘penetrate behind the polite superficialities and defenses’ of their normal discourse and engagement”, though not being focused on “achieving substantive agreement” (Maddison, 2015, p. 1017).

This dissertation will critique race dialogues based on the major philosophical, theoretical and methodological dimensions of the Afrocentric paradigm. The critique will provide an in-depth understanding of race dialogues as to their relevance to

Africology and explore the educational value of race dialogues within the context of the discipline.

In critiquing race dialogues, Africology will explore the impact of a very specific curricular and pedagogical approach for explicating, interrogating and eradicating racial oppression. The critique offered here recognizes that the nature of European racial oppression has not encouraged open, and honest, communication in the relations between African-Americans and European-Americans. Consequently, African-Americans have not generally explicitly communicated the challenges of maintaining productive relations with European-Americans. It can even be argued that African-American cultural norms place mistrusting European-Americans as a core survival strategy. This mistrust is a direct response to the physical and social violence Europeans have imposed on Africans as part of a system of social control and racial domination.

This racial division and mistrust, which inhibits productive and authentic interracial communication, occurs even on an international level. As Maddison argues:

*In many countries that have been divided by violent conflict, inter-ethnic/intercommunal hate and mistrust, exclusion, discrimination, and the experience of real and perceived threats to culture, person and property persist. Segregation and sectarianism have become institutionalised and normalised within society and politics, leaving little capacity for interaction between groups. Undoing these legacies of violent conflict will take effort. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1027)*

Historically, European-American racial violence has precluded a partnership of equals, generally based on mutual trust, respect and cooperation. As a survival

strategy, African-Americans learned to mute their voices, hide their feelings, and maintain distance in all interracial interactions. As Paul Laurence Dunbar expressed in his famous poem, *We Wear the Mask*, African-Americans have masked their self-expression in order to maintain their humanity:

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.  
Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask.  
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
We wear the mask!  
(Wiggins, 1907, p. 184)

Unfortunately, this tendency to mask thoughts, emotions, pains, and joys remains representative of the race relations. African-Americans continue to mistrust European-Americans, particularly in terms of communicating genuine attitudes and experiences about race. Derald Sue explains that this mistrust of European-Americans is sometimes mislabeled as paranoia because of a dismissal of historical and contemporary racism. Sue explains:

*Yet, history and anecdotal tales are replete with examples of how, in the face of historical oppression and discrimination, African-Americans employ strategies (behaviors toward Whites) that have proven successful for survival in a racist society. Playing it cool is one such strategy that Blacks employ to conceal their true thoughts or*

*feelings (rage and anger) and appear serene, calm, or non-reactive in the face of racism. Using this tactic is a survival mechanism aimed at reducing one's vulnerability to harm and exploitation in a hostile environment. True expression of thoughts and feelings endangers one's status in life and at the extreme can result in physical retaliation and death (being tortured, physically shackled, or killed by lynching). Thus the paragon and its continued contemporary use have proven to be a functional survival mechanism. (Sue, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, p. 108)*

This survival strategy has existed since Europeans chose to enslave Africans and is maintained to today. Anadolu-Okur provides an example from the childhood of Frederick Douglass to illustrate this point:

*Yet at an early age he learned the extent of communication one could initiate with a slave master, because he knew that too much knowledge always meant trouble for an independent-minded slave. Thus, Douglass asserted: "Ignorance is a high virtue in a human chattel; and as the master studies to keep the slave ignorant, the slave is cunning enough to make the master think he succeeds. The slave fully appreciates the saying, 'where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise'." (Anadolu-Okur, 2016, p. 12)*

Within the confines of Africological modes of inquiry, this dissertation will provide a unique examination of the historical struggle against European oppression as reflected in African-American desires for equality and freedom. Despite the protected mask displayed with European-Americans, African-Americans have fervently discussed, described and lamented their status as an oppressed people among themselves as a means of ameliorating their condition and fighting racial oppression.

## **Introspection**

To fully appreciate this exploration of race dialogues, Africological modes of inquiry and investigation require some personal reflection on the motives for this work. Having been intellectually grounded in African American Studies as an undergraduate and graduate student; molded politically by Afrocentricity, Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Black Feminist Theory for almost 40 years; groomed organizationally by the African Heritage Studies Association as an educator-activist; having served in leadership positions in the National Association for Multicultural Education and Pennsylvania Association of Liaisons and Officers of Multicultural Affairs; and oriented culturally, and spiritually by the Ausar Auset Society; all these various forms of thinking, leading, and teaching, have informed my desire to critique, understand, and explain race dialogues within the confines of the Africological intellectual framework. Working in higher education for over 28 years, as an administrator (Director of Multicultural/Diversity Affairs at four universities) and a university instructor (teaching African American Studies at Temple as a graduate student and, subsequently, teaching courses on class, gender and race, sociology, multiculturalism, and Black history at several other institutions), has significantly impacted my desire to appropriate curricular, pedagogical and leadership methodologies, philosophies, theories, models, concepts and approaches that advance agency, liberation and centeredness for African people.

Having been grounded in the Afrocentric paradigm for over 25 years, the intergroup dialogue approach seems to correlate rather significantly with the

philosophy and scope of Africology. As a practical matter, intergroup dialogue provides a significant opportunity for African American Studies faculty to employ a curricular and pedagogical model that would not only impact the survival of the discipline but also provide a very cogent strategy for expansion. Given the fact that the goals, mission and purpose seem to be consistent with Africology, exploring race dialogue for its relevance to the Afrocentric paradigm and Africology seemed quite reasonable, if not necessary. Utilizing the pedagogical practices of race dialogue could provide an effective approach to teaching African American Studies course content in almost every area of the discipline.

Furthermore, in 2009, I created an intergroup dialogue approach, called Transformational Intergroup Dialogue (TID); as an educational intervention strategy to facilitate intergroup understanding, enhance the capacity of teachers, leaders, and managers for intergroup engagement, and contribute to the eradication of oppression related to race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, and religion. I have been collaborating with colleagues to employ TID as a viable intergroup engagement approach for advancing centristic pedagogy and practice, social justice, multicultural education, equity and inclusion.

Transformational Intergroup Dialogue combines aspects of both the Michigan Model of Intergroup Dialogue and Transformational Social Therapy (TST). TID utilizes the intergroup dialogue framework and structure of the Michigan Model with the facilitation techniques, philosophical groundings, and theoretical scope of TST. TID supports the development of individuals to overcome their obstacles to leading,

teaching, facilitating and managing diverse groups by helping participants to understand and transform their fears of intergroup engagement.

Between 2009 and 2013, I was able to study, critique and practice TST as the program director and instructor for the Graduate Certificate in Diversity Leadership at Temple University, which utilized Transformational Social Therapy as the primary learning tool. The founders and partners of the Charles Rojzman Institute taught TST to students in the Certificate program in three out of the four courses of the program. Additionally, I have been offering workshops and trainings on TID to organizations across the United States. Consequently, I became a regional advocate and facilitator of intergroup dialogues, offering TID workshops and facilitator trainings to over 600 professionals in various fields, including education, healthcare, human resources, social services, human services, social activism, and business.

Over the course of the last ten years, I have concluded that intergroup dialogues can provide a supportive pedagogical framework for exploring the African American Studies curriculum. The critical-dialogical approach employed in intergroup dialogue is very consistent with traditional African American Studies pedagogy, placing personal narratives, liberation ideology and democratic practices within the teaching environment as central to student learning.

Given the social justice imperative of African American Studies, I was intrigued by exploring evidence from various intergroup models for their effectiveness at engaging students and professionals in race dialogues to improve race relations. A central concern involves the effectiveness of these various forms of intergroup

dialogue for enhancing the curriculum and pedagogy of African American Studies, especially in the area of being a more effective agent of change related to African-American liberation (as well as improving intergroup relations). Recognizing social justice as an important aspect of its mission, De Vere Pentony acknowledges that the African American Studies curriculum promotes agency for African-Americans and even “provides opportunities for whites to enrich their understanding of the black man and thus, perhaps, to help build more meaningful bridges of mutual respect and obligation” (Pentony, 2007, pp. 11-12).

One of the most central interest of this work is recognizing the importance of the transformational nature of African American Studies and how social and individual transformation must be clearly articulated within the discipline as part of the Afrocentric paradigm and methodology. While the curriculum is centered on exploring African-American agency and oppression through a variety of courses, the impact on students is both cognitive and affective. In order to benefit from the highly emotional issues that are central to the curriculum, African American Studies faculty can employ teaching strategies that foster pedagogy based on a holistic model of student involvement.

The discipline could benefit by emphasizing a transformational Afrocentric pedagogy based on the axiological standards established at the founding and best conceptualized within a Kemetian understanding of *khepera* (the perpetual unfolding of the human spirit). The exposition of such a perspective is more than an attempt for a philosophical justification of this position by arguing that the *Maatian* orientation

of the Afrocentric paradigm requires the repositioning of Afrocentric theory and methodology for its impact on societal reconstruction. Therefore, within the context of this discussion, the transformational nature of Afrocentric pedagogy becomes paramount for ensuring teaching effectiveness and the establishment of basic standards for Afrocentric curricular and pedagogical strategies.

Molefi Asante asserts that “Afrocentric education represents a new interpretation of productive transmission of values and attitudes. Students are made to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears. African American children learn to interpret phenomena from themselves as centered; whites learn to see that their own centers are not threatened by the space taken by African Americans or others” (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance*, 2007, p. 83). As Doñela Wright argues, the dislocation of both Africans and Europeans is purposeful, intentional and pernicious:

*While there is an intentional ignorance of cultural and historical knowledge within the Africana community, many people of African descent are not intentionally ignorant of their history and culture. Rather, they have been socialized to intentionally forget their history and culture, first by the Ma’afa, then by global white supremacy through social, educational, political, governmental and other systematic and institutional forms of oppression. (Wright, 2016, p. 2)*

Traditional Eurocentric disciplinary education mythologizes whiteness and negatively orients Africans and Europeans to historical truths about all peoples.

In both the theory and practice of intergroup dialogue, the intent is to disrupt the racist mythologizing by engaging participants about race on an individual, institutional and societal level. In my experience as an undergraduate and graduate

student in the field, while African American Studies provides an opportunity for students to better understand themselves from a critical cultural and historical perspective, pedagogical considerations rarely reflect the depth and level of engagement offered in intergroup dialogues. These pedagogical considerations are foremost in exploring the cogency of race dialogues as exemplified in the Michigan Model, Transformational Social Therapy, and Transformational Intergroup Dialogue.

One hope of this research is that facilitating race dialogues within the context of an African American Studies curriculum could offer the opportunity for a deep engagement where African-Americans and European-Americans could intimately and intentionally examine the most important issues of the discipline by utilizing an approach that seeks transformation. Intergroup dialogue is about providing individuals with an awareness, knowledge and skill that will enable them to be better advocates for social justice, while contributing to collaborative action with others. While the curriculum, activities and exercises create a dialogic experience that assists in the development of participants, it is not always clear that the model does not consciously ensure that the individual needs, barriers and challenges are integrated into the process.

In order to combat the fear and mistrust that African-Americans often express in their relations with European-Americans, I have chosen to utilize Maat as a guiding ethical construct for establishing a framework for conduct and behavior within the discipline. Asante argues:

*The discipline of Africology is grounded in the principles of Maat. Those ancient African principles seem to hold for all African societies and most African people trans-generationally and transnationally. The principles of Maat, as recently clarified by Maulana Karenga, include harmony, balance, order, justice, righteousness, truth, and reciprocity. What the Africologist seeks in his or her research is the pathway to harmony and order in society. This is why the ancient people of Kemet called this concept Maat. This is not about observing and experimenting in order to control your behavior but rather this is about making humans whole. (Asante, Afrocentric Manifesto, 102)*

As will be explained later, the inclusion of a Maatian orientation to human relations is vital to any Africological inquiry in order to lay the foundation of the analysis of African phenomena; as well as for cosmological purposes. Ana Monteiro-Ferreira provides an understanding of the Afrocentric rationale central to this work when she states:

*From its Kemetic foundations African worldview is embedded by an intense spiritual dimension. This spiritual dimension has become synonymous to a deep African religious thought permeating every aspect of African everyday life even when it was impacted by Islamic and especially Christian religious practices that have, in more than one way been responsible for many Western interpretations of African spirituality. (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2010, p. 106)*

The inclusion of a Maatian orientation is based on numerous factors related to the necessity of advocating for an expansive and inclusive perspective of Africological inquiry. The humanizing quality of Afrocentric intellectual endeavors is grounded in an orientation for the discipline's scope to not only liberate Africans but the world. At times, the practical aspects of teaching courses in African American Studies is not consistent with the curricular and pedagogical tenets of its founding, especially in

terms of the inclusion of European-American students. This is a major issue that may confound some in their understanding of the necessity for critiquing race dialogues.

### **Defining Race Dialogues**

This dissertation will utilize the *University of Michigan Intergroup Dialogue Model* (being referred to as the Michigan Model) as the major frame for analysis and critique of race dialogues. Transformational Social Theory will serve as a secondary model for understanding the goals, scope, and process of interracial engagement approaches; it also has value for the ways it expands the understanding of race dialogues beyond the scope of the Michigan Model. Additionally, other models, which are similar in scope and design, such as the Sustained Dialogue Model and the Bohn Model, will be integrated within this discussion to provide context, texture, and meaning to best explicate the framework of race dialogues.

Within higher education settings, race dialogues are a unique pedagogical approach to bringing diverse groups of students together to study race and racism with the expressed intent of understanding how race has impacted American society. Joshua Miller and Susan Donner provide a useful and concise definition of race dialogues to further ground this discussion:

*Dialogues about race and racism offer individuals an opportunity to explore who they are in relation to others while also affording them the opportunity to ponder the meanings of their own and others' social identity and group membership. Racial dialogues are essentially structured conversations that encourage expressing one's self and listening to others talk about race and racism. It is hoped that by having direct, open, and honest contact there will be improved*

*understanding and cooperation between groups. (Miller & Donner, 2000, p. 34).*

Dialogues focus on building connections between individuals through deep, reflective exchanges concentrating on understanding rather than competing or winning an argument. By having groups share their authentic thoughts and feelings about their identity, participants are able to explore commonalities and differences with others and find ways to promote collective problem-solving and decision-making.

The dialogues can be transformative because individuals have an opportunity to review how some of their past thinking and behaviors have been reflective of individual biases and prejudices. New knowledge and emotions can result from the dialogue when people choose to base their relationships in their new reality and overcome past fears.

### ***The Michigan Model of Intergroup Dialogue***

Race dialogues have been implemented as part of the recent Intergroup Dialogue Movement been popularized by the University of Michigan since the late 1980s. Several educational institutions across the United States have utilized the Michigan Model of Intergroup Dialogue, including Villanova University, Syracuse University, University of Washington, University of Maryland at College Park, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Occidental College, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, and Arizona State University. The Michigan Model, which serves

the major example for this discussion, defines intergroup dialogue in the following manner:

*Intergroup dialogue is a face-to-face, interactive, and facilitated learning experience that brings together twelve to eighteen students from two or more social identity groups over a sustained period to explore commonalities and differences, examine the nature and consequences of systems of power and privilege, and find ways to work together to promote social justice. Some groups that participate in intergroup dialogue include men and women; white people and people of color; African-Americans and Latinos or Latinas; heterosexuals, gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people; and Christians and Jews. Students engage in active and experiential learning over the course of eight to twelve sessions. The IGD groups are guided by trained facilitators who use an educational curriculum. (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. vii)*

The aim of intergroup dialogue is to engender a critical consciousness about social identity by having participants construct new meanings together, build alliances, and move to action on key social issues, including racism. Required readings convey to participants a social justice critique about the historical and social contexts of a particular group's oppression. Intergroup dialogue differs from other diversity education programs by focusing on both cognitive and affective dimensions of student engagement and learning. While readings can provide the conceptual framework, participants learn primarily by sharing individual and group experiences as well as listening to, and challenging, the experiences of others. While several colleges and universities operate intergroup dialogue programs as individual courses, many institutions integrate the intergroup dialogue methodology within the

context of courses focused on social identity, such as those related to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and social class.

Zuniga, Nagda and Sevig explain that higher education institutions contribute to institutional diversity efforts primarily by focusing on numerical and curricular diversity efforts, while neglecting interactional diversity; they argue that institutions “have been concerned with the first two levels—increasing structural diversity by recruiting more students, and infusing multicultural content into the curriculum. While these initiatives are important, efforts to develop structural and curricular diversity do not, by themselves, encourage meaning cross-group interaction among students” (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002, p. 7).

The Michigan Model promotes the idea that bringing divergent groups together to dialogue about important issues of social identity enhances the learning environment and prepares students to be better citizens (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker). Patricia Gurin, one of the leading architects of the Michigan Model, maintains “students who interact with diverse students in classrooms and in the broad campus environment will be more motivated and better able to participate in a heterogeneous and complex society” (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, *The Benefits of Diversity in Education for Democratic Citizenship*, 2004, p. 19). She also argues that higher education institutions must create curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities for students to learn to “think in pluralistic and complex ways, and to encourage them to become committed to life-long civic action” (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, *The Benefits of Diversity in Education for Democratic Citizenship*, 2004, p. 33).

Two trained facilitators, one from each identity group, facilitate the dialogue. The facilitators are trained in self-awareness, including awareness of their own social identity in the context of systems of domination and privilege, and of oppression and exclusion; knowledge of the groups involved in the dialogue; group processes; and community building.

Race dialogues provide an innovative educational program that helps participants explore such complex issues of race, racism, and racial identity. Zuniga et al. state “Intergroup dialogue shares common goals with other diversity education efforts in higher education, yet it is distinctive in its critical-dialogic approach to addressing issues of social identity and social location in the context of systems of power and privilege. Unlike efforts that emphasize content knowledge about group inequality or prejudice reduction through personalized encounters, intergroup dialogue strives to balance intimate, interactive, and reflective encounters among diverse participants with cognitive, affective, and active approaches to learning about diversity and social justice” (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, pp. vii-viii).

### ***The Transformational Social Therapy Approach***

Charles Rojzman, a French psychologist, created Transformational Social Therapy almost thirty years ago to assist people in addressing the violence and hatred related to race and racism in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The main goal of TST is to foster the practice and theory of healthy multicultural democracies by building relationships between individuals and groups by centering group engagements on dialogues and transformative action.

Transformational Social Therapy is focused on improving race relations by creating an environment where participants are able to express their emotions, explore intergroup conflicts without violence, share information between groups, and engage in transformative actions by addressing intergroup conflicts through authentic, meaningful dialogues. Rojzman argues that “We can’t change people, but people will change if they are motivated to do so” and offers TST as a model for people to create a new kind of relationship (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 2). Rojzman says that TST is not about changing people or relations, but to raise the “awareness of the lack of trust, fears and prejudices, so that people will become willing to change themselves in ways they themselves determine” (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, TST offers not only a method of engagement but also requires participants to “enter into co-operation with each other. But for that you have to agree to hear the other’s feelings of fear and hatred” (Rojzman, 1999, p. 3).

As part of Transformational Social Therapy, Rojzman espouses that the genuine, honest expression of negativity, violence, and hatred that exists between people must not only be explored within intergroup dialogue settings, but they are crucial in order to move to the level of group development and societal transformation. Consistent with the African American Studies curriculum, Rojzman argues the notion of *otherness* that exists among both the oppressed, and oppressors, creates a schism between groups that limits intergroup relations and contributes to

oppression. For Rojzman, oppression is a form of sickness that must be understood because of the way that violence manifests in race relations:

*This is why violence, unleashed in some parts of the cities, and racism may offer our society an opportunity. If our sickness is betraying its true nature in cooperation problems, violence, suicidal or addictive behaviour, it is also in those parts of the city that the sickness will intensify and the pressing calls for healing which result will be heard. (Rojzman, 1999, p. 197)*

Rojzman argues the conflict and social strife oppression creates within social structures and relationships is symbolic of the need for social healing. He states that “I am not just preaching to the converted. For my approach does not start off simply from good intentions but, on the contrary, from the consideration that racism and violence are the keys to transformation” (Rojzman, 1999, p. 203). Rojzman insists that:

*The main objective of TST is to understand that these emotions are continuously at work in each person, in similar and unique ways, and to help them find outlets for action. Working on fear, violence and powerlessness and stopping the cycle resulting from these emotions is a prerequisite for any project. If we do not confront this feeling or if you imagine being able to create a miracle, nothing can be experienced at a collective level without losses and damages. What we have just described is present in all of us to varying degrees and prevents a healthy relationship between oneself, others and the world. (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, pp. 1-2)*

Rojzman claims that to build genuine cooperation among participants only occurs after exploring the other’s fears, wounds, and pains. This process creates a sense of community where people will be able to “build a group with diverse people

*where it's possible to speak about difficult issues, conflicts without violence, find solutions, with a minimum of trust that enables us to go deeper, and with "collective intelligence". It's important, for instance, that people feel they can speak about their own racism and violence. Otherwise it's superficial. (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 14)*

Rojzman contends that basing collective action on the genuine issues of groups in conflict, through a process of authentic engagement of participants, produces what he calls *collective intelligence*. This collective intelligence, with participants as experts in their lives, struggles, and communities, where they link personal, historical, and institutional sources of violence, creates the framework for parties to solve their problems (Keith, Urban-Suburban Mirror: Youth, Violence and Community Building. Unpublished paper).

While the primary goal is not only for people to understand issues in TST, but to truly learn to work with someone who has been (or is) an enemy. TST provides a healing of social wounds by allowing for the emergence of new ways of working through constructive interracial conflict. Rojzman says that the "goal is not to heal all the wounds of people; it's to help them do something together, to speak freely about an issue, to try to live together" (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 12).

### **Research Methodology**

As this dissertation is primarily theoretical in nature, the analysis, assertions, assumptions, and conclusions will result from the application of the Afrocentric paradigm explicated by the Temple Afrocentric School, best reflected in the work of

Asante, Mazama, Karenga, Rabaka and Anadolu-Okur. The theoretical parameters will be augmented by theoreticians and researchers applying the Afrocentric paradigm in research related to Afrocentric philosophy, curriculum, and pedagogy relevant to this study of race dialogues. This philosophical grounding is central as a foundational aspect of the Afrocentric paradigm. Monteiro-Ferreira argues that “Being a philosophical, social and cultural theory committed to the construction of a holistic epistemological paradigm centered on African cosmological, ontological, ethical, and philosophical anteriority of classical African civilizations, the theoretical approach is supported by a rigorous methodology that calls for a constant awareness of location and agency of African people” (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2010, p. 12). While the research on intergroup dialogues is quite preliminary, the theoretical and philosophical foundations are quite substantive. To a certain extent, this dissertation serves as an Afrocentric critique of race dialogue theory.

The adherents of the Michigan Model have been supported within several university structures, organizations, and foundations across the United States. Much of the theory and research referred to within this dissertation will be obtained from a review of the relevant literature based on their approach. In fact, the University of Michigan hosts an annual four-day intergroup dialogue institute, where they provide an overview of intergroup dialogue theory and research.

### ***Goal of Racism Eradication***

Racism eradication is one of the major claims of the intergroup dialogue process; occurring through an honest, open sharing of thoughts, emotions, feelings,

and conflicts. All groups, the subordinated and dominant, are involved in the undertaking. As a learning goal and outcome, the dialogue process proposes to offer an opportunity for the most genuine, often unspoken, social identity issues to be communicated for growth of the group and individual. The goals of intergroup dialogue include the development of a “consciousness about social identity and social group differences” by examining individual, and group identities, behaviors and power relationships and “forge connections across differences and conflicts by building caring and reciprocal relationships” where participants can “learn to listen and speak openly, engage with one another seriously, take risks, explore differences and conflicts, and discover common ground”, as well as build coalitions for social action (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. viii).

In their article, *More Than Just Talk: The Use of Racial Dialogues to Combat Racism*, Joshua Miller and Susan Donner, argue that racism operates on a structural and individual level requiring a two-pronged approach to eradicate it. They state that given “the dualistic nature of racism, a two-track approach is also called for when challenging it. Combating racism requires both challenging the social hierarchies and systems of privilege that sustain it while also challenging the attitudes and beliefs that support this system and which are derived from it. Racial dialogues, the focus of this paper, directly respond to individual and group racism but hopefully also lead to challenges against institutional racism” (Miller & Donner, 2000, p. 34).

One likely Afrocentric critique rests with arguments challenging the educational value of engaging European-American students in race dialogues.

Generally speaking, research on multicultural educational curriculum, and diversity education approaches, tend to support the educational and transformative value of both the teaching of African American Studies courses and intergroup dialogues. In one of the foremost studies of research on multicultural education's impact on intergroup relations, Mark Engberg concluded that as "a whole, the majority of studies support the conclusion that multicultural interventions are effective in the context of the higher education curriculum. Most of the survey-based research studies, which carry the highest ability to generalize to other institutions, support the cumulative effect of ethnic and women's studies interventions, although the results are less clear for diversity-infused courses" (Engberg, 2004, p. 489). He found that the overall conclusion for students participating in intergroup dialogues were: 1) greater commonality and less divisiveness among different groups, 2) heightened racial awareness, 3) more support for affirmative action and multicultural programs, and 4) increased awareness of the structural causes of inequality (Engberg, 2004, p. 494).

Nida Denson's review of past research in this area claimed that "Although it does appear that these diversity-related activities have a generally positive influence on reducing students' racial bias, the absolute magnitude of that effect is still unclear" (Denson, 2009, p. 805). One of the results of her review is that while diversity-related educational interventions are effective for reducing racial bias, they are even more impactful for European-American students (Denson, 2009, p. 824). As is the case with the Michigan Model, Denson's work reveals that "although all the diversity-related

interventions examined here utilize content-based knowledge as one approach to reducing college students' racial bias, it appears that the interventions are even more effective when a cross-racial interaction component is also incorporated" (Denson, 2009, p. 826).

In the article "Teachers and Learners: Roles Adopted in Interracial Discussions" Travis Tatum and Denise Sekaquaptewa also discuss the disparate impact race dialogues have on European-Americans versus African-Americans. While both groups reflect some challenges in participating in race dialogues, for European-American "participants, speaking about race may be a new experience to begin with, let alone speaking about it to non-Whites. Therefore, White discussion participants may find it more difficult to think of something to say about race because they could have less prior knowledge about a particular race-related issue, or have not formed a clear opinion about a controversial racial issue" (Tatum & Sekaquaptewa, 2009, p. 581).

As African American Studies faculty intimately know, talking about race is also important to African-American students. One of the main results of the research of Nagda and Zuniga, reported in their article "Fostering Meaningful Racial Engagement through Intergroup Dialogues", is that race dialogues create a space that is missing in higher education for African-Americans to express their intimate experiences with racism. They report that "while students of Color often feel excluded in educational settings in predominantly White universities, they rated the dialogic learning process significantly higher than did White students" because intergroup dialogues offered

“them a process where they have a voice, feel heard, and can constructively address issues of racial ignorance, prejudice, and racism” (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003, p. 124).

Intergroup dialogue is distinct from other multicultural education programs that focus on advantaged groups learning about the history and struggles of the oppressed. Intergroup dialogue programs focus on “raising the consciousness of all participants, not only those who are members of the less-advantaged groups. For a genuine dialogue to occur, it is just as important for members of privileged groups to understand how they and others have been affected by privilege as for members of less-advantaged groups to understand how they have been affected by subordination” (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 9). This supports Asante’s contention that European-Americans “must consider confronting the meaning of their privilege. Perhaps also whites will interrogate preference in order to create racial harmony. But this will require whites to go beyond the idea that they are being dispossessed because others are being treated fairly and justly” (Asante, *Erasing Racism: The Survival of the American Nation*, 2003, p. 70).

Maddison argues that the terrains of race dialogues are still in their nascent stages, and that while the practice may be over 100 years old, there is great ambiguity and misunderstanding on a theoretical, conceptual, and philosophical level (especially in terms of practice and method):

*Yet despite a growing interest in the merits of dialogue, and in the face of a proliferation of dialogue projects in a range of contexts, this mode of intervention as a field of political practice remains surprisingly under-theorised. Conceptually, this remains a very muddy field, an*

*indeterminate space in which the term 'dialogue' is attached to a range of other forms of communication: dialogue and debate, dialogue and deliberation, dialogue and discussion, and so on. A wide array of dialogical methodologies only adds to this confusion. A lack of conceptual precision in the field means that many meetings, of all kinds, are labeled 'dialogue', almost to the point of rendering the category meaningless. Given the extent of 'dialogue' work currently underway around the world, including in some of the most intractable conflict situations, this lack of clarity is concerning, if not dangerous. Without conceptual clarity, which can in turn inform methodological and design choices, activities labeled 'dialogue' may potentially contribute to misunderstandings about goals and processes that could deepen rather than alleviate conflict. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1016)*

The Intergroup Dialogue Movement proposes solutions that directly challenge oppression, mediate conflicts between disparate groups, forge alliances for common understanding and social change, and contribute to the actualization of democracy. As the Intergroup Dialogue Movement will continue to expand with various strands evolving, continuous assessments and evaluation of the models must be made. Major distinctions between the Michigan Model of Intergroup Dialogue and Transformation Social Therapy exist that will be explored later as to the relevance of an Afrocentric critique. There are numerous differences related to structure, content, leadership, and participant roles that impact theory, outcomes, and results.

Basing his analysis within the framework of Africana Critical Theory, Reiland Rabaka argues that the Afrocentric paradigm offers a context for interrogating both the theory and application of race dialogues:

*Above and beyond all of the aforementioned, Africana critical theory is about offering alternatives to what ought to be and/or what could be (human liberation and radical/revolutionary social transformation). To reiterate, it is not afraid, to put it as plainly as possible, to critically engage or dialogue deeply with European and/or*

*other cultural groups' thought traditions. In fact, it often finds critical cross-cultural dialogues necessary considering the historical conundrums and current shared conditions and shared crises of the modern or postmodern, transnational, and almost completely multicultural world" (Rabaka, 2009, p.20).*

As a method of investigation, this dissertation will allow the adherents of race dialogues to reflect their own aims and conclusions by presenting their writing and research with the best intentions. However, the critical issue of the relevancy of race dialogues to African-Americans, particularly in terms of its utility to impact racism eradication, will be of primary concern.

### ***The Afrocentric Paradigm as the Method of Analysis***

As has been argued by the founders, present adherents, and even pre-cursors of the Afrocentric movement, African agency is the centerpiece, foundation, and *nia* of Africology. In his book Erasing Racism, Molefi Asante outlines the significance of an Afrocentric consciousness to interracial relationships by calling on African-Americans to assume leadership over the national debate on race. Placed within an Afrocentric theoretical context, Asante contends that part of the ***Afrocentric centering*** process requires a deep and abiding commitment to self-actualization. He says that "By turning to agency, action, and participation as opposed to passivity, victimization, and spectatorship, the African American assumes the kind of centrality that serves as a basis for national cohesion. This is key to mature racial encounters and interactions" (Erasing, p.71). He believes that it is in African-Americans' national interest to engage European-Americans on issues of race, regardless of their motivations, intentions and inaction.

*But what is clear is that African-Americans must act even if whites do not act. And our actions for harmony and racial peace cannot depend on a change of heart in the white community. Yet whites have a grave national responsibility to work out their own prejudice and hatred. (Asante, Erasing Racism: The Survival of the American Nation, 2003, p. 71)*

The core of the Afrocentric paradigm relevant to this study is what Ama Mazama asserts is the continuing struggle for African liberation from European domination on a global level. She argues the following:

*Although most Africans, on the Continent as well as in the Diaspora, have, at least in theory, put an end to the colonial rule to which we were subjected for many years, we nonetheless still find ourselves in a state of mental subjugation that has gravely interfered with our ability to recover our integrity and truly decolonize ourselves. (Mazama, 2003, p. 3)*

The subjugation of African people may have been physical, in a historical sense, but its legacy has psychological and intellectual dimensions that are constant and pernicious. As Ana Monteiro-Ferreira asserts, Afrocentricity is a confrontational and radical theory based on self-assertion and self-definition, operating as a call to arms:

*Notwithstanding the fact that the American experience of African people has produced a unique understanding of the genesis of every system of oppression, the Afrocentric philosophical reach goes beyond African people's assertiveness of their Africanity or mere modes of expressing their social bonds; it applies to a consciousness-raising of the centeredness of everything African that calls for agency. (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2010, p. 17)*

Similarly, Anadolu-Okur argues, Frederick Douglass advanced African agency as central to emancipation itself. While Douglass recognized the central need for

Europeans to contribute to the emancipation of Africans, he insisted that Africans must fight for themselves:

*Douglass was aware of the fact that racial unity constituted one of the most important steps in building a united front against slaveholders. Meanwhile, he reiterated the fact that the struggle for collective emancipation rose on the shoulders of blacks rather than whites. (Anadolu-Okur, 2016, p. 12)*

The **agency imperative** advanced by the Afrocentric paradigm maintains that people of African descent must fight against racial oppression and base their liberation on an Afrocentric orientation and consciousness. The thrust for liberation is an enduring remnant and response to the oppression of African people manifesting in many forms. Monteiro-Ferreira explains:

*Throughout the American continent rebellion, resistance, and strategies of survival all accounted for the lifelong struggle of the oppressed populations, some of which have made history, became a source of inspiration and hope. From the individual to the collective levels we may recall the persistent attempts to run away from the plantations, the passive resistance to working conditions, or the sabotage of the means of production as witnessed by innumerable slave narratives; the organization of active warfare like the Haitian revolution; or the establishment of quilombos or free African republics in Brazil. (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2010, p. 52)*

Mazama lays the foundation of the Afrocentric paradigm's agency imperative within Black Nationalism, emerging out from the philosophical grounding of Marcus Garvey. She asserts that Asante's creation and foundation of the Afrocentric paradigm can be traced to the influence of Garvey's advancement of Black Nationalism:

*The organizing principle of Black Nationalism as developed by Marcus Garvey is African agency. African agency subsumes a consciousness of victory. Or else why should anyone want to assume agency if not to*

*achieve victory? How could anyone talk about agency if they did not believe in the possibility of victory? Why should anyone talk about victory if they were satisfied with defeat? The indomitable consciousness of victory that informs all of Garvey's philosophy makes it a truly powerful drive towards self-determination, one that has moved millions of Black people the world over. (Mazama, 2003, p. 11)*

African agency is asserted as the grounding of the discipline because it is imperative for African people to continuously respond to the persistent onslaught of Eurocentric hegemony and central for understanding the necessity of including a liberation-focused curriculum and pedagogy within Africology. Asante continues:

*Afrocentricity is therefore a consciousness, quality of thought, mode of analysis, and an actionable perspective where Africans seek, from agency, to assert subject place within the context of African history. All other explanations or elaborations of the Afrocentric idea begin with this foundation; there is no Afrocentricity without an emphasis on African agency in the context of African history. (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance*, 2007, p. 16)*

Creating a conceptual framework for the analysis of racial dialogues is particularly cogent as an application of the Afrocentric paradigm, as Mazama argues, in order to investigate its claims of applicability to African liberation. She contends that for Afrocentricity to be viewed as a paradigm it must “activate our consciousness” and be a value as a “true paradigm for African liberation” (Mazama, 2003, p. 31).

Doñela Wright describes the importance of an Afrocentric consciousness and liberation in her dissertation, The Home as Refuge: Locating Homeplace Theory within the Afrocentric Paradigm:

*Thus, for an Africana scholar to interrogate the cultural consciousness of persons of Africana descent and study how the elevation of one's cultural consciousness determines the life chances of the individual in*

*the pursuit of liberation within a global white supremacist society qualifies that study as Afrocentric and as valid, critical and engaging. However, the study is incomplete without a liberatory function associated with it. (Wright, 2016, p. 17)*

In this regard, Africology has created an educational and existential space which facilitates an intellectual and emotional reconstructing of students' ideas about themselves and the world. Fabio Rojas argues that prior to the existence of African American Studies, African-American students were relegated to a submissive, subordinated expressiveness in their dealings with whites, "always kind and polite, and constantly restraining their anger" (Rojas, 2007, p. 31).

Consequently, racial dialogues serve in a historical role, as Sarah Maddison explains, to support the transition of societies as they move beyond a state of violence imposed on one or many groups. The Africological implication of her position is that racial dialogue creates a curricular and pedagogical framework for a group to express its agency in response to historical conditions. Maddison contends that a legacy of historical patterns of racial oppression "leave a legacy of hatred and mistrust" that can lead to the resurfacing of violent conflict. She insists that:

*Thus, both before and after a political settlement is achieved, and possibly for several generations afterwards, it is likely that ongoing work designed to surface and address underlying structural and cultural violence through a focus on transforming identities and relationships will be of benefit. The aim, however, is not to rid a society of conflict, but rather to transform the nature of that conflict. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1027)*

Therefore, the agency imperative requires Africologists to assiduously explore the constitutive dimensions of European oppression as a cornerstone of the

discipline. If subordination, submission, and acquiescence are indicative of the European dominance of African-European relations to Africologists, what constitutes a liberated, Afrocentric orientation to African-European relationships? For there to be clarity in this regard, the terms of equitable relations between Africans and Europeans must be understood and outlined by Africologists. Therefore, to provide a critique of race dialogues, this dissertation will seek to explicate the purpose, goals, motivations, process, impact, and outcomes of race dialogues and provide an overview of the key factors restricting and promoting dialogues utilizing Afrocentric theoretical constructs. As a means of advancing Africological inquiry, this dissertation seeks to describe the frameworks, parameters and content of the desires of African people in their relations with Europeans.

### ***Parameters of Africology Theory and Praxis***

While this dissertation proposes to provide a critical examination of race dialogues, it will fundamentally serve as an application of Afrocentric theory and praxis. As proposed earlier, a major function of Africology is to add to the advancement of knowledge related to African people and the world. By providing an Afrocentric critique of race dialogues, as an educational model and approach impacting African people's agency, consciousness-raising, and liberatory action, this dissertation will serve as an application of an area of Africological inquiry relevant to research, policy development, and praxis important to African people worldwide.

Africology provides the basis for the utility of race dialogues within the investigative parameters of Afrocentric theory and praxis. Rabaka argues that

Afrocentric theory “is not in any sense a traditional society theory but, unapologetically, *a social activist and political praxis-promoting theory* that seriously seeks the radical/revolutionary redistribution of social wealth and political power” (Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition*, from W.E.B. Du Bois and C.L.R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral, 2009, p. 23). He argues that that Afrocentric theory offers a unique contribution to academia because “it simultaneously searches for progressive and retrogressive aspects of Africana, Eurocentric, and other cultural groups’ thought traditions” that encompasses an external and internal critique that no “other tradition or version of critical theory has historically or currently claims to highlight and accent *sites of domination* and *sources of liberation* in the interests of continental and diasporan Africans, as well as humanity as a whole” (Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition*, from W.E.B. Du Bois and C.L.R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral, 2009, p. 23).

A major theoretical focus herein centers in the mission, function and philosophy of Africology itself. A major area of exploration for this critique is the correlation between race dialogues with the mission of Africology. While not necessarily advocating for race dialogues in his book, *Erasing Racism*, Asante provides a compelling argument for African-American agency and political action in combating racism:

*There has been personal and collective fury, and there will be fury so long as we do not deal with the primary issue of white racial*

*domination that influences every aspect of this society. The African-American community must inoculate itself against racism and racism's offspring in the form of justifications, explanations, and interpretations that seek to continue the historic social domination. (Asante, Erasing, p. 70).*

Asante's position is quite compelling for advancing the Africological orientation to agency, consciousness-raising, and liberatory action. The Afrocentric paradigm's call to political action invites Africologists to interpret, inquire, and judge substantive arguments that promote and explore African-American involvement in so-called liberation approaches. As dialogue represents racism eradication model, and is proposed as a strategy for liberatory action, it is the responsibility of Africologists to utilize disciplinary tools to assert the limitations of claims of applicability to African liberation or to recognize the plausibility of this strategy for advancing the Afrocentric paradigm.

The perspective of Zizwe Poe is quite important for expounding on the scope of Afrocentric theory as he describes the synthetic nature of the Afrocentric paradigm (Poe, 2001, p. 732). I am particularly interested in two aspects of his construct: 1) individual and organizational agency in the intellectual and social landscape, and 2) psychological, political, and philosophical location. These are important for a critique of any models, theories, philosophies, or ideas related to African people because they undergird the importance of what Poe refers to as "concerns...directly related to the history of social and cultural struggles experienced by African populations in their effort to establish and maintain well-being. Who should be well, and what is meant by

wellness, are questions that are addressed in Afrocentric examinations; thus, relevant identification of subjects, objects, and intervening categories are required” (Poe, 2001, pp. 732-733).

Poe’s synthetic Afrocentric paradigm is valuable because it connects political and philosophical location to the psychological well-being of Africans by determining the concepts and perspectives that are harmful through a subordination to hegemonic Eurocentric ways of being reflected in terms or concepts (Poe, 2001). This is done by recognizing that political location “can be ascertained through affiliation, self-identification, nationalism, and stance on policy issues,” and philosophical location is determined by “ontological, epistemological and axiological markers” (Poe, 2001, p. 739).

In Africana Critical Theory (2009), Rabaka establishes the framework for employing the Afrocentric paradigm by arguing that the discipline offers “the black radical traditions its highest commendations and its most meticulous criticism” with the necessary grounding and contextualization for interrogating all phenomena relevant for African people (p. 5). He argues that the “transdisciplinary” nature of the discipline “*transgresses, traverses, and transcends* the academic boundaries and intellectual borders” of traditional disciplines and

*...at its best it poses problems and seeks solutions on behalf of Africana (and other struggling) people employing the theoretic innovations of both the social sciences and humanities, as well as the political breakthroughs of grassroots radical and revolutionary social movements. (Rabaka, 2009, p. 5).*

James Turner contends that African American Studies is grounded in an activist orientation at its core and believes that those operating in the field must be fundamentally engaging in intellectual enterprises that promote the viability of African-American communities and the eradication of “oppression and racist inequality that it confronts” (Turner, 2000, p. 63). While acknowledging the numerous Eurocentric critiques of the field’s mission, he believes that basic “to the teleology of Africana Studies is the application of knowledge to promote social change” (Turner, 2000, p. 63). Furthermore, Jennifer Williams asserts that the activist dimension of the discipline should be conceptualized as a core component in order to solve societal problems:

*Africana Studies has had a strong commitment for its faculty and students to engage in social change projects both within and outside the academy. Its most pertinent concern, however, has been to rectify the damage that European/American oppressive systems have inflicted upon the study of the history, social conditions, and psychology of Africana people. (Williams, 2016, p. 41)*

Another dimension of the mission of Africology explored here is its significant contribution to the amelioration of race relations through the teaching of courses, the production of research elucidating the impact of race, and the promotion of a pedagogy centered on understanding the nature of the African experience within societies dominated, controlled, and determined by Europeans. As a discipline, African American Studies has provided the academic terrain for students to engage in cross-cultural learning that has facilitated a broad understanding of historical, and contemporary, race issues relevant to African people throughout the diaspora.

African American Studies has provided an academic environment for students to discuss, debate, and dialogue about the most important social, political, economic, psychological and, even, scientific issues of relevance to African life and culture. Concomitantly, a central focus of the discipline has been a critique of European people, and their culture and worldview.

How does the African American Studies founding mission to improve race relations through explaining, critiquing, and challenging European racism correlate with the contemporary race dialogue approach? Many in the discipline would argue that African American Studies has provided a wealth of research, curricula, and pedagogical approaches focused on eradicating racism on an individual, institutional, and societal level, resulting in the amelioration of race relations by assisting European-American students in addressing their individual racism and recognizing the institutional privileges that European-American racism provides.

Historically, the African American Studies pedagogy has functioned as a vehicle for student transformation by providing a learning environment, substantive reading materials, intellectual content, and a critical perspective that questioned the dominant racial hierarchy. As a theoretical grounding for the discipline, Asante states that the “Afrocentric method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege and position in order to establish how principal myths create *place*” (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance*, 2007, p. 27). Consequently, African American Studies has served as an academic framework for students to engage each other in an exhaustive exploration of historical and

contemporary issues related to race, racial power, and racial oppression. Rabaka argues that from a theoretical standpoint that the discipline, as well as its theories, provide “not only a critique of domination and discrimination, but also a deep commitment to human liberation and radical/revolutionary social transformation” (Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition*, from W.E.B. Du Bois and C.L.R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral, 2009, p. 16).

In *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, Asante argues that “Afrocentricity as a way of interpreting reality begins with the idea that it is teachable and accessible to anyone who cares to learn it” and the “Afrocentrist will teach anyone how to become a scholar who begins the study of African people and African phenomena from the standpoint of Africans as subjects rather than objects of history” (21-22). Just as Asante argues that biology must be acknowledged but limited in scope for the teaching of African American Studies courses, one could assert that membership in an African American Studies class is another area where biology has limited applicability. As Asante posits, empathetic relationships rather than biology can be informed by a proper understanding of “the cultural, social and psychological experiences” within classrooms, laying the basis for an inclusive pedagogy within the discipline (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance*, 2007, p. 96). One of the areas to explore herein is: How does this “inclusive pedagogy” reconcile with the tenets of race dialogues?

To further explore this point, Asante maintains that *centeredness* provides a cognitive readjustment for European-American as well as African-American students.

*Centricity is the process of locating a student within the context of his or her own cultural reference in order to be able to relate to other cultural perspectives. Thus, this applies to students from any culture. The most productive method of teaching students is to place the student within the context of knowledge. For students of European heritage in America, this goes without saying because almost all of the experiences discussed in classes are from the standpoint of European history. (Asante, An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance, 2007, p. 79)*

While I agree with the latter part of this statement in spirit, Asante's larger point is that European-American students primarily learn from a *hegemonic* Eurocentric perspective of history, more so than from European history itself. Asante's most important point here is that African American Studies pedagogy provides an opportunity for European-American students to gain a more comprehensive and accurate perspective of European history because of the use of Afrocentric analysis and the critique of European power and oppression.

Asante further asserts that "Afrocentric education represents a new interpretation of productive transmission of values and attitudes. Students are made to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears. African American children learn to interpret phenomena from themselves as centered; whites learn to see that their own centers are not threatened by the space taken by African Americans or others" (Asante, An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance, 2007, p. 83). Consequently, this reparative dimension of Africology's mission has implications for the critique of race dialogues, given that both approaches have societal reconstruction around race as part of their goals, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Another dimension of Africology's mission examined here pertains to the acknowledgement that the discipline was formed in a climate of political struggle, and agitation, as a form *resistance* to European-American intellectual hegemony which must always be framed within the context of a larger movement for African-American liberation. Maulana Karenga concurs, indicating that this "duel interrelated thrust to create Black Studies from the Black Liberation Movement in general and the Black Student Movement in particular was a political thrust as well as an academic one" (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 477). While the foundational emphasis of the discipline was immersed in Black Nationalist rhetoric and ideology, the very nature of being encapsulated within the European-American academy reflects a similar conceptual framework and political reality for African-Americans. The agency reflected by Africans, especially within higher education, has the eradication of racism as a pedagogical goal and has been inclusive of other progressive elements, and people, within academic institutions.

Although Black Nationalist ideology may propose political, psychological, religious, and, even, physical independence from European-Americans as a response to racism, these lofty goals have never been realized within American institutional structures. Furthermore, as Karenga notes, the struggle against European-American racism has not been an African-American struggle alone having been "joined and aided by Third World groups who formed with Blacks the Third World Liberation Front" and "white progressives formed a support committee for the Front" (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 44).

Admittedly, the Black Nationalist movement, as well as other African-American movements for social change, has significantly impacted African-American progress through the use of civil disobedience, political agitation and, even, physical force. While Africology has been an important vehicle for understanding the detrimental impact that European racism has had on African people in every dimension of life, it has been, and continues to be, vital in providing theories, research, models, and strategies for advancing African liberation, improving race relations, and eradicating racism.

Africology provides an avenue for Africans and Europeans to understand “the whole story of white oppression and of the struggles of some blacks, and some whites too, to overcome that oppression” (Pentony, 2007, p. 10). Karenga argues that racial understanding contributes to alliance building and serves as a key functional role to maintain and expand the discipline. He argues that the leaders in African American Studies must “build and sustain positive and productive relations, especially with other Third World ethnic programs or departments as well as with women studies and other progressive forces on campus” (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 487). While it has always been obvious that one of the practical challenges to the perpetuation of African American Studies has been student organizing on college campuses, James Stewart argues that much of that political capital was lost due to the lack of support from African-American community leaders, and students, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in part, due to an individual careerist mentality (Stewart, 2007, p. 48). William Nelson agrees that strong support must be

established on campuses and that the “central target here must be undergraduate students who will be motivated not only to take courses in the program, but rally to its support on a continuous basis” (Nelson, *Africology: Building an Academic Discipline*, 2007, p. 71).

As was the case with early adherents of African American Studies, DeVere Pentony provides a sense of the restorative educational impact of African American Studies on African-Americans and European-Americans:

*There is the possibility that an emphasis on blackness, black dignity, black contributions, and black history will provide whites with new perspectives about the black man and woman. In turn, these new perspectives may indicate what clues of behavior and guides to proper responsiveness are necessary to enable whites to relate to blacks in something other than a patronizing or deprecating fashion. Through black studies there may be opportunities for whites to enrich their understanding of the black man and thus, perhaps, to help build more meaningful bridges of mutual respect and obligation. Moreover, if the truth can make blacks free and open, it may also free the whites from their ignorant stereotypes of the black man and his culture. (Pentony, 2007, pp. 11-12)*

This redemptive dimension of African American Studies is also relevant as a component of W.E.B. DuBois’s double-consciousness construct expounded in *The Souls of Black Folk*. DuBois argued that African-American liberation will come from a unifying the ideas of race and the human brotherhood, stating that “the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that someday on American soil two world-races may give each to each those characteristics both sadly lack” ( (DuBois, 1968, p. 500).

Nilgun Anadolu-Okur provides quite an illustrative example of the value of Africological historical inquiries for exploring the foundational factors impacting progressive interracial relations between African-Americans and European-Americans. In her book, Dismantling Slavery: Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Formation of the Abolitionist Discourse, she states:

*In this study, abolitionist discourse is analyzed from a contemporary standpoint, with particular emphasis on the significance and righteousness attributed to the development of a dialogue between a white and a black man. Their discourse was generated through an inclusive and Universalist moral framework, based upon tolerance, mutual understanding and devotions to the cause of freedom. This work examines how both men avoided political rhetoric throughout their struggles, and paid attention, instead, how they could dismantle slavery. Abolition movement can be viewed as the product of a discourse on freedom, or “unfreedom,” a term coined by Angela Davis through her readings of Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois, both of whom become the leading chroniclers of African-American narrative of liberation from 1850s to 1960s. (Anadolu-Okur, 2016, p. 19)*

Anadolu-Okur’s book provides the scope of the reciprocal, mutually beneficial nature of Black-White relations that emerge from a shared desire for African-American liberation. While the racist nature of American society breeds mistrust among African-Americans towards European-Americans, the historical reality of African-American liberation is consistently supported by a desire of some European-Americans for a similar goal. While the motivations, perspectives, and experiences of European-Americans and African-Americans may vary, the common goal of African-American liberation has been advanced through collaborative efforts. Anadolu-Okur furthers this idea in the relations between Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison:

*It is important to recognize that Garrison's enthusiasm in seeking Douglass's trust and friendship originated to a certain extent from the fact that in Douglass's experience with slavery and in his unflinching desire to attain freedom, there was a great potential for public endorsement. Abolitionists aimed to harness this potential. In effect, Garrison immediately recognized the opportunity of vocal assent in Douglass's electrifying life-story, and the perilous account of his escape stood as the ultimate testament to slavery's dehumanizing effects on human and society. Throughout his crusade, Garrison assiduously aimed to convey this message to his audiences. Additionally, by way of Douglass's African-ness and the time he spent in captivity, Garrison was able to validate not only the disparity between freedom and unfreedom, many and property, power and powerlessness, but expose the ill-effects of exploitation of the African by the European. (Anadolu-Okur, 2016, p. 9)*

Consistent with this aspect of the founding of the field of African American Studies, some leaders, faculty, and researchers in the discipline argue that one dimension of the mission of African American Studies is to improve the lives of African-Americans by contributing to the reduction of racism among European-Americans. To support that mission, African American Studies has engaged in teaching and learning practices that, as Karenga says, to “cultivate persons capable of critical thought and problem-solving” among the European and African-American populations (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 20). Karenga argues that focusing on creating a better understanding of African-Americans among all peoples of the world demonstrates a recognition that “the problems of the Black community are the problems of the larger society, and their collective solution is clearly in the larger society’s instance” (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 20).

William Nelson argues that White students' involvement in African American Studies has prepared them for living and working in a multiracial world. He states:

*Many white students have also profited from the Black Studies experience. These students have gained a greater appreciation of the contributions of blacks to world society, and the artificial barriers placed in the way of black progress by racism and economic exploitation. Consequently, they have left the university with a more realistic perception of the black community; this fact has enabled them to more effectively cope with the demands and requirements produced by a multiracial society. (Nelson, Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Academy, 2000, pp. 85-86).*

Once again, the relationship of Douglass and Garrison becomes illustrative of the interconnection of African-American/European-American alliances for forging African-American liberation:

*For Douglass, his reaction to injustice brought upon his race was shaped by survival first, and liberation next. Garrison's reaction involved a life-long struggle in expanding abolitionist discourse, as an editor, journalist, speaker, and community organizer. Naturally Douglass's discourse was wrought with qualities different than those of Garrison, though both men joined hands, merging their ideas as well as their skills to attack slavery as an invincible team. (Anadolu-Okur, 2016, p. 6)*

One of the primary aims of the African American Studies curriculum and pedagogy has been to engage students cognitively and affectively around critical issues within the discipline with the specific intent of creating social change agents. Anderson and Stewart argue that "in a multiracial society, education must be made relevant to the cultural, political, and social interests and aspirations of all racial/ethnic groups. An educational system must be pedagogically designed to

influence positively the cognitive and affective learning outcomes of all the racial-ethnic groups in relation to ethos and culture” (p. 34).

At the inception of the field, John Blassingame reasoned that one of the major challenges of the discipline related to the clarification of goals. He argued that despite African-American students’ desire for the discipline to be relevant to the pertinent issues of the African-American community, it should also provide students with the “tools for restructuring society” (Blassingame, 2007, p. 26). Arguing from a Black Nationalistic perspective, he stated that many students “apparently forget that it is still true that the first requirement in any struggle is to know your enemy. What blacks need more than anything else is much more sophisticated knowledge about American society” (Blassingame, 2007, p. 26).

African American Studies creates an academic rationale for not only researching and teaching about the experiences of people of African descent but, in addition, the discipline offers a unique window on who European-Americans are and have been. African American Studies creates a framework for European-Americans to know themselves in a manner inconsistent with traditional American education. Writer, lecturer, and social critic Tim Wise offers himself as a case in point:

*Being a white man, born and reared in a society that has always bestowed upon me privileges and advantages that it has just as deliberately withheld from people of color. I am not expected to think the way I do, I suppose, let alone to act on those beliefs. After all, to be privileged, to be advantaged, is a coveted position in society, so why, many ask, would I seek to change a set of social conditions that work to my benefit? (Wise, 2005, p. viii)*

Therefore, the analysis provided by this critique will reveal the challenges, and possibilities, race dialogues can offer on a theoretical and practical level to produce the kind of transformation Wise has experienced.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **AFRICOLOGICAL GROUNDING FOR CRITIQUE OF RACE DIALOGUES**

#### **Rationale for an Africological Critique of Race Dialogues**

Because the Afrocentric paradigm insists, requires, and demands African agency, the analyses provided herein will elucidate the contours and scope of agency in African-American/European-American relationships. The relevance of this approach is that within the historical and contemporary data there exists the components and foundation of African-American desires for racial equality through their response to European-American racism. Within African-American literature and political movements exist the substance, content, and nature of the kind of relationships they desire with European-Americans. To this end, this critique should provide an understanding of how African-Americans envision race relations with European-Americans and clarify the substance of what they desire in those relationships.

One of the most cogent examples for providing such analysis can be obtained through the political work of Malcolm X. As a prominent African-American leader espousing a nascent Afrocentric consciousness, Malcolm X is a particularly important figure for an Afrocentric critique of race dialogues because of the essential contributions he made to elucidate the condition of African-Americans, his leadership of African-American organizations, and his commentary on interracial relationships indicated in his speeches, writing, and political activity. Molefi Asante argued that Malcolm was the “standard bearer” for the radical onslaught against Eurocentric

ideologies emerging in the 1960's and that Malcolm, "like Walter Rodney and Frantz Fanon, was a commentator, an activist commentator on the revolutionary road to an Afrocentric viewpoint" (Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 1991, pp. 18-19).

The use of Malcolm X is quite instructive for Africology because his leadership and authority was based on his authentic relationship with, and study of, the needs, concerns, and problems of the African-American masses and his pre-Afrocentric analysis of the African-American condition. William Sales argues that Malcolm X was epistemologically grounded in African-American politics, history and culture as reflected in the African-American tradition. Sales says that

*Malcolm X respected the written word and the power of books, but he also knew that true knowledge did not come exclusively or even essentially from books. Malcolm X validated the "truth" both from the pages of history and through testing his insights and conclusions against a broad cross-section of his street constituency. Written facts had to be validated against the lessons of his own experience and that of the people he led and influenced. (Sales, 1994, pp. 56-57)*

### **Afrocentric Historical, Political and Cultural Grounding: Malcolm X's Critique of American Race Relations**

*Many will ask what Harlem finds to honor in this stormy, controversial, and bold young captain—and we will smile.... And we will answer and say unto them: Did you ever talk to Brother Malcolm? Did you ever touch him, or have him smile at you? ...Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood!... and we will know him then for what he was and is—a prince—our own black shining prince—who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so. (Marable, 2011, p. 459)*

The above quote from Ossie Davis reflects an Afrocentric perspective of the general sentiments of racially conscious African-Americans. Fifty years after his

death, Malcolm X still reigns as one of the foremost figures in the world representing the struggle against European and European-American oppression. Ama Mazama describes Malcolm X as the “most outspoken and articulate critic of integrationism and Western civilization...who urged us to see ourselves as Africans in America. A Black Nationalist, Malcolm revived many of the ideas developed by Marcus Garvey and others” (Mazama, 2003, p. 19). His legacy as a leader of the Nation of Islam, Organization of Afro-American Unity, and the nascent Black Power Movement is well documented for his singular ability to capture the emotional trauma resulting from actual, and existential, racism, as well as the liberatory aspirations of African-Americans through his words and actions.

Sales claims in his 1994 book, From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity, that “Malcolm X’s ultimate value to the Black Liberation movement today is as a thinker who returned the movement to a radical Pan-Africanist tradition—as represented in the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)—and identified and grappled with crucial questions that still confront our movement today” (Sales, 1994, p. 19).

Due to Malcolm’s prominence as an ardent spokesperson for African-American liberatory thought and praxis, this examination of race dialogues will rest, in part, on Malcolm’s analysis of race relations in the United States and world. Malcolm’s philosophy and political work will establish a theoretical framework for the political, historical, and cultural groundings of this critique of race dialogues. To establish this framework, this dissertation will focus of the overachieving themes of Malcolm’s

philosophy and activism in relation to intergroup relations and race dialogues, particularly as it connects with Afrocentric theory and the Afrocentric paradigm.

### ***Malcolm X's Political Philosophy and Activism***

As a continuation of a long line of advocates of Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Afrocentric consciousness, Malcolm X serves as a primary example of African-American liberatory thought and practice. Manning Marable summarizes the complexity of Malcolm's image to African-Americans and European-Americans in the following manner:

*By contrast, throughout most of his public career Malcolm sought to place whites on the defensive in their relationship with African-Americans. He keenly felt, and expressed, the varied emotions and frustrations of the black poor and working class. His constant message was black pride, self-respect, and an awareness of one's heritage. At a time when American society stigmatized or excluded people of African descent, Malcolm's militant advocacy was stunning. He gave millions of younger African-Americans newfound confidence. These expressions were at the foundation of what in 1966 became Black Power, and Malcolm was its fountainhead. (Marable, 2011, p. 480)*

While today very few African-American organizations openly espouse Black Nationalism, the idea of Black Nationalism, espoused by Martin Delaney, Ida Wells-Barnett, Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad, Kwame Toure, and Huey Newton, still resonates among both the leadership and masses of African-Americans. Since the late 1950s, Malcolm X has served as the crystallization of Black Nationalist and Pan-Africanist political ideology and the dawning of Afrocentric critical consciousness. Due to his premature death, the legacy of his work remains complex, unresolved, and

incomplete due to the limited time he had to fully redefine himself apart from, and beyond, his leadership in the Nation of Islam.

Rabaka helps to underscore the necessity for integrating Malcolm X into this critique of race dialogues. Rabaka states that:

*Although Malcolm X's life and legacy have been analyzed, often critically, by historians, political scientists, philosophers, literary theorists, feminists, theologians, and psychologists, his lifework, to my knowledge, has never been examined for the import it may possibly have for an Africana critical theory, that is, theory critical of domination and discrimination in continental and diasporan African life-worlds and lived experiences. (Rabaka, Malcolm X and/as Critical Theory: Philosophy, Radical Politics, and the African American Search for Social Justice, 2002, p. 146)*

In utilizing Malcolm's works as a frame of reference and context for critiquing race dialogues, this analysis will expand African American Studies theoretical constructs and buttresses them in a structure that affirms both theory and praxis.

One quandary of using Malcolm X is how to fully reflect the meaning of his life for contemporary audiences without minimizing or negating his Nation of Islam roots and honor his embrace of a more global, internationalist, and inclusive Black Nationalist/Pan Africanist political orientation that was the focus at the end of his life. This quandary is one that is a problem for contemporary Black Nationalists, Pan-Africanists, and Afrocentrists.

As is the case herein, Sales argues that Malcolm X's legacy and work reflect questions more so than answers for contemporary scholars and activists within the discipline. Sales believes that Malcolm X's thought "represents a conceptual framework useful in analyzing the Civil Rights decade not so much for the answers it

provides as for the questions it asks and for which it seeks answers” (Sales, 1994, p. 41).

*The questions first articulated by Malcolm X in the last eleven months of his life became the ones which the movement was to take up for the remainder of the 1960s and beyond. Even Dr. King was primarily involved in responding to those questions thrown up by the struggle in transition which were first recognized and articulated by Malcolm X. The significance of Malcolm X is misunderstood. He was not then and has not yet been accorded respect as a major thinker of Black liberation. (Sales, 1994, p. 41)*

The questions raised by Malcolm’s work are central to the issues raised by the intergroup dialogue movement itself that must be addressed by the Afrocentric paradigm. However, to develop a coherent appreciation for such determinant aspects of the discipline, scholars must articulate theories which directly address the paradigm’s approaches to 1) ameliorating race relations, 2) eradicating racism, 3) relationships with European-Americans, and 4) the positionality of non-Africans within the discipline. It is critical to understand the strategies that African-American leaders have employed to confront such issues and the consequences of their political, and philosophical perspectives for African American Studies.

Therefore, the question of Malcolm’s legacy becomes an important area of inquiry to the discipline of African American Studies as a vehicle for educating African-American and European-American students at the university level and for addressing the issue of race relations in society in general. As expressed earlier, while African American Studies was formed as a discipline in the 1960s to serve the interests of African-American liberation, its mission and scope have broadened, serving as a

valuable academic opportunity for advancing intergroup relations, especially between African-American and European-American students.

***Malcolm X's Advancement of Afrocentric Consciousness and African-American Agency***

Asante argues that Malcolm's interests in advancing Afrocentric consciousness and African-American agency had implications for his idea of reconstructing America and the entire world. Asante states that Malcolm had an

*...insistence on African cultural autonomy by which he meant all things considered cosmological, axiological, epistemological, and aesthetical. Given such autonomy it was possible to imagine a culture of resistance as well as a reconstructive culture. By virtue of its affirming posture this new view of culture became, in Malcolm's theory, a critique of oppressive reality. (Asante, Malcolm X as Cultural Hero and Other Afrocentric Essays, 1994, p. 29)*

Asante's analysis is consistent with those previously mentioned; through his political philosophy and political organizing, Malcolm was advocating for a new dynamic in African-American/European-American relationships as one part of the larger movement for African-American liberation. Sales argues that "as a precondition for developing an effective movement for Black liberation, Malcolm X insisted that Black people rethink their entire experience in the United States. Therefore, his most important contribution was an ideological one" (Sales, 1994, p. 53). Asante concurs:

*Despite the attempt by numerous revisionists to steal Malcolm's thunder, to reduce him to a sub-heading of Arabism, or a footnote in Marxism, he remains a Pan-African nationalist committed to the African-Americans living in an imperialist state, and he reacted to that condition with a keen analysis of the social and economic conditions of Africans in the United States. (Asante, Afrocentricity, 1991, p. 18)*

A glimpse into Malcolm's autobiography provides an example that this dissertation seeks to reveal as representative of a critique of the nature of African-American/European-American relations with implications for racial dialogues. Malcolm's general sentiment throughout his tenure in the NOI, and thereafter, was that relations between African-Americans and European-Americans was one of enslaved-to-master and oppressed-to-oppressor; he insisted there has never been true, meaningful exchanges between African-Americans and European-Americans. He said that "raw, naked truth exchanged between the black man and the white man is what a whole lot more of is needed in this country -- to clear the air of the racial mirages, clichés, and lies that this country's very atmosphere has been filled with for four hundred years" (p. 298).

For those in the field of African American Studies, Malcolm's political philosophy at the end of his life provides an example that contemporary scholars, teachers, and leaders can benefit from for eradicating racism, improving race relations, and liberating African-Americans. The political philosophy and activism of Malcolm exemplifies a complexity that is best understood within the parameters of Africology and Afrocentric theory. This point is central to the application and construction of theory within Africology and as a rationale for utilizing Malcolm as a benchmark for this critique of race dialogues. Rabaka argues that "Africana critical theory, utilizes the thought and texts of Africana intellectual-activist ancestors as critical theoretical paradigms and points of departure because so much of their thought is not simply

*problem-posing* but *solution-providing* where the specific life-struggles of persons of African descent (or “black people”) are concerned—human life-struggles, it should be said with no hyperbole and high-sounding words, which European critical theorists (who are usually Eurocentric and often unwittingly white supremacist) have woefully neglected in their classical and contemporary critical theoretical discourse” (Rabaka, 2009, p. 18).

Malcolm validates and exemplifies the role of African-American activists and leaders in speaking to and for African-Americans. The model he constructs is based on his praxis as an activist-leader, who quantifies authority through the evidence of African-Americans responses to both words and actions. In describing Malcolm’s tendency for identifying with average African-Americans, Karenga argues that Malcolm rejected the materialist tendencies of the traditional African-American leadership, including the Nation of Islam, stating that “Malcolm was more and more concerned with social action and confrontation. A man of the people, he felt obligated to translate their aspirations and be in their ranks as they actively dared defy and defeat the oppressor” (Karenga, Malcolm X, Muhammad, and the Nation of Islam: Political Analysis vs. Psychological Assumptions, 1982, p. 196). Malcolm’s epistemological grounding is given credence by the agency reflected in the larger African-American community. His example is as follows:

*Over the ensuing years, I'd had various kinds of evidence that a high percentage of New York City's black people responded to what I said, including a great many who would not publicly say so. For instance, time and again when I spoke at street rallies, I would draw ten and*

*twelve times as many people as most other so-called "Negro leaders." I knew that in any society, a true leader is one who earns and deserves the following he enjoys. True followers are bestowed by themselves, out of their own volition and emotions. I knew that the great lack of most of the big-named "Negro leaders" was their lack of any true rapport with the ghetto Negroes. How could they have rapport when they spent most of their time "integrating" with white people? I knew that the ghetto people knew that I never left the ghetto in spirit, and I never left it physically any more than I had to. I had a ghetto instinct; for instance, I could feel if tension was beyond normal in a ghetto audience. And I could speak and understand the ghetto's language. There was an example of this that always flew to my mind every time I heard some of the "big name" Negro "leaders" declaring they "spoke for" the ghetto black people. (X, 2012, p. 339)*

Given that Malcolm is the predominant precursor and symbol of the Black Studies component of the Black Nationalist/Black Power/Black Liberation Movement, a review of Malcolm's evolving ideology creates a framework for analysis and activism within academic and political spheres. As was revealed in the numerous speeches Malcolm X gave in religious institutions, universities, and street rallies, he was the consummate teacher who utilized his immense rhetorical skills to educate, organize and inspire. Sales indicates that Malcolm's growth was spawned by direct needs within the African-American liberation struggle. He maintains that Malcolm X "evolved in his thinking from Black nationalism to Pan-African internationalism and created the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) in order to address this dilemma that confronted the future development of the Civil Rights movement at the end of its first decade, the crucial period of 1963-65" (Sales, 1994, p. 21).

The reconstructive dimension of Malcolm's ideology, which Asante outlined previously, molded his desire for the transformation of African-Americans (as was

the case in his own life), as well as for the eradication of European-American racism. Karenga furthers this contention and notes that Malcolm recognized the need for “African and other oppressed people to self-consciously struggle to regain their history and humanity and build a new world” (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 251).

Therefore, Malcolm X’s leadership establishes a framework for assessing the value of race dialogues to provide, what Doñela Wright calls, cultural consciousness, both explicating the impact of European oppression and demarcating a pathway to liberation:

*The culturally conscious African individual understands that this contemporary Ma’afa will and can end; their dreams of liberation are not incarcerated. The culturally conscious African person imagines and sees him/herself as a fully, complete human being that has full agency over their life and is able to wield that agency to seek liberation. For this reason, to accept victory is to be liberatory, to want to resist oppression, and to know that liberation and freedom will come, which is why Africans have already won. (Wright, 2016, p. 99)*

### **Malcolm X’s Afrocentric Grounding for African-American Liberation through Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism**

Malcolm X was born into a family of Garveyites, who engendered in him a Black Nationalist/Pan-Africanist orientation that inspired his personal transformation in prison and influenced his acceptance of the political tenants of the Nation of Islam (X, 2012). While Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism provided the theoretical and ideological scope for his analysis of American race relations, Malcolm’s burgeoning Afrocentric consciousness allowed him to respond philosophically and strategically

to the political, historical, and cultural events reflected in the African-American struggle against racism. As Sales claims:

*Between 1958 and his 1964 break with the NOI, Malcolm X became the alter ego of the Civil Rights movement. His staunchly nationalist and rejectionist stand made him the bête noire (no pun intended) for U.S. liberal discourse. Nevertheless, he understood and articulated the rage of those in the northern Black ghettos. Malcolm X gave this group of street people its voice and a public persona. During this same period, Malcolm was being systematically reintroduced to the Black nationalism and Garveyism of his parents. He developed a profound concern for Africa and the Third World, and reinstated a sense of peoplehood and internationalism into the African-American community. Most important, he wanted to establish an activist, nationalist presence within the Civil Rights movement, using the NOI as his base. This desire brought Malcolm into conflict with the leadership of the NOI and ultimately convinced him to leave the organization in order to pursue his political agenda. (Sales, 1994, p. 36)*

Peter Goldman says that “What interested Malcolm first was the decolonization of the black mind—the wakening of a proud, bold, impolite new consciousness of color and everything color means in white America” (p. 396). This reflects the core consciousness-raising component of the Afrocentric paradigm and is clearly expressed in Malcolm X’s notion of Black Nationalism, codified by a focus on culture, both African-American and African, including a psychological “acceptance of African roots and identity” (Sales, 1994, p. 79).

Malcolm X’s call for Black Nationalism was based on his analysis of the historical, and political, circumstances impacting the lives of African-Americans since enslavement in the United States. The construction of this Afrocentric consciousness

was grounded in the Black Nationalist orientation consistent with Garvey and the Nation of Islam:

*The American black man should be focusing his every effort toward building his own businesses, and decent homes for himself. As other ethnic groups have done, let the black people, wherever possible, however possible, patronize their own kind, hire their own kind, and start in those ways to build up the black race's ability to do for itself. That's the only way the American black man is ever going to get respect. One thing the white man never can give the black man is self-respect! The black man never can become independent and recognized as a human being who is truly equal with other human beings until he has what they have, and until he is doing for himself what others are doing for themselves. (X, 2012, pp. 300-301)*

As an example of his Black Nationalism orientation, Malcolm believed that African-American independence was requisite for liberation. He said that African-Americans have “to start self-correcting his own material, moral, and spiritual defects and evils. The black man needs to start his own program to get rid of drunkenness, drug addiction, prostitution. The black man in America has to lift up his own sense of values” (X, 2012, pp. 300-301).

Goldman argues that Malcolm was prophetic in his way of seeing, “transmuted it and combined it with an intuitive genius for modern communication...and it was he in catalytic chemistry with his times who really began the difficult passage from Negro to black consciousness” (Golman, 1979, pp. 396-397). According to Goldman, what was central to Malcolm’s appeal to the African-American masses was in how he challenged the self-abnegation that haunted the burgeoning African-American consciousness in response to white supremacy. Malcolm’s ability to clearly articulate African-American dislocation by his insistence on educating African-Americans about

the psychological impact of White supremacy, elucidates his importance for inspiring a shift in African-American consciousness that became endemic to the Black Liberation struggle of the 1960s:

*We hated our head, we hated the shape of our nose—we wanted one of those long, dog-like noses, you know. Yeah. We hated the color of our skin. We hated the blood of Africa that was in our veins. And in hating our features and our skin and our blood, why, we had to end up hating ourselves.... Our color became us to a chain. We felt that it was holding us back. Our color became to us like a prison which we felt was keeping us confined...and it became hateful to us. It made us feel inferior. It made us feel inadequate. It made us feel helpless. And when we fell victims to this feeling of inadequacy or inferiority or helplessness, we turned to somebody else to show us the way. (Golman, 1979, p. 398)*

Goldman claims that the greatest gift Malcolm offered was saying the “things that black people had been afraid to say, to even to think, for all those years; he got it out in the open, the secrets and the guilts and the hypocrisies that underlay the public mythology of the melting pot” (p. 399). As part of this process, Malcolm provides a profound critique of the imposition of Eurocentric hegemony:

*Here was one of the white man's most characteristic behavior patterns -- where black men are concerned. He loves himself so much that he is startled if he discovers that his victims don't share his vainglorious self-opinion. In America for centuries it had been just fine as long as the victimized, brutalized and exploited black people had been grinning and begging and "Yessa, Massa" and Uncle Tomming. But now, things were different. (X, 2012, p. 260)*

Malcolm's staunch and vocal support for African-American liberation establishes the criteria for improving interracial relations by directly critiquing European-American behavior, attitudes, and culture. Malcolm addressed a deep truth about the

oppressive nature of American society and, requisite for his position as a leader, offered instructions to African-Americans on how to be free of this oppression through the development of an Afrocentric consciousness. As an example below, he shares insight into African-Americans feelings about European-Americans:

*For the white man to ask the black man if he hates him is just like the rapist asking the raped, or the wolf asking the sheep, 'Do you hate me?'  
The white man is in no moral position to accuse anyone else of hate!  
(X, 2012, p. 263)*

While this example might be quite uncomfortable to express as an African-American to European-Americans, or to hear as a European-American from African-Americans, Malcolm believes that this perspective must be understood as a by-product of living within a racist society.

Malcolm X argued that the racial alienation and despair, common within the United States, must be expressed and understood by African-Americans and European-Americans. As Magnus Bassey (2005) argues, Malcolm X's desire to address racial alienation as a means of ameliorating African-American racial consciousness was a major part of his philosophical construct. Bassey believes that Malcolm critiqued the "hopelessness, helplessness and alienation" (p. 55) that African-Americans experienced because the United States doctrines of equality were not practiced or implemented for African-Americans, requiring the creation of a new political and economic relationships where "black and whites" would "share power equally" (Bassey, 2005, p. 57). Bassey (2005) saw this focus on African-American critical racial consciousness as connected to Malcolm's core political strategy by

recognizing that for African-Americans to solve their problems they must first “return to Africa romantically” (p. 57); must separate from Whites in order to control their own destiny (p. 58); and to start a revolution “of all the oppressed people” led by the grassroots and black masses (pp. 60-61).

In his autobiography, Malcolm X provides an unequivocal rationale for the unification of Africans globally:

*Speaking in the Ibadan University's Trenchard Hall, I urged that Africa's independent nations needed to see the necessity of helping to bring the Afro-American's case before the United Nations. I said that just as the American Jew is in political, economic, and cultural harmony with world Jewry, I was convinced that it was time for all Afro-Americans to join the world's Pan-Africanists. I said that physically we Afro-Americans might remain in America, fighting for our Constitutional rights, but that philosophically and culturally we Afro-Americans badly needed to "return" to Africa -- and to develop a working unity in the framework of Pan-Africanism. (X, 2012, p. 382)*

### ***Malcolm X's Vision for Racial Reconciliation and White Involvement in the African-American Liberation Movement***

Though reluctantly, and with trepidation, Malcolm had come to acknowledge and embrace White activists as plausible allies in the Black Liberation Movement. In the months before his death, Malcolm proclaimed that he “will work with anyone, with any group, no matter their color is, as long as they are genuinely interested in taking the type of steps necessary to bring an end to the injustices that black people in this country are afflicted by” (Breitman, 1967, p. 51). During his final trip to London, Malcolm stated that “I believe in taking an uncompromising stand against any forms of segregation and discrimination that are based on race. I myself do not judge a man by the color of his skin” (Marable, 2011, p. 413).

In fact, with the formation of the OAAU, Malcolm desired to “replace the hatred of White people characteristic of the NOI with the more acceptable hatred of oppressive social systems” (Sales, 1994, p. 113). Malcolm X stated:

*I tried in every speech I made to clarify my new position regarding white people -- "I don't speak against the sincere, well-meaning, good white people. I have learned that there are some. I have learned that not all white people are racists. I am speaking against and my fight is against the white racists. I firmly believe that Negroes have the right to fight against these racists, by any means that are necessary." (X, 2012, p. 401)*

This shift in Malcolm’s political consciousness began near the end of his leadership within the Nation of Islam; it was influenced by his interest in galvanizing international support for African-American and African liberation, as well as the liberation of people of color throughout the world. As part of this shift, Malcolm expanded his thinking on the involvement, and role, of non-African-Americans in the African-American liberation struggle. It is during this period that Malcolm’s thinking becomes instructive for contemporary race relations and the application of Afrocentric theory. While he continued to remain a steadfast advocate of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism, he began to define a specific role for European-Americans in the struggle for African-American liberation and racial equality. On his return from his second trip to Saudi Arabia in May 21, 1964, Marable states:

*Malcolm emphasized his desire to create a new ‘organization which will be open to the participation of all Negroes, and we will be willing to accept the support of people of other races.’ Malcolm candidly admitted that his ‘racial philosophy’ had been altered after all he had seen— ‘thousands of people of different races and colors who treated me as a human being.’ (Marable, 2011, p. 319)*

Breitman argues that this shift coincided with Malcolm coming into a new independence as he transitioned out of the Nation of Islam, influenced by his travels abroad, and the brief time he spent back in the United States before being murdered (p. 23). During this period Malcolm's attitude shifted towards European-American advocates of African-American liberation (Breitman, 1967, p. 24). In a December 12, 1964 speech he further articulates the rationale for his new vision:

*'United States history is that of a country that does whatever it wants to by any means necessary...but when it comes to your and my interest, then all of this means become limited,' he argued. 'We are dealing with a powerful enemy, and again, I am not anti-American or un-American. I think there are plenty of good people in America, but there are also plenty of bad people in American and the bad ones are the ones who seem to have all the power.' What he was conceding was that the solution to America's racial dilemma would not be found by African-Americans alone. (Marable, 2011, p. 394)*

However, Sales argues that Malcolm X still "retained a suspicion of Whites from his membership in the NOI" because "Black unity required the exclusion of White people from Black organizations so that a private airing of differences would be possible. Only in this way could African-Americans discover what they agreed on and construct the Black united front" (Sales, 1994, p. 83). The crucial difference in his philosophy was largely tied to his desire for liberation on an international stage. Marable says that "Malcolm appealed for a politics that explicitly rejected racial hatred" and believed that his call for universal human rights would be sufficient to address European-American racism (Marable, 2011, pp. 332-333).

His shift was not without restrictions, standards, and demands. Breitman argues that Malcolm was not necessarily transcending Black Nationalism, but wanted

to include aspects of Black Nationalism as part of a larger, more international, movement against oppression. He believes Malcolm wanted “black nationalism plus fundamental social change, plus the transformation of the whole society. Malcolm was still looking for the name, but he was becoming black nationalist plus revolutionary” (Breitman, 1967, p. 68). Breitman’s position is significant because he argues that Malcolm accepted the need for the inclusion of European-American progressives as part of the larger revolutionary process:

*He was questioning this because it ‘was alienating people who were true revolutionaries’—in this case, white revolutionaries. A pure-and-simple black nationalist wouldn’t care what effect he had on whites, revolutionary or not. Malcolm cared because he intended to work with white revolutionaries; he knew their collaboration was needed if society was to be transformed. (Breitman, 1967, p. 68)*

Though he expressed the idea that European-Americans needed to work on the racism within their own communities as a primary act of racial reconciliation, saying “Whites should spend more time influencing whites” (Marable, 2011, p. 405); his conceptualization of European-American humanity differed from his early espousals of the *demonic white man*. Marable reports that in an interview in the last year of his life, Malcolm demonstrated his desire for a new dynamic in race relations with his changing ontological conceptualization of European-American identity saying that “‘We all believe in the same God’—and denied that whites were ‘devils,’ insisting ‘this is what Elijah Muhammad teaches.... A man should not be judged by the color of his skin but rather by his conscious behavior, by his actions’” (Marable, 2011, p. 407). While Malcolm X embraced the “white man as the devil” construct in the NOI

as a religious concept, he also argued its use on historical and political terms that is emblematic, even today, of the serious mistrust extant among African-Americans in their relationships with European-Americans:

*Unless we call one white man, by name, a 'devil,' we are not speaking of any individual white man. We are speaking of the collective white man's historical record. We are speaking of the collective white man's cruelties, and evils, and greeds, that have seen him act like a devil toward the non-white man. Any intelligent, honest, objective person cannot fail to realize that this white man's slave trade, and his subsequent devilish actions, are directly responsible for not only the presence of this black man in America, but also for the condition in which we find this black man here. You cannot find one black man, I do not care who he is, who has not been personally damaged in some way by the devilish acts of the collective white man! (X, 2012, pp. 290-291)*

However, Malcolm was still distrustful of Whites, especially those whites who seemed overly anxious to befriend and engage in the activities of African-Americans. He says that those types of whites reminded him of his hustler days when “all of those red-faced, drunk whites in the after-hours clubs were always grabbing hold of some Negroes and talking about ‘I just want you to know you're just as good as I am’” (X, 2012, p. 412).

While continuing to be a staunch advocate of Black Nationalism, Malcolm X recognized that in order for racism to be eradicated, institutional and structural forms of racism would have to be addressed by European-Americans:

*I said that on the American racial level, we had to approach the black man's struggle against the white man's racism as a human problem, that we had to forget hypocritical politics and propaganda. I said that*

*both races, as human beings, had the obligation, the responsibility, of helping to correct America's human problem. The well-meaning white people, I said, had to combat, actively and directly, the racism in other white people. And the black people had to build within themselves much greater awareness that along with equal rights there had to be the bearing of equal responsibilities. (X, 2012, p. 411)*

Malcolm X believed European-Americans had a role to play in eradicating racism by educating members of their own community since that is “where America’s racism really is” (X, 2012, p. 412). While rejecting membership in the OAAU for Whites, Malcolm X said to let “sincere white individuals find all other white people they can who feel as they do -- and let them form their own all-white groups, to work trying to convert other white people who are thinking and acting so racist. Let sincere whites go and teach non-violence to white people!” (X, 2012, p. 412).

Malcolm X’s insistence that Whites not join the OAAU was designed for the maximum benefit of White allyship. He believed that Whites working within Black organizations was an escapist approach to “salve their conscience, instead of solving racism because, as he says, “Negroes aren’t the racists” (X, 2012, p. 411). And while they couldn’t join the OAAU, he did believe that they could contribute financially, as was the case with many causes during the 1950s and 1960s. He said that an astonishing number “of white people called, and wrote, offering contributions, or asking could they join? The answer was, no, they couldn't join; our membership was all black -- but if their consciences dictated, they could financially help our constructive approach to America's race problems” (X, 2012, p. 346). Malcolm believed that there is a significant need for European-Americans to be educated about

race, racial identity, and racism because racism was so embedded in the White psyche, being such a major part of their “white national subconsciousness” that many “whites are even actually unaware of their own racism, until they face some test, and then their racism emerges in one form or another” (X, 2012, p. 396).

During this final phase of his life, he conceptualized an integration of civil rights with human rights as a synthesis of Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and the global struggle for liberation by continental and diasporan Africans (as well as other people of color) battling against colonialism and neocolonialism. The global anti-imperialist movement, which Malcolm began to understand and integrate into his ideology and activism in the late 1950s, helped him in forging a new strategy for a global, multiracial revolution that also had implications for a role for European-Americans. Sales asserts that Malcolm X “saw African-American nationalism as an integral part of the worldwide revolution of Afro-Asians against White domination” (Sales, 1994, p. 75).

Malcolm’s charge to European-Americans about educating their own community members is reflective of a general sentiment among African-Americans as one tactic in eradicating European-American racism. Malcolm stated that “Whites who are sincere should organize among themselves and figure out some strategy to break down the prejudices that exists in white communities” (Marable, 2011, p. 407). Marable believed that in Malcolm’s new vision, he “offered hope that whites could

overcome centuries of negative socialization toward blacks, and that a racially just society was achievable” (Marable, 2011, p. 484).

Malcolm clearly accepted, even as a member of the Nation of Islam, that American race relations were encumbered by the racist nature of the society which did not foster true dialogue. As a critique of interracial communication he said:

*What are they talking about? There never was any communication. Until after World War II, there wasn't a single community in the entire United States where the white man heard from any local Negro "leaders" the truth of what Negroes felt about the conditions that the white community imposed upon Negroes. (X, 2012, p. 298)*

This sentiment is characteristic of African-American leadership’s critique of White society generally. However, Malcolm’s philosophy at the end of his life reflects the desire for a particular type of engagement with European-Americans as part of his liberation strategy, especially during the period of 1964-1965. Marable says that Malcolm “linked his black consciousness to the ideological imperative of self-determination, the concept that all people have a natural right to decide for themselves their own destiny. Malcolm perceived black Americans as an oppressed nation within a nation, with its own culture, social institutions, and group psychology” reflecting a significant distinction imposed by racism (Marable, 2011, pp. 482-483).

*At the end of his life he realized that blacks indeed could achieve representation and even power under America’s constitutional system. But he always thought first and foremost about blacks’ interest. Many blacks instinctively sensed this, and loved him for it. (Marable, 2011, pp. 482-483)*

Sales argues that although Whites could not become members of the OAAU, it received support from whites who were allied with the Civil Rights Movement. In fact, Sales claims that the OAAU “gave Malcolm access to the radicalized white students. As it turned out, the OAAU found that its allies in the white community came most readily among white students” (Sales, 1994, p. viii). In his autobiography, Malcolm X believed that many Whites, particularly the youth, would be inspired to rebel against the malevolent impact of racism as a direct result of his years of actual conversations and observations. He says that racism is leading America down a “suicidal path” that “whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the hand-writing on the wall and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth -- the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to” (X, 2012, p. 372).

Sales contends that Malcolm X’s experiences with White activist students, with whom he engaged around the United States while lecturing as part of the NOI and afterwards, taught him about the potential for working with Whites in general. Sales states that:

*At the time of his death, Malcolm X noted that there was emerging a new kind of White student who might relate to the human rights struggle of Black people. Malcolm found that he could talk to these students and that they seemed receptive. He foresaw the possibility that if he were wrong on the question of the potential for change of White people, it would be White youth would prove him so. To that end, near the end of his life he began to direct a specific message to that audience. This message was based on Malcolm’s sense of the role students were actually playing in contemporary history. (Sales, 1994, p. 132)*

In this autobiography, while a minister in the Nation of Islam, Malcolm recalls the story of a young, White, female, student who had attended a lecture when he spoke at her New England college. The woman had traveled to Harlem to meet him at one of the NOI's restaurants, imploring him to consider the role and nature of Whites in the struggle for African-American liberation. Part of their conversation is as follows:

*She demanded right up in my face, "Don't you believe there are any good white people?" I didn't want to hurt her feelings. I told her, "People's deeds I believe in, Miss -- not their words."*

*"What can I do?" she exclaimed. I told her, "Nothing." She burst out crying, and ran out and up Lenox Avenue and caught a taxi. (X, 2012, p. 312)*

By the end of the autobiography, Malcolm shares his desire to provide a different answer to the young woman that reflected his post-NOI position on White activism. He understood "how many white people truly wanted to see American racial problems solved. I knew that many whites were as frustrated as Negroes" (X, 2012, p. 411). For Whites who were sincerely desiring a role in the liberation movement, Malcolm wanted to inspire them to action. He shares his regrets for not providing the young women with some direction:

*I wish that now I knew her name, or where I could telephone her, or write to her, and tell her what I tell white people now when they present themselves as being sincere, and ask me, one way or another, the same thing that she asked. (X, 2012, p. 411)*

The lessons of Malcolm's life serve as a narrative for the needs that African-Americans desire in their relationships with European-Americans. His political

philosophy and activism are consistent with the axiological framework of Africology and the Afrocentric paradigm – humanizing students to realize their own agency, while engaging them in the process of eradicating oppression in all its forms, for all people, right now *by any means necessary*.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL, PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR SCOPE OF RACE DIALOGUES**

#### **Rationale for an Africological Critique of Race Dialogues**

As a point of pedagogical comparison between race dialogues and Africology, the African American Studies curriculum is centered on exploring oppression, discrimination, and prejudice through courses focused on literature, history, sociology, politics, and psychology impacting students cognitively and affectively. From a pedagogical perspective, African American Studies faculty employ teaching strategies that foster holistic student participation in order to benefit from the highly emotional issues that are central to its curriculum.

In this section of the dissertation, the focus is to provide the theoretical and pedagogical framework of race dialogues based on its purpose, goals, motivations, processes, impact, and outcomes. As outlined previously, the major dimensions of the Afrocentric paradigm, which are of considerable importance here, primarily pertain to the relevance of race dialogues based on African people's agency, consciousness-raising, and liberatory action given race dialogues' claims of applicability to African liberation.

Six dialogue facilitation plans will be provided in this section to offer specific examples from the Multiversity Race/Ethnicity Dialogue Facilitator's Curriculum, which was produced by a collaboration of universities utilizing the Michigan Model (Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008). Each dialogue example will provide the subject matter title, exercises that structure the dialogue, a time frame that

includes the number of minutes projected to complete the dialogue, a rationale, procedures for conducting the dialogue, questions to guide the dialogue, and some helpful hints and debriefing questions. The dialogues include: 1. Setting a Climate for Dialogue: Normalizing Voicing One's Own Feelings and Perspectives, and Conflict, 2. Sharing Stories, Noticing Commonalities and Differences in Experiences, 3. Socialization and Caucus Groups, 4. Understanding Systems of Oppression/Privilege, 5. Hot Topic #1: Interpersonal/Relationship Dialogue and 6. Hot Topic #2: Institutional Level Dialogue.

### ***Race Dialogues Purpose***

The purpose of race dialogues is to bring together diverse groups of people to learn together by sharing, and listening, in order to “work collectively and individually to promote greater diversity, equality and justice” in a “structured, supportive and sustained environment” (Nagda & Maxell, *Deepening the Layers of Understanding and Connection*, 2011, p. 1). For many it is a form of “democratic engagement that fosters critical understanding, communication, and collaborative actions across race and other social group boundaries about contentious issues in educational and community settings” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, pp. 1-2). Sarah Maddison explains that race dialogues is “an engagement that allows for an expanded understanding of the other, with the aim of sustaining peace and, over time, transforming the underlying conflict – not towards agreement, but in a direction that enables greater mutual understanding” (Maddison, 2015, pp. 1015-1016).

While intergroup dialogue has its foundations in many progressive and transformative educational traditions and movements, specifically the work of John Dewey, Gordon Allport, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks, the philosophical core is based on “the importance of subjectivity, the role of lived experience in the construction of meaning and generation of new knowledge, and the emancipatory potential of relational communication and learning” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, p. 3). Freire has had one of the most profound impacts on the intergroup dialogue movement by viewing dialogue “as inextricably linked to processes of *conscientization* (consciousness-raising) and education for freedom” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, p. 5). The intent of this consciousness-raising is the creation of new social structures and social relationships. Dessel argues that Freire’s framework recognized the transformative reality created when one has a consciousness of the world and that consciousness was based on having an “understanding of oppression as it related to issues of power and control, and the importance of acknowledging underlying mechanisms of oppression” (Dessel, *Dialogue and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary and Transformative History*, 2011, p. 171).

Dialogue reflects a need for recognizing that historical conflicts have divided groups to such an extent that mistrust, separation and alienation are viewed as a kind of normalcy. Because racism has created systematic ways of engendering the separation of groups, specifically based on race, carried on through divergent

“histories of violence and conflict” that “live on in everyday intercommunal relationships, often for generations after the violent conflict has ended”, dialogue serves the aim of transforming the conflict rather than to resolve it (Maddison, 2015, p. 1019).

The goal of intergroup dialogue is for “participants (to) also go beyond recognizing ways in which their relationships are defined by societal power relations to ways in which they can redefine these relationships to produce more equality” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 78). In this regard, race dialogues see consciousness-raising as “a process that encourages participants to recognize, question, broaden, and challenge individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and behaviors that perpetuate estranged and oppressive relations between groups” (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002, p. 9). Furthermore, through this process, dialogue participants are “able to see some of the ways racism or other systems of oppression (e.g., sexism or heterosexism) shape people’s lives. Gradually they may be able to understand that the tensions and misunderstandings surfacing between members of the social identity groups do not happen in a vacuum randomly but are a result of historical and institutional dynamics of privilege and oppression. Through this process participants frequently realize how the experiences and opinions of individual group members differ from common stereotypes” (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002, p. 9).

The general legacy of interracial relations in the U.S. is fraught with bias, prejudice and fear. Race dialogues serve as a remedy and response to the alienation

that exist between racial groups. However, the false politeness and avoidance of racial conversations, impinge the societal inclination for dialogue. As Sue outlines, a major barrier to productive racial dialogue is fear. He says

*Many well-intentioned citizens harbor deep-seated fears about possessing unconscious racial biases that assail their images of being good, moral and decent human beings who would never intentionally discriminate. Race talk threatens to unmask the ugly secrets of personal prejudices. Ironically, successful racial dialogues as a means to increase awareness and compassion can only come about when we acknowledge and take responsibility for our implicit biases and behaviors. (Sue, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, p. xvii)*

Intergroup dialogue is based on a social justice approach to improving intergroup relations through transformative education. It is focused on “the development of a critical consciousness and transformative pedagogical practices to foster educational change” by an examination of “sociopolitical and ideological dimensions of systems of privilege and oppression” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice, 2014, p. 6). Intergroup dialogue seeks to “engage difference, social identity, and social justice through an intentional process that attempts to enhance equity across two or more social identity groups with distinct subject positions and statuses in asymmetrical power relations” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice, 2014, p. 7).

In part, social justice exemplified in race dialogue involves the exploration of social identities. Intergroup dialogue “involves diverse groups of students in learning

about social justice. By social justice, we mean learning that involves understanding social identities and group-based inequalities, encourages building of crossgroup relationships, and cultivates social responsibility” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 3). Buckleya and Quayeb include the concepts of distributive justice and relational justice as part of their social justice construct for understanding the social justice impact in education by defining the terms in the following manner:

*Distributive justice concerns the equality of opportunity, outcome, and condition, particularly in relationship to the ways in which power and wealth are distributed in a society. Relational justice is based on mutuality, which ranges from a community bound by shared responsibilities to common efforts to challenge the status quo. Justice as recognition includes both the recognition of others and the commitment to avoid oppressive behaviors. In other words, redistribution concerns political economy and undergirds efforts to create similar opportunities, outcomes, and conditions for all. Recognition, however, concerns the appreciation, support, and defense of cultural differences. (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 3)*

Freire provides a critique of the general posture employed in intergroup interactions by stating that “In my relations with others, those who may not have made the same political, ethical, aesthetic or pedagogical choices as myself, I cannot begin with the standpoint that I have to conquer them at any cost or from the fear that they may conquer me. On the contrary, the basis of our encounter ought to be a respect for the differences between us...” (Placier, Kroner, Burgoyne, & Worthington, 2012, p. 29). Racial dialogues are a response to racial conflict by providing a structural mechanism intended to overcome the social division and social malaise. Furthermore,

racial dialogues are a recognition of the transformative work that is required following a significant period of historical and contemporary racial injustice. Sarah Maddison so aptly explains:

*Societies emerging from conflict and violence face enormous challenges. While achieving a peaceful political settlement marks a turning point in the recovery from violent conflict, it is evident that the transformative work required in the wake of a settlement remains long and arduous, often over decades or even generations. In most situations, an agreement to end the violence is not enough to transform a deeply divided society's underlying conflicts, which are rooted in history and identity. Divided or segregated institutions must also be transformed and, perhaps even more fundamentally, so too must relationships. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1014)*

In the Michigan Model, “the curriculum is organized around various *isms* (such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, ethnocentrism, and others) as a way to examine systemic privilege and oppression. Pedagogically, students’ life experiences are brought into the classroom as a starting point for raising consciousness” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 38). For European-Americans, this means not only developing a critical consciousness but also a consciousness about White racial identity development. Sue argues that a major purpose of race dialogues for European-Americans is to “allow them to grasp the significance of what it means to be White, and how Whiteness with its accompanying invisible norms and standards are entrenched into their everyday lives. This racial awakening and the development of a nonracist identity is intimately linked to racial identity development” (Sue, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*, 2015, p. 189).

At the beginning of the dialogue process, facilitators spend a significant amount of time helping participants develop trust in order to encourage a high level of engagement in the dialogue. In the dialogue below, facilitators allow participants to share their hopes and fears about the dialogue.

<p>Section: STAGE I – SESSION 2</p> <p><b>Title: Setting a Climate for Dialogue: Normalizing Voicing One’s Own Feelings and Perspectives, and Conflict</b></p> <p>Exercise: <i>Active Listening about Hopes and Fears Pair Share</i></p> <p><u>Time:</u> 30 Minutes</p> <p><u>Source:</u> Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008, pp. 16-18</p>
<p><u>Rationale:</u> To provide an opportunity for participants to <b>talk</b> about their responses to the hopes and fears activity, to encourage people to begin to <b>name and normalize conflict</b> by identifying and processing “hot buttons” responses through the practice of <b>active listening skills</b>, and to help participants form important <b>links</b> between their experiences, the activities, and the readings.</p>
<p><u>Procedure:</u> With the class’ hopes and fears in mind, we want to move to another level of communicating. We’d like you to pair up with someone in the class you don’t know well to talk about and listen to each other’s hopes and fears about race/ethnicity dialogues using active listening. Please be honest, but don’t feel you need to share anything you are not ready to share. What is active listening? What does it entail?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Post definitions of speaker, listener, active listening, paraphrasing, and feedback on newsprint on the wall and/or give students the Bidol handout. Briefly define active listening, comment on the role of paraphrasing and feedback in interactive communication and the roles of the speaker and listener. Let participants know that we are going to practice these skills as we talk about our hopes and fears.</li><li>2. Ask participants to pair up with someone they do not know well for this activity and who represents a different group in the dialogue – for race/ethnicity, dyads would consist of a White and a student of color.</li><li>3. Explain that each member of the pair will take a few minutes to speak without interruption while the other member actively listens, and then they will switch.</li><li>4. Post and briefly read the following list of “hopes and fears” questions on the wall:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. What types of things are hard for you to voice in classes? What happens to you in these situations? What do you need from others to voice your thoughts and feelings about race/ethnicity?</li><li>b. What types of things are hard for you to hear when it comes to topics of race/ethnicity? What needs to happen so that you are able hear and respond constructively to them?</li><li>c. How do you feel about and respond to conflict? To emotion? What would you like to be able to do better? How might our class help this happen?</li></ol></li></ol>

5. Ask each participant in the dyad to select one set of questions he/she is comfortable addressing and to take one minute to think about and jot down any thoughts about them.
6. Then ask participants to decide who will go first and face each other.
7. The speaker will speak for two minutes without interruption. The listener will listen actively without interrupting.
8. At the end of two minutes, the listener will take one minute to paraphrase what he/she heard the speaker say (both content and emotions). The listener should ask clarifying questions where necessary, for another minute or so.
9. The speaker will confirm whether or not the listener paraphrased correctly – both content and emotions. Depending on the time available for the exercise, encourage pairs to work on accurately capturing the overall message rather than the more specific details/nuances.
10. Next the participants will switch roles and repeat the exercise.
11. Time each four-five minute period and signal when time is up.
12. After both people have had the opportunity to be the speaker and listener, ask the pairs to talk for two minutes each about what it was like to do this activity and what they learned about how to hear and respond to people’s hopes and fears.

Debriefing Tips and Questions:

- What was it like to listen without verbally engaging with the speaker?
- What questions or comments did you want to ask the speaker as they were speaking? Why?
- What was it like to speak continuously for two minutes without interruption or comments? What was it like to receive acknowledgement from listener?
- How does this communication style differ from the communication style you are used to? What does this mean for your participation in the dialogue?
- How did you feel sharing some of your emotions? Some of your hot buttons? Some of your challenges?
- How do you feel about conflict? How does this shape your response to it?
- Any final thoughts about the value of listening, paraphrasing, or interactive communication, especially as they are related to hopes and fears, to hot buttons, to conflict?
- What does this mean for our group?
- How might specific themes in the readings help us respond to these fears?

***Race Dialogues Goals***

The central pedagogical construct of the Michigan Model of intergroup dialogue is the use of the critical-dialogic approach. Nagda and Maxwell describe the dialogic goals to this approach are “aimed at building affective self-other relationships through personal storytelling and sharing, empathetic listening, and

interpersonal inquiry” (Nagda & Maxell, *Deepening the Layers of Understanding and Connection*, 2011, p. 5). The critical goals of the approach are centered on “understanding how power, privilege, and group-based inequalities structure individual and group life as well as on fostering individual and collective responsibilities for redressing inequalities and promoting social justice” (Nagda & Maxell, *Deepening the Layers of Understanding and Connection*, 2011, p. 5). The goals of intergroup dialogue include “critical co-inquiry, consciousness-raising about causes and effects of social group inequalities, conflict transformation, and civic engagement in activities that foster learning and social change” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, p. 2).

The critical-dialogic approach is designed to promote intergroup understanding of the self and others by communicating about challenging social issues by listening to the experiences of others and learning from the responses one gives and receives. This approach fosters a critical understanding of race relations through the perspectives of dialogue participants as they explore issues of racial identity, racial fear, racial power and racial inequalities and privileges. The goal of the critical-dialogic approach is to “mobilize the power of cross-group relationships not only as a focal point of analysis of structural inequalities and the consequences on group and individual lives, but also as sites for relating in ways that advance individual and collective agency for transformative social change” (Nagda & Maxell, *Deepening the Layers of Understanding and Connection*, 2011, p. 5). The critical

approach clearly defines the goal in the following manner: “We aim to raise critical consciousness by facilitating individual and collective reflections on readings, the experiences students share about how power and privilege influence their lives, and the power dynamics that emerge during the dialogue. This joint focus on person and structure means that students reflect on their social identities and on the larger systems of inequalities” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 44).

The critical-dialogic approach fosters an unlearning of oppression and a critical consciousness that leads to equitable race relations based on the eradication of racism. Thusly, “intergroup dialogue can be conceived of as a critical-dialogic praxis that simultaneously supports *critically* (the capacity to critically examine social hierarchies and dominant beliefs or explanations) and *liberation* (the capacity to free oneself and help support others to free themselves from oppressive scripts and habits through authentic dialogue, problem-solving, and reciprocal and empowered relations). Ultimately, intergroup dialogue may enable the development of a sense of individual and collective agency for creating social change and more equitable and just relationships” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, p. 8).

Nagda and Maxwell assert that this critical perspective fosters an understanding of the impact of race on individual lives through the shared narratives, and, more importantly, that race manifests in individual lives because it is entrenched in a complex system that institutionalizes racial patterns of attitudes, behaviors,

perceptions and actions. Therefore, the goal of this process is to engender an understanding among participants about the systemic ways in which their individual stories are the result of racialized patterns intended to manifest racial conflict. And because the dialogue is critical, revealing a plethora of examples of racial strife, mistreatment and pain, the intent is to foster community building and relational development by exposing the structural and institutional nature of racism. Nagda and Maxwell explain that because intergroup dialogues focus on the inequalities on a structural, institutional, and individual level, participants are encouraged to explore the connection between their personal context and the social frameworks that produce and reproduce racial disparities. They explain that the goal of intergroup dialogue is to encourage “participants to both personalize and contextualize experiences and issues vis-à-vis systems of power, privilege, and resistance/empowerment. Personalization refers to examining the issues of social identities and inequalities and the affective and cognitive impact on participants, individually and collectively. Contextualization involves questioning personal biases and misinformation, and understanding differences in experiences that flow from differential societal locations” (Nagda & Maxwell, *Deepening the Layers of Understanding and Connection*, 2011, pp. 14-15).

Because race dialogues operate on cognitive and affective levels, it is clear that the goal is to transform participants in their thinking, behavior and attitudes. Sue states that the goal of influencing participants on an emotional level is reflected in participants often reporting “less intimidation and fear of differences, an increased

compassion for others, a broadening of their horizons, appreciation of people of all colors and cultures, and a greater sense of connectedness with all groups” (Sue, Race Talk: The Psychology of Racial Dialogues, 2013, p. 664) .

The dialogic component both describes the process and the goals. Gurin et al. explicate the connection between both:

*By dialogic, we mean a focus on building substantive relationships between and within groups through communication. Because estranged intergroup relationships are marked by lack of contact and lack of constructive engagement across differences, a primary task of intergroup dialogue is to create engaged interaction. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 44).*

Since the goal is not acquiescence, agreement, compromise, or consensus, a dialogue allows for the expression and revelation of meaning, truth, perspectives, self-awareness, and other-understanding. A major goal of the process is “to facilitate critical analyses and dialogic relationships not simply as ends unto themselves or as separate goals, but to integrate them with a commitment to collaborative action and change” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 45). Sue believes that race dialogues can promote a level of racial literacy by helping people to “expand the ability to critically analyze racial ideologies, and dispel stereotypes and misinformation about other groups” (Sue, Race Talk: The Psychology of Racial Dialogues, 2013, p. 663).

The next dialogue example shared below is focused on helping participants share and listen to personal stories. On a macro level, the goal of intergroup dialogue is to promote better intergroup interaction through intergroup communication about

race, racial identity and racial conflict. Nagda argues that intergroup dialogue improves intergroup relations because of its positive impact on participants' "thinking more about their racial identities, better perspective taking abilities, more comfort in communicating across differences, and more motivated to bridge differences" (Nagda B. R., 2006, p. 555). The dialogue below utilizes an exercise called Testimonials to help participants' gain intergroup understanding.

<p>Section: STAGE I – SESSION 4</p> <p><b>Title: Sharing Stories, Noticing Commonalities and Differences in Experiences</b></p> <p>Exercise: <i>Testimonials</i></p>
<p><u>Time:</u> 70 Minutes</p> <p><u>Source:</u> Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008, pp. 31-33</p>
<p><u>Rationale:</u> The previous session focused on participants exploring social identity memberships. Having read other testimonials, this session will create an opportunity for participants to tell their own stories. Finding one's own voice and narrative can be a powerful experience in understanding the self in relationship to others who have both commonalities and differences to you. One part of dialogue is giving participants the chance to bring their experiences into the classroom as a legitimate and authentic process of learning.</p> <p>By creating the space and environment in which each participant can share their own story, facilitators and other participants have the opportunity to create a stronger learning community in which risks can be taken and experiences affirmed. This process can bring individuals in the group closer together as a group and serve as a way to commit to the colearning process in real ways by listening and accepting each other's stories.</p>
<p><u>Procedure:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have participants sit in a circle if not already doing so.</li><li>2. Explain that each participant will now share their testimonials, tell their own stories.</li><li>3. Make sure everyone understands that they are free to tell or not tell any parts of their stories. Creating an open environment in which participants feel able to take risks and be supported and not judged is critical to this process. Everyone else in the circle should be listening attentively to the person sharing. During the process, we should affirm the sharing and risk-taking without judging what is being said.</li><li>4. Before starting, give the group a few minutes to collect their thoughts about how they will explain their testimonial. Encourage participants to review their testimonials (from their journals/logs) but then simply talk from their own words about their own story.</li></ol>

5. Explain that because our stories are important and can be quite involved, we want to make sure that everyone has a chance to share. Therefore, while someone is speaking, the person sitting to their right will have an automatic timer with an alarm, which will signal the end of that person's time after ~4 minutes. (This way it's the alarm, and not another person who "stops" the story—no one has to feel guilt about stopping.)

6. Given the time constraints, suggest to participants that it may be best to begin with the most difficult or important part of their stories so that they do not miss sharing it.

7. Finally, have the facilitator who did not model testimonials the previous session to begin with her or his testimonial to demonstrate the depth and openness of sharing permitted and affirmed within the dialogue session.

8. Have each participant share in turn.

**IF TIME: Sharing in dyads**

1. After everyone has finished sharing with the large group, break into dyads and allow several minutes for each participant to share their thoughts and feelings with one other person.

2. Once participants have paired up, explain that each person in the dyad will have several minutes to speak and that they can decide who will go first.

3. One of the facilitators should time their interactions to allow an equal time for each to share (2 minutes for the first, and then 2 minutes for the second).

**ENDING:**

1. After returning to the large group (if you had time to share in dyads), affirm participants' participation in the session.

2. As important personal issues may have surfaced for the first time during this session, hand out the information about the University's Counseling Services and explain how they can access these services.

3. Thank the group for their stories and their willingness to share.

**Debriefing Tips and Questions:**

Facilitators should look for opportunities to connect testimonials and stories with readings if participants fail to do so. You can do so by asking, for example, "which, if any, of the readings speak to some of the things people shared today?"

Among possible debriefing questions are:

- What was it like to look for items to write your story?
- What was it like for you to share your testimonial with the group?
- What did you learn about each other? How was it for you to hear others talk about the importance of their social identities?
- Did you notice any similarities?
- How significant was intersectionality for people? What does this suggest to you? How is it shaping your own understanding of identity – in particular for this dialogue?

Sue argues that race dialogues are one part of the process of developing healthy racial identities. As the testimonial exercise is intended to reveal, European-Americans participating in race dialogues are able to achieve the following goals:

*First, race talks places Whites in new and oftentimes uncomfortable situations, impels them to question themselves as racial/cultural beings, and increases awareness of racial issues, especially racism. Second, race talk can help create conditions that impel change in the form of new insights, attitudes, and behaviors that lead Whites to a realization of their roles in the perpetuation of racism. Third, race talk that stresses the development and maintenance of a healthy White racial identity (nonracist) is of utmost to success. Last, race talk will hopefully facilitate the lived experience of White Americans, increase their understanding and comfort in relating to groups of color, and motivate them to take personal and social action in eradicating racism (antiracist). (Sue, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, p. 205)*

The Sustained Dialogue Campus Network offers its own model of race dialogues operating within framework of the Michigan Model. The goal within this approach is to “create the capacity to collectively design change through transforming relationships and building a deeper and more complete understanding of the participants’ communications” (Parker, Nemoeroff, Kelleher, & Christina, 2011, p. 104). While discussion and debate can exist in the dialogic frame, they are discouraged because the goal of dialogue is “critically analyze prevailing ideas and expand what is known in a space where listening, respect, appreciation, and inquiry build relationship and understanding” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice, 2014, p. 9).

In the Sustained Dialogue model, dialogue is defined as

*an interactive process designed to change conflictual relationships over time—is different from the usual public-policy discussions and from formal mediation and negotiation. First, it focuses on the dynamics of the underlying relationships that cause divisive problems, not just on the problems. Second, it focuses on changing those relationships, not just on choosing a policy direction or on dividing*

*material goods or power in dispute through formal mediation or negotiation. It is designed for groups, communities and organizations in deep-rooted human conflict or tension whatever the cause—ethnic, racial, religious, historic, material or personal. (Saunders, A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts, 1999, p. 81)*

Gurin, Nagda and Zuniga argue that the Michigan Model is not focused on intergroup harmony as a goal, which they critique as an ineffective dimension of historical models of improving intergroup relations, but argue that the goal of intergroup dialogues is collective action for “greater equality and social justice in society” which is a result of collective consciousness-raising and action (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 35). They explain that, historically, many programs designed to improve intergroup relations focused on intergroup harmony as a goal through prejudice reduction.

Gurin, Nagda and Zuniga argue that the problems with these historical models, framed as either decategorization and recategorization, ignored major constructs inhibiting constructive intergroup relation practices because within these models: “all group identities, whether privileged in the social structure or not, are deemphasized so that group members think about each other as individuals or as part of a newly formed deracialized or nongendered in-group. Original in-group identities are deemphasized as a trade-off to improve intergroup harmony. However, it is not always possible or even desirable, outside of the laboratory, to rely completely on these two models for positive intergroup relations because many people continue to

find their racial, gender, ethnic, and nationality identities important in their lives every day” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 34).

While intergroup dialogue utilizes aspects of the recategorization and decategorization models within its approach, the inclusion of the social justice dimension of the model facilitates learning for participants that allows for the maintenance of one’s social identity along with the desire to engage other social identity groups. Participants maintaining this “dual identity” approach to intergroup interactions are just as effective in reducing prejudice and even more effective in “helping group members generalize the positive feelings developed in the original intergroup situation toward other out-group members who were not present at the time” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 37).

The agonistic forms of dialogue may be most appealing to Africologists due to the explicit ways this form of dialogue recognizes the almost perpetuity of conflict. The agonistic approach sees the goal of engagement (and democracy itself) as a means to “convert antagonism into agonism and enemies into adversaries” through a “democratic attitude that enables a contestatory, but respectful, engagement of adversaries across profound differences” by centering the engagement within the inherent historical and contemporary struggles that began and replicate racist policies, practices and institutions through an epistemic openness to difference and conflict (Maddison, 2015, p. 1020). Under the agonistic approach, the goal is for participants to understand each other through “a serious and genuine effort to understand others’ concerns, even though deep disagreements may persist”,

recognizing the historical foregrounding of racial conflict lies within identity politics and historical mistreatment (Maddison, 2015, p. 1021).

The goal of dialogue is to surface the violence that exist within racial relationships in order to forge genuine, authentic relationships and envisaged new forms, patterns and approaches to race in the United States. Agonistic notions of dialogue purport to advance the expression of conflict in dialogue as a requisite dimension of the transformation process. Maddison argues that in struggles for justice, it may be the case that more rather than less conflict is required to truly dredge the depths of a disagreement, facilitate deep learning about the other, and therefore ensure that needs are fully addressed. Rather than bracketing or avoiding conflict, the aim in dialogue work is to” transform the violence into constructive conflict as part of the process of social struggle afforded through relationship building between groups (Maddison, 2015, pp. 1021-22).

Racial dialogues sometime allow racial groups to have an intragroup experience. The dialogue below employs an exercise called Caucus Groups to provide an opportunity an intraracial dialogue to support intergroup understanding. This is quite useful, especially for European-Americans, since groups often don’t talk about racial issues among their own groups in a healthy and productive manner.

Section: STAGE II – SESSION 5

**Title: Socialization and Caucus Groups**

Exercise: *Caucus Groups*

Time: 50 minutes

Source: Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008, pp. 41-43

**Rationale:** To offer participants an opportunity to discuss within identity groups issues that emerged from the Cycle of Socialization; and to discuss within groups, the impact of racism.

**Procedure:**

1. Inform participants that we will now be spending time in caucus groups – small groups of only people of color or white people, to explore the experiences particular to that group.

2. Invite people who identify as white to go to room “#” with the assigned facilitator.

Note: The privileged group is asked to leave the room.

3. Caucus groups will have 40 minutes for this discussion, and 10 minutes for wrap-up and prep for fish bowl (which will occur next week). Five to seven minutes before the end of the caucus group, invite participants to free-write about their reactions to the discussion, and to identify something they would like to report back to the large group.

4. Begin all caucus group discussions with “here and now” questions, capturing the responses on newsprint (have each question pre-printed on newsprint to facilitate the process and save time):

- “How does it feel to be identified as a member of this group?”
- “How do you feel about dividing up into caucus groups?”

Each caucus group should discuss the questions listed below (as appropriate):

**White People’s Caucus Group**

**Preliminary Questions:**

- We discussed some of the messages we were taught about being white growing up (e.g., family, school, neighborhood, places of worship, media). What has been the impact of that socialization on your life? Consider some of the costs and benefits.
- What do you like about being white? If that is a difficult question to answer, share why.
- When have you felt good or proud to be white? What is the relation you see to the socialization process in talking about this?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask other white people in this group about what it is like for them to be white? Do they have different socialization patterns? If so, what are some of the commonalities and differences amongst the group?

**Conversation Extenders:**

- What is easy or difficult about being a white person in this society or on campus?
- How are you being hurt by racism?
- It’s easy to think of racism as an individual’s action against people of color by racist/white supremacist white people... In what ways has the cycle of socialization affected your thinking about this, if at all?
- How can we use our common and different experiences and awareness to resist or challenge the system of racism? What benefits and costs can you associate with resistance?

### **People of Color's Caucus Group**

#### **Preliminary Questions:**

- We discussed some of the messages we were taught about being a person of color growing up (e.g., family, school, neighborhood, places of worship, media). What is the impact of that socialization on your life? Consider some of the costs and benefits.
- What do you like about being a person of color? If that's a difficult question to answer, share why.
- When have you felt good or proud to be a person of color? And what is the relation you see to the socialization process in talking about it?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask other people of color in this group about what it is like for them to be people of color? Do they have different socialization patterns? If so what are some of the commonalities and differences amongst the group?

#### **Conversation Extenders:**

- What is easy or difficult about being a person of color on this campus?
- How are you being hurt by racism?
- It's easy to think of racism as an individual's action against people of color by racist/white supremacist white people... In what ways has the cycle of socialization affected your thinking about this, if at all?
- How can we use our common and different experiences and awareness to resist or challenge the system of racism? What benefits and costs can you associate with resistance?

#### **Closing and Assignments:**

##### **Time: 10 Minutes**

Bring the caucus group who left back into the room. Explain that there is value and learning being in an intragroup setting. Explain that the next class period will be devoted to discussion of the caucus groups and practicing active listening and perspective taking.

Transformational Social Therapy fits well into the agonistic form of dialogue in that it is focused on improving race relations by creating an environment where participants are able to express their emotions, explore group conflicts without violence, share information between groups and engage in transformative actions by addressing intergroup conflicts through authentic, meaningful dialogues. Charles Rojzman argues that "We can't change people, but people will change if they are motivated to do so" (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 2). Rojzman says that TST is not about changing people or relations, but is

focused in raising the “awareness of the lack of trust, fears and prejudices, so that people will become willing to change themselves in ways they themselves determine” (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, TST offers not only a method of engagement but also requires participants to “enter into co-operation with each other. But for that you have to agree to hear the other’s feelings of fear and hatred” (Rojzman, 1999, p. 3).

The transformation of violence into constructive conflict is a key aspect of TST. Violence is a pathological accommodation to fears that denies that humanity of those of a different social identity that arise from a confluence of societal, institutional, and personal factors. This kind of violence prevents people from living, working, and problem-solving together. TST encourages participants to engage in conflict, without the usual masks, enabling participants to take collective responsibility for the problems they face and put on the table what they know about particular issues or problems.

### ***Race Dialogues Motivations***

While the previously explained purpose and goals provide some insight into the motivations for participants in race dialogues, Rebecca Willow’s study, *Lived Experience of Interracial Dialogue on Race: Proclivity to Participate* (Willow, 2008), provides a poignant focus on the issue. One of the main issues she explored is how a person’s social background, political orientation, and interracial experiences impacts their inclination to dialogue about race. The dialogue approach used in her study

centered in a Race Study Circle taking place at a YWCA in the Northeast section of the United States. She describes a Race Study Circle in the following manner:

*A race study circle is a 5- to 12-member, interracial group convened to discuss issues of race and racism including (a) personal experiences with race, (b) definitions of race-related terms, (c) the nature of the problem and proposals for progress, (d) White privilege, (e) internalized racism, and (f) social policies. (Willow, 2008, p. 41)*

Willow reports her findings on four levels and expands the scope of critique by focusing in a key variable for African-American involvement in race dialogues. Willows contends that on the most basic levels, African-American and European-American participants in the racial dialogue were motivated by 1) an interest in exploring race and racism at an early age, 2) professional or work related factors impacting educational or interactional goals; 3) a desire for self-development and understanding; 4) desire for interracial contact; 5) inspired by role models who “inspired them to become more aware of racism and more inclined to be active in its elimination”; and 6) the role of educating others about race relations, believing that “that racial understanding is learned, and the participants sought empowerment to influence those around them” (Willow, 2008, pp. 44-45).

One of the main findings of Willow’s study that is relevant for a critique of race dialogues is that there are few opportunities for people interested in furthering their own understanding of race and race relations. She says “the individuals in the study mentioned early curiosity or natural inquisitiveness about race that was rarely addressed by their formal educational experiences in secondary school or colleges” (Willow, 2008, p. 49). Among Willow’s participants, many of whom had a high degree

of racial development, revealed several major factors influencing their decision to be the race dialogue, including

*(a) participation in interracial experiences and antiracist activities, (b) the capacity to relinquish the privileges of racism, (c) expression of a sense of unity among all people, (d) collaboration with other oppressed groups, (e) a sense of security in one's identity and acceptance of self, and (f) the universalization of the human experience and understanding of the worldview of other racial groups. (Willow, 2008, p. 36)*

### ***Race Dialogues Process***

A race dialogue is a process where individuals share the impact of their race on their lives on individual, institutional and structural bases. Through the sharing of each person's experience with race, participants become conscious of how their race impacts other races, as well as themselves. Through the process of listening, speaking and engaging with others, meaningful relationships can be built "within and across identity groups and in mobilizing individual and collective agency to promote positive intergroup relationships" (Maxwell, Chesler, & Nagda, *Identity Matters: Facilitators' Struggles and Empowered Use of Social Identities in Intergroup Dialogue*, 2011, p. 163). The pedagogy employed by intergroup dialogue includes: "(1) structured interaction (e.g., small group of students, equal representation of two or more social identity groups); (2) active and engaged learning that balances both content (e.g. sociological and psychological readings) and process knowledge (e.g., critical self-reflection, experiential activities); and, (3) facilitated learning environment led by two trained peer-leaders" (Ford & Malaney, 2015, p. 27).

While there are various types of dialogues, most approaches “focus on enabling open communication, honest speaking and genuine listening; allowing people to take responsibility for their own learning; and creating a safe space in which participants felt able to surface their assumptions, question their previous judgments, and to change the way they think in order to generate new ideas or solutions that were beyond what had been imagined possible prior to dialogue” (Maddison, 2015, p. 1017).

Because of the tension in race relationships, most people in intergroup settings do not easily share their thoughts and feelings about race. Therefore, the structured approach to intergroup dialogues is quite intentional to create an environment and process to stimulate dialogue. The activities, readings, and facilitation are the key components of the pedagogy to “help students connect with each other (dialogic processes) and situate their learning in broader social contexts (critical processes)” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 94). To be more explicit about the process, the Michigan Model offers a curriculum which outlines part of the process in the following manner:

*...in the first stage of dialogue, activities such as the role-play of debate and dialogue and the active listening exercise build dialogic processes because these activities help students practice listening and asking questions of each other. Appreciating difference is reinforced and deepened in the second stage as students share their identity wheels and testimonials in class, two activities that also encourage engaging self. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 94)*

The dialogue below example below is focused on helping participants understand the nature of the intergroup conflict on an institutional level during the second stage of the process. By having participants share their participant in the Web of Oppression/Privilege exercise, the dialogue reveals the differential treatment of individuals based on their social identity and provides a visual representation of the larger institutional influences.

<p>STAGE II – SESSION 7</p> <p><b>Title: Understanding Systems of Oppression/Privilege</b></p> <p>Exercise: <i>Web of Oppression/Privilege</i></p> <p><u>Time:</u> 55 Minutes</p> <p><u>Source:</u> Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008, pp. 52-55</p>
<p><u>Rationale:</u> To illustrate the systemic nature of discrimination, derogation, and oppression against some social identity groups and of consequent privilege for others in modern U.S. society (as opposed to individual acts). To illustrate the consequences and impact of being an ally.</p> <p>The web helps demonstrate how different social groups are served/privileged or disempowered/targeted based on their social and cultural status in society. It also depicts the inherent interconnectedness of people and social institutions/systems of advantages. And it demonstrates that we are all implicated and that the cost of oppression affects all of us. The web also helps us apply multi-level analyses to challenging oppressive dynamics as it includes individual and institutional action.</p> <p>Facilitators can keep these definitions in mind as they proceed with the web: Discrimination: Actions and/or policies that have a differential negative effect on people from targeted social groups (such as women or people of color). (Pincus, 2000) (See also individual discrimination, institutional discrimination, and structural discrimination)</p> <p>Individual discrimination: Refers to “... the behavior of individual members of one racial/ethnic/gender group that is intended to have a differential and/or harmful effect on the members of another race/ethnic/gender group” (Pincus, 2000, p. 186). (See also discrimination, institutional discrimination, structural discrimination.)</p> <p>Institutional discrimination: The “policies of the dominant race/ethnic/gender institutions and the behavior of individuals who control these institutions and implement policies that are intended to have a differential and/or harmful effect on minority race/ethnic/gender groups” (Pincus, 2000, p 186). Examples of institutional racism include companies that as a matter of policy do not hire or promote people of color, or real estate firms that do not show homes in certain areas to people of color. Examples of</p>

institutional sexism include schools that fund men's athletics better than women's athletics, or companies that only hire women for subordinate positions and don't consider them for promotion. (Pincus, 2000.)

Prejudice: "Attitudes and beliefs involving a tendency to prejudge people, usually negatively and usually on the basis of a single personal characteristic (such as race, sex, religion, hair length, etc.) (Farley, 1996, p.13). Or, "[a] set of negative personal beliefs about a social group that leads individuals to prejudge people from that group or the group in general, regardless of individual differences among members of that group" (Goodman & Schapiro, 1997, p.118). Prejudice often leads to discrimination. (See also individual discrimination, stereotypes.)

Oppression: A system of relationships among social groups in which "one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another social group for its own benefit" (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997), resulting in "vast and deep injustices" (Young, 2000, p. 36). Oppression operates through individuals' conscious and unconscious attitudes and behaviors, media and cultural stereotypes, institutional practices, hierarchical power structure, and competition for resources (Young, 2000).

Procedure:

1. Spread the Web on the floor in the center of the room, and have participants form a circle around it.
2. Have a participant take hold of loose end and pick up the Web. (If too few participants they can hold multiple ends; if too many participants, they should share or watch).
3. Ask participants what the rope reminds them of (e.g., web, net, grid, etc.)
4. Ask each holder to choose an attached label, and read it aloud. Hand each the corresponding card, and have him/her read its example aloud.
5. Repeat around the web until all labels and matching example cards have been read.
6. Ask what these examples are about (e.g., racism against people of color).
7. Ask whether they have heard these examples before. Whether these examples exist and are "out there" in society - not to say we support them, just that they're "out there." Can they think of other examples that target people of color around these label groups?

Debriefing Tips and Questions:

While most people will admit they've heard these or something similar, resistance will show immediately as someone talks about how some have changed, and/or how there are jokes, etc. against white people too. It is important to acknowledge that some things are changing, in some places, in some ways - but even if they merely recognize the individual items, they still exist in some form. It is also important to acknowledge that there are "white trash" jokes, etc.; however, use these points to transition into discussion:

- Why are these examples presented in this format? Why a web? How are they connected? They add up to bring/keep people of color down and to bring/keep white people up.

- Discuss how the individual pieces connect. (For example, whites can also be targets of mistreatment, particularly at the individual and interpersonal level, but when we look at the broad systemic nature of the problem, “whites as a social group” are not subject to the same treatment as “people of color as a social group.”)
- If people of color are the target/object of each of these pieces, what affect does the web/system have on them? (Demonstrate how it literally prevents someone from moving freely.)
- Who supports this system? White people and people of color. (Discuss how whites are traditionally blamed for racism and how people of color also collude in the system too).
- How can we stop supporting it? Let go of the system. Stop participating in jokes, media, etc.
  - o Ask participants what is different about, for example, a black person making jokes about a white person, as opposed to the other way around (that is, a white person, or at least white people as a group, have a historical and continuing power to actually harm people of color on a broad scale, whereas the reverse is not the case). Also, point out the role of intersections. There are jokes about poor white trash because of classism, not because they’re white. And, point out the different purposes jokes serve. Sometimes they function to put other people down. Other times they function to relieve the stress and hopelessness of oppression. For example, there are plenty of derogatory jokes about the President, but that doesn’t make him an oppressed minority, it makes him a powerful and scary person who we make jokes about because we don’t know what else to do.
- Let’s say one or two of us stop participating (or let go), what happens to the system? Weaker, but still supported by many.
- What happens to those who resist? Are criticized by those still in it. Ostracized. Their own racial identity is questioned.
- What are some specific examples of how white people and people of color will receive pressure to conform (enticement to return and/or punishment for letting go)?
- Are there costs for white people (or other agent/privileges groups)? Yes: white people have a harder time having authentic relationship with people of color, they may be afraid of how people of color view them, etc. HOWEVER, these are costs of the greater privileges and freedoms – NOT equivalent/equal to oppression.

Debriefing Tips and Questions:

Participants may feel hopeless at this point, since discussion has indicated that it’s difficult if not impossible to escape the system(s) entirely. Ask about, and acknowledge these feelings.

In order to let the “hopelessness” (i.e., challenge posed by the system) sit with participants, this might be a good place to TAKE A BREAK, mindful of any participants who have been particularly hard hit by the exercises.

After the web exercise, many feel drained, emotional, angry, hopeless, and guilty. Attend carefully to this. Below are several points – you cannot make them all, BUT select those related to the class character and comments. The readings are easily applied – whether they are Pincus or Lorde – see the example questions included below but be creative and consider ways to incorporate other readings as well. Their messages are vital to the health of the discussion.

- If previous discussions have included introduction of levels of prejudice/oppression (individual, intergroup, institutional, societal/systemic), discuss how different examples are parts of different levels. For example, jokes may be interpersonal, while laws are institutional. Yet all support the larger, integrated system. How do the articles help you with this question? OR Pincus discusses individual, institutional, and structural discrimination. What are these and how do all three apply to the web of oppression/privilege? (Pincus and Pharr)
- There are a number of such systems of privilege/oppression: racism, sexism, colorism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, ableism, etc. Imagine multiple overlapping nets, some catching us or holding us down (our target identities), and some holding us up (our agent identities). One question as an example: Lorde states, “there is no hierarchy of oppressions.” What does she mean and do you agree with her? How does this relate to our thinking about these multiple overlapping nets? (Lorde, Pincus)
- More accurately, there are interconnecting systems – the intersection of our multiple identities complicates our treatment/contribution to the various systems. (Not simply adding up target and agent identities to see what our “net” oppression/privilege is.) For example, a woman of color has a different experience than whites (men and women) and men of color; a lesbian has a different experience with systems of sex and sexual orientation oppression than does a gay man. Our multiplicity of identities means that our experience will vary from those who do/don’t share our constellation of identities (social positions in the systems).
- So we see how a person of color and a white person might experience that system differently but how about a man of color and a woman of color? Or a gay white man and a straight man of color? Etc. How does McIntosh’s article help us understand these interconnecting systems, particularly racism and sexism? (Lorde)

David Bohm, one of the leading advocates of dialogues in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, valued dialogues for their “egalitarian participation, suspension of assumptions that enabled participations to mutually examine their prejudices and thought processes, and a relinquishment of attachment to outcomes” (Dessel, *Dialogue and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary and Transformative History*, 2011, p. 172). In dialogue, relationships are built by addressing their inherent conflicts within intergroup relationships, not by ignoring historical and contemporary strife, but participants are asked to “suspend their own assumptions in order to look at other people’s opinions

without making judgments, so that they might see what all of those opinions mean when taken together” (Maddison, 2015, p. 118).

Bohm (2004) was highly critical of social oppression and inequality, and promoted collective thought and cultural transformation as the cornerstone to producing meaning, social change and social action to resolve societal ills related to social identity. Bohm explained:

*During the past few decades, modern technology, with radio, television, air travel, and satellites, has woven a network of communications which puts each part of the world into almost instant contact with all the other parts. Yet, in spite of this worldwide system of linkages, there is, at this very moment, a general feeling that communication is breaking down everywhere, on an unparalleled scale. People living in different nations, with different economic and political systems, are hardly able to talk to each other without fighting. And within any single nation, different social classes and economic and political groups are caught in a similar pattern of inability to understand each other. Indeed, even within each limited group, people are talking of a ‘generation gap,’ which is such that older and younger members do not communicate, except perhaps in a superficial way. (Bohm, 2004, p. 1)*

Because of these divisions in social relations, Bohm argues that dialogue facilitates a level of participatory thought through the collective engagement and that “if we can recognize the dimensions and interconnections among individual, collective, and cosmic ways of being, we might be able to communicate dialogically in a manner that would be transformational for society” (Dessel, *Dialogue and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary and Transformative History*, 2011, p. 172).

Bohm recognized the inherent acts of social violence played out in race relation that are deeply entrenched as a part of post-enslavement and post-colonial

societies, where the violence is reflected by a dismissal of a groups' aims, goals and pains (Maddison, 2015, p. 1018). The Bohmian orientation to dialogue allows for a free expression and openness to the dialogic process where such "communication can lead to the creation of something new only if people are able freely to listen to each other, without prejudice, and without trying to influence each other. Each has to be interested primarily in truth and coherence, so that he is ready to drop his old ideas and intentions, and be ready to go on to something different, when this is called for" (Bohm, 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, Bohm believed that groups in conflict must come to view the other as humans through the collective sharing of experiences, ideas and information, but without imposing the accomplishment of specific goals on the dialogue process (Maddison, 2015, p. 1018).

As expressed previously, while intergroup dialogues stress the importance of intergroup understanding and critical social consciousness among participants, the process operates on a cognitive and affective level. In the Michigan Model, exploring and expanding a participant's emotional capacity is central to the process: "It is not enough for students to experience cognitive learning exclusively (knowledge, skills, and factual awareness). They must also experience the affect or emotion tied to these issues (passion and personal awareness). Integrating cognitive knowledge with personal passion and empathy (the intrapersonal and interpersonal) therefore becomes a central learning goal" (Maxwell, Fisher, Thomson, & Behling, 2011, p. 44).

The Michigan Model is based on four communication processes that foster psychological processes in order to improve intergroup relations through dialogue:

appreciating difference, engaging self, critical reflection, and alliance building (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 77). These four communication processes are quite elaborate, resulting from the critical-dialogic approach:

*Over time, however, the four processes should increase comfort, positive emotions, and positive interactions. They should decrease intergroup anxiety, especially fears about appearing prejudiced and having to deal privately with the prejudice of other people. Through engaging self, students see others take risks, share beliefs and prejudices, and expose their ignorance without being judged. They learn to listen and ask questions themselves. They see others being listened to and responded to positively. They try to understand why peers think and feel as they do, and appreciate that others try to do that as well. They practice alliance building by exploring commonalities and differences, some of them individual, some cultural, and some power-based. Through these communication processes, students develop positive feelings for each other, feel fewer fears of judgment and other kinds of anxieties, and increase capacities for collaboration across differences. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 103)*

Alliance building is one of the most challenging aspects of the race dialogue process because of the historical barriers and mistrust between groups. However, alliance building is crucial for individual and societal change to be effected. In race dialogues the bridging of differences “involves developing empathy and understanding, building collaborative ties, and supporting action for change. Such a process is necessary to undo the impact of systems of oppression, such as racism or sexism, which are powerful sources of disconnection in our society” (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002, p. 9).

Race dialogues utilize various strategies to help participants communicate verbally, often employing videos, readings, games, and movement-based exercises to build trust and to overcome the emotional barriers to authentic communication. In the dialogue below, two separate exercises are employed to help participants explore the challenges of race on an interpersonal level. The initial exercise, (Un)Common Ground, asks participants to move based on their responses to questions and is intended to help support a deeper engagement for the main dialogue.

STAGE III – SESSION 8

**Title: Hot Topic #1: Interpersonal/Relationship Dialogue**

Exercise Starter: *(Un)Common Ground*

Time: 15 Minutes

Source: Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008, pp. 60-63

Rationale: This exercise is a variation on a low-risk version used at various institutions and organizations, to help build connections among participants as a low risk, often introductory activity to help name the “obvious” similarities among group members (apparent gender, age, race, etc.) and to bring out those less obvious (religion/faith, sexual orientation, etc.). Here, we apply the same structure to flesh out both similarities and differences, toward our goal of introducing conflict in the dialogue setting.

Helpful Hints:

Both facilitators should participate fully, even if one is taking lead on this activity – stepping in on those statements that genuinely apply to them. In fact, it’s probably best to begin with several statements you know at least one of the facilitators will step in on – to set the tone.

As an introduction to the statement generation we will ask them to do for Session 9, we ask the facilitators to model the variety, depth (appropriate risk level), and sincerity of statements/question this week. Therefore, based on the items they offered in Session 6 (when generating the hot topics to begin with), the facilitators will compile a list of statements that will be used in the activity. For example:

- If the hot topic is pornography: Step into the circle if you own or use pornography.
- If the hot topic is romantic relationships: Step into the circle if you would not date someone of your own race/ethnicity. Or, Step into the circle if your family or friends would be upset if you married a person of the same race/ethnicity.
- If appropriate to the hot topic, I feel more confident if my professor (physician/my child’s teacher) is male than female.

- If appropriate to the hot topic, I rarely go to parties/ join organizations where my race/ethnicity is in the minority.

Set-up:

You need an area where the participants can form a comfortable, standing circle with nothing in the center. (Participants should be free to step into and gather in the center of the circle).

Procedure

1. Introduce this activity by explaining how we are going to begin to explore experiences with interpersonal/relationship levels of privilege and oppressions around race/ethnicity through the TOPIC(S), as selected by the group.
2. Ask participants to move their chairs or move to new space for the activity, and to gather in a circle facing inwards. While they do not need to be shoulder-to-shoulder, the circle shouldn't be too porous – too great a distance between participants can be a defense mechanism.
3. Explain that you are going to read some statements that relate to the TOPIC. Describe how, after each statement is read, those who identify with that statement – those for whom it is true, should step into the center of the circle. They will be asked to see who similarly identifies (those standing in with them), and those who do not (those remaining on the outside).
4. Model an example by making a statement that you know will apply only to yourself and some of the group (i.e., some will remain on the outside). Step into the circle, and invite those who also identify to join you. Instruct them to “take a look at those in the circle with you. [Pause]. Take a look at those who are not. [Pause]. Thank you, step back into the circle.”
5. Advise the group that this is a silent exercise, like the fishbowl, and so they should refrain from commenting on who moves when, etc.
6. Read each statement from your prepared list, repeating the “step in, look at who’s in, at who’s out, thanks” script for each.
7. On any items that seem to strike the group particularly strongly (gauge the non-verbals), ask 1-2 people if they’d like to ask a question of someone else in the group. They should NOT comment on their own place/movement, but direct the QUESTION at someone else.
8. Once your list is done, ask the group if anyone has any additional topic relevant statement they would like to add. The catch is that they can only offer those for which they would step in for (no baiting others!).
9. Follow the above process for the remainder of the time you’ve allotted and/or you feel there is rich enough basis for a dialogue.
10. Have the group return to the dialogue space and retake their seats to debrief.

Exercise: LARGE GROUP DIALOGUE

Time: 50 Minutes

Procedure: Once the group has retaken their seats, debrief the activity, their reaction to it, etc., using these and other appropriate questions.

1. First, begin with process-based debriefing questions:
  - What did you notice? What stood out for you in the activity?
  - How did it feel to step into the center? How did the number of people who stepped in with you affect that feeling, if at all?

- What was it like to remain on the outside of the circle when others were stepping in?
  - In either case, what pressures, if any, did you feel to move or remain? Impact of others' perceptions on our thoughts, actions, honesty...
  - We instructed you to engage this activity silently, for the most part. Were there any statements or step-ins that were challenging for you? Did anyone wish to explain why they stepped in, or did not? Did anyone want to ask someone else why they did or didn't?
  - We did allow a few people to ask others questions. They were not allowed to comment on their own actions, but only to ask others. What was that restriction like for those who did speak?
  - If there was laughter, gasps, or other noticeable reactions by any members of the group to a statement or person's stepping in, ask about it. I noticed that the statement about XYZ got a reaction from the group; why was that? Why the particular reaction? For those who stepped in, what was it like to step in to that reaction?
2. Second, shift to a more content-based discussion, addressing specific questions or issues that were part of the dialogue starter. Ask for specific examples:
- What statements were more challenging?
  - How does your position/perspective influence your interaction with others? What opportunities and challenges do they present when talking with other people who have similar/different perspectives?
  - How did the positions of others impact on your ability to "stay in dialogue"? When was this hardest and when easiest?
  - (When) Did you feel not completely free to express your real opinion? When do you think others may likewise have distorted some of their real feelings?
  - Were there any surprises? For example, was anyone surprised when someone did or did not step in, challenging our expectations about that person? What does this say about our perceptions of the issue, the position, people who hold that position, our groupmates themselves?
  - How did different identities/experiences bring people to similar/different conclusions and opinions?
  - How did similar experiences/values/identities bring people to different conclusions and opinions?
  - How do these complexities impact our interactions with people who we think are like us? With those we think are not like us? This is the big relationship question, so dig!

Because race is such a volatile topic in the U.S., racial dialogues engage the emotional lives of individuals and groups in a very intense way. In Race Talk, Derald Wing Sue describes the kinds of emotions exemplified in traditional racial interactions and conversations.

*When in mixed company, race talk often pushes powerful emotional hot buttons in people. The dialogue can become quite heated, evoking personal attacks, and in some cases participants may feel threatened by physical retaliation (Sue, 2013). The feelings and emotions may run the gamut of defensiveness, anxiety, anger, guilt, helplessness, blame, embarrassment, hurt feelings, and invalidation. (Sue, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, p. 11).*

Race dialogues allow African-Americans and European-Americans to explore their conflicts without the need for forging unity. Participants are not instructed or directed to achieve aims of group harmony or create symbolic aspirations of peace, but to delve deeply into the pains and suffering that race and racism have created for both groups. The process allows both groups to acknowledge how having an “enlarged understanding of other groups and participants in dialogue can lead to a greater recognition of difference, rather than a greater sense of unity as is often imagined” (Maddison, 2015, p. 1022). Race dialogues, under these terms, allow “greater scope for people to express the full range of their passions – anger, hatred, jealousy, pride, joy and so on” (Maddison, 2015, p. 1022).

The emotional dimension of the process is quite challenging for most participants and even facilitators at various stages. The process involves participants sharing their stories and they “must be willing to engage in difficult conversations that critically examine how differences in perspective, values, and access to cultural and material resources impact social identities and relationships between groups within as well as outside of the group, and facilitators must have the knowledge and

skills to help them do this” (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, pp. 8-9).

Because intergroup dialogues are focused on exploring intergroup relations, dealing with, responding to and facilitating conflicts is central to the process. In fact, exposing and surfacing intergroup conflicts, as they manifest in individual participant’s behaviors and attitudes, are as seen as educational opportunities for collective understanding and engagement. Accepting and embracing the realities of racial antagonism and the numerous ways that racial groups are “profoundly alienated from one another” empowers facilitators to invite a level of engagement necessary for forging authentic relationships (Maddison, 2015, p. 1024). Conflicts are seen as an “opportunity, not something to be avoided or repressed. Both interpersonal and intrapersonal (e.g. dissonance) conflict helps to challenge the assumptions, biases, and socialization/hegemony of participants” (Maxwell, Fisher, Thomson, & Behling, 2011, p. 52). Intergroup dialogue challenges both agent and target groups “to grapple with the interconnected histories and circumstances of their singular or intersecting privileged and disadvantaged social group identities within micro and macro sociopolitical contexts in order to engage and sustain a process in which multiple points of view can be explored and held as valid (Zuniga, Lopez, & Ford, *Intergroup Dialogue: Engaging Difference, Social Identities and Social Justice*, 2014, p. 7).

Zuniga et al. admit that by:

*its very nature, the intergroup dialogue process highlights conflicting perspectives, feelings, and experiences. There may be heated disagreements or a strong display of emotions due to feelings of fear, alienation, and exclusion. Such conflicts can be opportunities for students to gain greater clarification of underlying sources of tension and to engage in new behaviors that communicate increased self-awareness, sensitivity to the experiences of others, and relational ways of being with each other. Dialogue group facilitators encourage students to embrace conflict as an opportunity to engage in possibly uncomfortable heart-to-heart conversations, reconsider potentially polarizing conflict episodes, and practice skills for meaningful engagement. (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002, p. 9)*

In Dialogue Across Differences, Gurin, Nagda and Zuniga describe the interconnecting psychological processes that establish the theoretical framework for intergroup dialogues as:

*Cognitive involvement: complex thinking, analytical thinking about society, consideration of multiple perspectives, and identity engagement.*

*Affective positivity: positive intergroup interactions, positive emotions during intergroup interaction, and comfort in intergroup interaction. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 95)*

Both of these psychological processes have been measured to indicate the viability of dialogue because they support key communication skills. Cognitive involvement produces a “desire to acquire knowledge about group and societal phenomena” which reduces intergroup bias, engenders emotional empathy, and facilitates an awareness of social group identity (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, pp. 96-97). The concept of affective positivity helps to explain how the dialogue process encourages sympathy, compassion, warmth, and tenderness in intergroup

interactions, which results in reduced intergroup anxiety, prejudice and bias (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 97).

In order to engage participants in a dialogue, the process involves creating “a safe and caring environment that encourages and supports listening deeply, identifying and checking assumptions, asking questions, sharing observations and perceptions, taking risks, and giving and receiving feedback” (Zuniga, Kachwaha, DeJong, & Pacheco, 2011, p. 74). This is based on what Gurin, Nagda and Zuniga call a student-centered pedagogy which is based on the dialogic education model advanced by Paulo Freire. In this dialogically based pedagogy, students are “active rather than passive; they engage in deep learning and understanding rather than simply master information; they individualize their learning but also participate collectively in group learning; they interact in a learning climate characterized by mutual respect and reflexivity” based on reflective, relational and integrative learning (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 39).

The relational focus is of primary importance to the dialogic process. Dialogue is not simply focused on conflict related to certain issues, but it is concerned “with the dynamics of the relationships underlying those issues. In the context of deeply divided societies, and regardless of whether the division is the result of long ago historical conflict or more recent violence, the underlying conflict that needs to be addressed almost always involves conflict between identities” (Maddison, 2015, p. 1025).

In promoting authentic engagement among participants, dialogues are not intended for participants to present themselves in a perfect manner. The listening dimension of the process is very active and continually results in emotional responses from the listeners as well as speakers. Therefore, listening involves the asking of questions for understanding and constructive conflict. Gurin, Nagda and Zuniga explain that the “practice of listening and asking clarifying and probing questions provides opportunities to revise one’s perspectives in dialogues. A sense of being recognized through listening enables others to engage and share more meaningfully. Not only does this allow for trusting others, but it creates a trust in oneself to bring as much as possible of oneself to the dialogic engagement, sometimes allowing others to see parts not easily shared with others” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, pp. 86-87).

The reflective learning is based on “stepping back to ponder what has just transpired and what sense can be made of what has occurred” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 41); relational learning is “when students, mentors, and instructors co-construct knowledge” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 40); and integrative learning includes “making connections across concepts, disciplines, or contexts and applying what is learned in one situation to another” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 41). The distinctive dimension of the Michigan Model is that it “moves beyond the focus on reducing prejudice, implicit or explicit, to foster understanding of identity and inequality, to build relationships with and across differences, and to strengthen

collaborative capacity for change” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, pp. 42-43).

The Michigan Model is a four stage process that starts with 1) developing trust and relationship building, 2) exploring and understanding socialization and social identity, 3) dialoguing about hot topics or difficult questions, and 4) ending with alliance building and taking action. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 60). The goals of each phase are intended to extend collective learning, understand and action through dialogue.

*Stage 1: Group Beginnings: Forming and Building Relationships: Establish the context for dialogue as a unique approach to learning and intergroup engagement*

*Stage 2: Exploring Differences and Commonalities of Experience: By having conversations around identity and inequality, in this stage participants share their social identity narratives as a means to realize the impact of social group membership as individuals and within a larger social and structural context as it pertains to power and privilege.*

*Stage 3: Exploring and Dialoguing about Hot Topics: This stage allows for a deeper engagement of participants in exploring social conflict relative to social identity in order to gain an appreciation for the impact of social group membership and their resulting conflicts that manifest on an individual and collective level.*

*Stage 4: Action Planning and Collaboration: This stage is intended for participants to apply the learning with members of their race and other races in order to advance social justice. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, pp. 60-71)*

Not surprisingly, the dialogue process is based primarily on the sharing of personal narratives, stories and struggles. Storytelling is central because it reveals the distinct realities of individual and collective racialized experiences.

*Because storytelling involves freedom of expression, open-endedness, and imagining oneself in another person's situation, it helps students from both privileged and less privileged backgrounds personalize and understand each other. Storytelling is especially powerful as a way to learn from marginalized groups whose voices are too often unheard and unheeded in discourse that takes place in many social institutions. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 81)*

Storytelling is a unique tool that supports the exposure of the complexity of racism and racial identity. Both target and agent group members have the ability to liberate themselves from socialization through the sharing of their life histories and struggles with oppression.

*By giving voice to people from marginalized groups, storytelling can illuminate their structural and internalized oppression. By giving voice to members of privileged groups, storytelling can make clear their often unexamined statuses and privileges. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 81)*

Intergroup dialogues are facilitated by individuals with clearly defined roles that ensure the dialogue meets its goals and is productive for participants. The central role of the facilitator is to “drive, guide, and encourage meaningful interaction among participants within groups and across groups. On university campuses intergroup dialogue facilitators come from a variety of backgrounds including students, graduate students, academic staff, and faculty, all of whom receive varying degrees of formal training and supervision specific to the intergroup dialogue topic” (Lau, Landrum-Brown, & Walker, 2011, p. 85).

Intergroup dialogue facilitators guide the dialogue as opposed to teaching participants about social identity issues. Their role is crucial to participant engagement, especially given the complexity of ideas and emotions expressed for the

purpose of understanding social inequality. The process involves facilitators practicing multipartiality, instead of being “neither impartial nor partial” in order to support and challenge the multiple perspectives being expressed in the dialogue through content and individual and collective engagement (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 52).

The facilitator becomes a primary tool for participant engagement without being the focus or central figure within the dialogue:

*Facilitators can share their experiences and perspectives, which other forms of facilitation do not permit. Special care must be taken, however, that the dialogues do not become facilitator-centered and that facilitators do not become advocates for particular positions. A productive use of self as a facilitator can be purposive in guiding and deepening the dialogue. Facilitators also use their knowledge in framing and naming individual and group dynamics. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 52)*

Facilitators manage the dialogue process by creating activities to initiate and deepen participant engagement. Their role is to ensure that participants are meeting the dialogue objectives by structuring exercises, processing questions, supporting constructive conflict, and inviting participants to speak, write and act in an individual and member of a social identity group. Each group is facilitated as a unique entity, regardless of similarity in dialogue topics, issues and goals because of the particular individuals participating in the process. Facilitators remain focused on ensuring authentic engagement by participants.

*On one hand, facilitators ask questions that lead to naming and framing the group dynamics; they redirect the dialogue to foster trust and risk taking, recognizing intergroup patterns and deepening the*

*dialogue. On the other hand, group members also ask questions and redirect the dialogue as they learn to become facilitators themselves. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 55)*

The chief role of the facilitators is to continually further participants' engagement in the dialogue process through the asking of questions and commenting on participants' psychological and emotional response to activities and other participants. Their role is to "continually connect appreciating difference and engaging self" by noticing participants' responses and asking each other questions during these activities and in the dialogue about the activities (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 94).

One of the challenges for intergroup dialogue facilitators is their knowledge, experience, and attitudes about their own or other racial groups. As Maxwell et al., admit that many "facilitators, particularly members of agent identity groups, encountered and acknowledged gaps in their own self-awareness and their knowledge of their own group's backgrounds and realities, as well as that of others'. Without knowledge and awareness of the meaning and impact of one's social identity (on oneself, on others in the dialogue, and in the structure and culture of society at large), it would be very difficult to facilitate the consciousness-raising, knowledge development, and relationship-building activities that typically occur in an intergroup dialogue" (Maxwell, Chesler, & Nagda, Identity Matters: Facilitators' Struggles and Empowered Use of Social Identities in Intergroup Dialogue, 2011, p. 167).

As an example of the challenges of intergroup dialogue facilitation, a study of the University of Missouri's attempt to prepare faculty to facilitate, many faculty admitted to their perceived incapacity and fears in facilitating difficult dialogues. Several cited their "lack of experience" facilitating certain social identity topics, the challenge of "helping students remember to be respectful and listen to others", a fear of their "own emotional reactions" impeding the process, and a fear of the emotions of students, including the "potential violence" and anger from students, especially if they "think their teacher is biased" (Placier, Kroner, Burgoyne, & Worthington, 2012, p. 30). In this same article, the authors provided a valuable questionnaire utilized by faculty preparing to implement their difficult dialogues program. The questionnaire, *Self-Efficacy to Facilitate Difficult Dialogues* (Placier, Kroner, Burgoyne, & Worthington, 2012), provided below, offers an important scope of the issues facilitators face in race dialogues. The facilitator would respond to following prompt of "I feel confident in my ability to" with the scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "not at all confident," to 5 indicating "extremely confident," related to the these statements:

1. discuss potentially contentious issues as they pertain to my field.
2. stay focused when classroom discussions become emotionally charged.
3. involve additional students when a debate occurs between students.
4. ensure that multiple perspectives are heard when a difficult dialogue occurs.
5. facilitate a discussion about socially divisive issues in my classroom.
6. manage students' defensiveness during a classroom discussion.
7. talk about divisive issues with people from a variety of backgrounds.
8. persist in a classroom dialogue that has become uncomfortable.
9. deal with intense emotion in the classroom.

10. acknowledge my own lack of information or knowledge about certain topics.
11. respond in a non-defensive way if challenged by a student with a completely different opinion.
12. avoid imposing my opinion on value laden topics.
13. engage students in dialogue about issues that are difficult to discuss.
14. manage my own discomfort when classroom dialogue becomes emotionally charged.
15. provide unbiased information to ensure a fair discussion.
16. ask difficult questions.
17. be able to ensure that multiple sides of a difficult issue are heard.
18. provide guidelines for discussion of potentially divisive topics.
19. foster mutual respectfulness in the classroom.
20. help students clarify the differences between opinion and fact during a classroom discussion.
21. question what I believe to be true regarding socially divisive issues.
22. assist students in questioning their opinions and beliefs regarding controversial topics.
23. openly acknowledge when a classroom topic is beyond my expertise.
24. encourage students' inquiry into factual information related to controversial issues.
25. openly admit I do not have sufficient knowledge about a divisive issue.
26. use listening skills to improve communication in a difficult dialogue.
27. encourage an open and inquisitive environment when discussing difficult topics.
28. teach students active listening skills to improve communication in difficult dialogue.
29. be aware when I lack knowledge in a controversial topic.
30. not allow my personal views to be evident in class during difficult dialogues.
31. learn from students' opinions that differ from my own.
32. encourage students to be open minded regarding controversial issues.
33. recognize when a discussion becomes unproductive.
34. recognize a value-laden argument.
35. remain calm in an emotionally intense discussion.
36. bring an unproductive discussion about a controversial issue to a reasonable end.
37. recognize when my personal views might affect my ability to facilitate a discussion.
38. help students think about their own viewpoints in the context of others.  
(Placier, Kroner, Burgoyne, & Worthington, 2012, p. 36)

Because of the lack of knowledge and internalized privilege of some European-Americans, their ability to facilitate a race dialogue can be hampered. European-American facilitators' ability to empathize and manage productive conflict may be stifled by their inability to support authentic engagement of participants because of knowledge gaps or emotional avoidance. Furthermore, internalized oppression can impede the effectiveness of African-American facilitators who may be dislocated due to their acceptance of stereotypical or inferiorized roles of their own racial group. In research exploring the attitudes and effectiveness of African-American facilitators, some admitted that their perceptions could "threaten their ability to be authentic and effective in their leadership roles" (Maxwell, Chesler, & Nagda, *Identity Matters: Facilitators' Struggles and Empowered Use of Social Identities in Intergroup Dialogue*, 2011, p. 168). In order for facilitators to be successful, Maxwell et al., argue that they must be engaged in critical self-reflective practice by "understanding and undoing both internalized oppression and internalized dominance" (Maxwell, Chesler, & Nagda, *Identity Matters: Facilitators' Struggles and Empowered Use of Social Identities in Intergroup Dialogue*, 2011, p. 174).

In the Michigan Model, two co-facilitators are utilized as the intergroup dialogue facilitators, with one person representing each social identity group in the dialogue (Nagda, Timbang, Fulmer, & Tran, 2011, p. 181). Having the dialogues co-facilitated by individuals from both groups provides an example and model of intergroup cooperation and relationship building that participants can observe and learn from. Nagda et al. assert that this relationship "is an avenue to engage in alliance

building and action – promoting understanding of identity, inequality, and social justice—by working intensively in intergroup collaboration teams” (Nagda, Timbang, Fulmer, & Tran, 2011, p. 182).

As part of the intergroup dialogue process, participants are encouraged to not only become allies but to actually form alliances. While alliance building is a goal and outcome of the dialogue process, it does not require a subordination of one group to the other, nor to ignore the potency and viability of maintaining a strong racial group social identity and consciousness. Gurin et al. explain that the alliance building “does not require members of the two identity groups to deemphasize or forgo their group-based identities. It is based on both common commitments and recognition of differential access to power and privilege” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 43).

A major aspect of dialogue is listening. Within the context of the racial dynamics of the United States, people of European and African descent rarely engage in listening within the context of understanding race relations. The power of the intergroup dialogue framework is that listening serves as a means of understanding in order to build intergroup relationships. In very simple terms,

*Listening actively allows for a deepened conversation through asking questions to build understanding. Sometimes the questions simply attempt to clarify what someone else has said. At other times, the questions are intended to understand why another student thinks as she or he does. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 83)*

Because here we speak of listening in the context of dialogue, listening must be understood as a mutual and reciprocal process. Though new learning can occur, particularly for European-Americans who rarely hear or know of the real lived experiences of African-Americans, and therefore can be voyeuristic, within a race dialogue listening is complemented by the “process of engaging self by personal sharing, taking risks, voicing disagreements, and addressing difficult issues” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 83).

Listening is one of the major dimensions of race dialogues because African-Americans and European-Americans can listen to each other in a way that other forms of communication do not afford. The pernicious nature of European-American racism separates European-Americans and African-Americans in a manner that marginalizes both from having an authentic understanding of each other. Given the goals of race dialogues to improve the relationships between European-Americans and African-Americans, exploring the specific ways that race dialogues impact the ability of each group to actually listen to each other can be quite revealing.

Zuniga et al. argue that the proponents of intergroup dialogue not only want participants to hear each other by talking with and to each other, they desire “engaged and active process of taking in and trying to understand the meaning of what is being said” (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 80). The dialogic process facilitates active, engaged listening through its framework and activities as both offerings and reactions to dialogue.

The listening required by dialogue operates on a cognitive and affective level, impacting levels of participation, supporting the engagement in constructive conflict and even in the co-creation of knowledge. The kind of listening that dialogue engenders is very unique to the dialogic framework, which specifically refers to a “deeper” or more fully engaged type of listening, one that involves more than just “hearing” another person’s words and, instead, searches for meaning and seeks understanding” and “requires holding one’s assumptions and judgments loosely and engaging in a process that makes sure people have really heard each other by paying attention, focusing on the moment, and not getting lost in their own thoughts and reactions” (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 83).

Because the dialogue frame encourages an intimate connection and collaboration on the production of knowledge while exploring intergroup conflicts, the listening that occurs in race dialogues helps participants to be “open to others’ perspectives and experiences by suspending judgment of the speaker and of what the speaker is saying; and noticing and reflecting on assumptions and emotions that might interfere with hearing and taking in the intended message (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 83).

The critical aspect of dialogue allows participants to have a deeper understanding of themselves on an individual and social level. Through dialogues, participants engage in both cognitive and affective reflection that creates paradigm shifts and personal transformation.

*Critical reflection means that students not only examine their socialization and past experiences, but also their everyday experiences on campus and the here-and-now dynamics of the intergroup dialogue itself. They reflect individually, often in response to something that happens in the dialogue, as the next student did. They also reflect together when the facilitators ask them to make sense of what happened in that dialogue session. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 90)*

Alliance building is both a part of the dialogue process as well as an outcome.

Being similar to Asante's *victorious consciousness*, alliance building is centered on participants acknowledging their commonalities and working through their disagreements in order to forge their collective energies to address racial disparities, inequalities and oppression. As Gurin et al. explain, alliance building is a constructive response to the hopelessness surrounding racial violence, separation and mistrust by "imagining alternate possibilities and having a sense of efficacy and a commitment to action in a context of collaboration and relational responsibility" (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, pp. 90-91).

However, an exploration of the agonistic model of dialogue offered by Maddison posits that the most effective forms of dialogue must be sustained over time, involve an intensive level of engagement, and must be relational in focus (Maddison, 2015, pp. 1023-1025). Given the depth of racial oppression and its impact on race relations, the goal is to "change conflictual relationships over time focusing not just on the problems that have brought groups to dialogue, but on the underlying relational dynamics that contribute to these problems" that are deeply entrenched and pervasive, influencing the mistrust and separation that pervades race

relationships (Maddison, 2015, p. 1023). By advocating for a sustained, intense, and relational approach participants are able to transform their relationships through constructive conflict because “sustaining dialogue over time allows participants to deepen their understanding of one another, attending to nuanced differences and finding connections and shared experiences that are only evident after extended discussion. Over time, and with careful facilitation, participants may learn to trust each other even as they continue to passionately disagree, becoming more confident to probe difficult issues, challenge themselves and each other, to express a fuller range of emotions” to see beyond their racial conditions and appreciate the structural and institutional dimension of their racial realities (Maddison, 2015, p. 1024).

### ***Race Dialogues Impact and Outcomes***

Intergroup dialogue practitioners argue that participation in dialogues provide benefits on cognitive, affective and behavioral levels, including increased social justice awareness, political interest in causes related to social oppression, and increased involvement in college and community activities (Maxwell, Fisher, Thomson, & Behling, 2011, p. 41). The University of Michigan Program on Intergroup Relations has constructed a model that defines the spheres of development for intergroup dialogue participants:

*Depending on their prior experiences and awareness, students typically begin their studies by focusing on individual and interpersonal issues, then progress to intergroup and institutional issues, and finally structural and cultural issues. Breadth and depth are added as students' progress through the course sequence and ultimately become facilitators. Students are encouraged first to*

*develop an understanding of self and their social identities within the individual sphere. They learn interpersonal skills and how to communicate with members of other social identities. They then begin to understand the broader implications of social identity for their own groups and others in the intergroup sphere and move toward an understanding of power and society at large in the institutional sphere. Structural and cultural spheres focus on a web of institutions and structures, the unquestioned norms and assumptions that underlie those structures, and the ways the structures socialize our judgments of what is “good,” “right,” and “valued” in our society. (Maxwell, Fisher, Thomson, & Behling, 2011, p. 45)*

In the study by Rebecca Willow, she says that her participants “reported that it was their responsibility to better the world, to give back to society, or to make an effort to be a good citizen”, seeing their participation in a race dialogues as part of their social justice work (Willow, 2008, p. 36).

Some of the research on race dialogues clearly demonstrates the impact that intergroup dialogues have on the social and racial consciousness of participants, both people of color and European-Americans. Ford and Malaney compared pre- and post-dialogue analysis of students participating in both inter- and intraracial race dialogues at a small, liberal arts college in the Northeast section of the United States. They state that by participating in race dialogues many students of color “have been able to break the silence and identify their own unique ‘voice of color;’ they have also developed a new understanding of how the normalization of racism affects people of color in the U.S.” (Ford & Malaney, 2015, p. 42). They argue that because of the race dialogues, their students have a better understanding about the complexity of racial identity for both people of color and European-Americans which had a positive impact on their overall college experience (Ford & Malaney, 2015, pp. 42-43).

Additionally, Dessel says the challenges of the dialogue process surfaces emotional issues that are distinct to oppressed groups:

*The history for oppressed groups of trauma, mistrust, and lack of resources has led many citizens to avoid public dialogue participation. Participants may feel uncomfortable speaking up in groups or feel that it is unproductive; they may be concerned about expressing intense emotions or cautious about the sociopolitical process. (Dessel, Dialogue and Social Change: An Interdisciplinary and Transformative History, 2011, p. 177)*

Derald Wing Sue has conducted numerous studies on the impact of race dialogues. As stated previously, the impact varies based on social identity. In his studies, he has found that one of the major findings has been that both European-American students and faculty showed an inability to “identify and deconstruct racial microaggressions in the classrooms” and seemed “oblivious to offensive microaggressive conduct in themselves and others, although they could sense the tension in the classroom and they knew something was wrong” (Sue, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, p. 30). Sue’s work reveals that people of color are more willing to share their racial thoughts, feelings and experiences and feel there are limited social and educational opportunities where they get to do so because of the lack of receptivity by others, mainly whites (Sue, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, p. 33). He states that people of color express a great deal of anxiety of having race talk because of White avoidance and denial, as well as the challenge of managing their anger and dealing with their vulnerability with European-Americans. (Sue, Race Talk and the

Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, 2015, pp. 33-34).

Gurin et al. concur with Sue's findings:

*Among white students, intergroup interaction sometimes fosters a fear of being evaluated and appearing prejudiced, and those concerns then result in poorer performance on cognitive tasks because these students have to use so many cognitive resources to regulate their feelings and behaviors during the interaction. Among students of color, intergroup interaction sometimes produces a corollary fear that they will have to deal once again with prejudiced white people. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, p. 101)*

One of the main outcomes of intergroup dialogue is forging productive, honest relationships with individuals from conflicting groups. Through dialogue, individuals learn to explore ways that racial groups can build relationships and develop alliances that can focus on problem-solving. Tensions exist in racial relationships because of the historical lack of trust based on mistreatment as well as racial segregation and separation. By having alliance-building as an outcome of racial dialogues, participants must explore their conflicts in a constructive, albeit direct, manner. In Dialogues Across Difference, Gurin et al. explain:

*Alliance building provides an avenue for students to channel their individual and collective energies to address inequalities with a view toward social change. It involves recognizing commonalities and differences, and working through disagreements and conflicts that often arise when identity groups interact. It also involves imagining alternate possibilities and having a sense of efficacy and a commitment to action in a context of collaboration and relational responsibility. (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, Dialogues Across Difference, 2013, pp. 91-92)*

While race dialogues encourage honest reflection and sharing, the dialogue process consistently requires facilitators to utilize exercises that encourage authenticity. The dialogue below allows intergroup conflict to be revealed, though first anonymously, by soliciting participant thoughts and feelings in writing through what is called a gallery walk. Given the facilitated nature of race dialogues, participants can be both careful and courageous in engaging in conflicts with others. As in the example below, utilizing participant anonymous responses first sets the stage for a deeper engagement in the large group dialogue.

<p>STAGE III – SESSION 9  <b>Title: Hot Topic #2: Institutional Level Dialogue</b>  Exercise#1: <i>Gallery Walk</i></p>
<p><u>Time:</u> 20 Minutes  <u>Source:</u> Multiversity Intergroup Research Project, 2008, pp. 67-69</p>
<p>To engage today's topics, we employ a kinesthetic experience where participants will physically move around and review statements relating to the institutional topic. Some of the discussion will also be in the Intergroup Collaboration Project (ICP) groups, to give them additional time to connect and work with this group.</p> <p><u>Rationale:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce conflict through differing opinions.</li> <li>• To clarify thoughts and feelings connected to TOPIC.</li> <li>• To encourage participants to take risks while communicating about how TOPIC impacts them.</li> <li>• To explore similar and different viewpoints and perspectives.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Set-up:</u> You will need to be able to post statements and the participants will need to be able to mill about the room to read the posted statements. If at all possible, pre-post some statements so as to save "hanging up" time during the session itself.  Be sure to pre-read all statements/questions sent in by participants for this activity. While not wanting to censor any (the point is challenge and conflict!), you should screen out duplicates, off-topic items, and grossly inappropriate content/wording. Make sure to pick statements that elicit conversation on a wide range of perspectives on your particular campus.</p>
<p><u>Procedure:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participants were to email facilitators 4-6 questions regarding today's topic; and facilitators should have pre-screened and selected a variety of these for use in today's session. The selected statements, and any additional ones facilitators wanted to add, should be written/printed in large (easily legible) letters and posted around the room.</li> </ol>

2. Remind participants that today we'll be discussing the institutional topic of \_\_\_\_\_. Last week was interpersonal/relationship; today we focus on institutional and large social systems.
3. Based on the readings, current events, and additional thoughts on the issues, invite participants to take a moment and largely, legibly write any additional statements for use today. They could consider writing down "the hottest aspect of this issue for me is: \_\_\_\_\_" or "what bothers/intrigues me most about this issue is \_\_\_\_\_."
4. Mix up these new contributions (so that it's not clear who contributed what) and add them to the gallery already posted on the wall.
5. Invite the group to take a few moments to quickly wander the room and review the posted comments/questions.
6. Help the group spread out and cover the gallery as quickly as possible, so that they don't all start at the same place.
7. Instruct them that the walk itself is to be silent – no speaking.
8. Once the group has quickly reviewed the gallery, instruct them to break into their ICP teams and sit down together.
9. Invite them to discuss their initial reactions with the groupmates. Did we agree or disagree, like or dislike what we read? The small groups should focus on the issues and the comments on the walls.
10. Begin the dialogue in these small groups, being sure to mingle among the groups to get a sense for the discussions and to help them stay on task.
11. After about 10 minutes, bring the large group back together to share out and continue the discussion.

*Exercise #2: Large Group Dialogue*

Time: 40 Minutes

As with last session, engage participants in dialogue about the topic and issues raised today. In the large group, we want them to talk both about the comments and the issue itself, AND their reaction to what others shared. Go beyond agree/disagree, to what underlies the opinions, reactions, etc.

The idea here is to dig beyond the pro/con/indifferent position (a lá debate) to the underlying conclusions, the reasons for those conclusions, the source and impact of those positions/opinions. Challenge all participants to do more than just acknowledge items on the wall, but to really take a position or have an opinion and discuss what lies behind it. We want more than shallow/superficial/easy opinions and reactions. We want to really challenge participants to reveal and interrogate how they came to those positions/perspectives about the issue itself AND about other people's comments. This allows others to ask clarifying questions about the reasons and process, rather than just arguing with the opinion itself; it allows us to recognize the human experience leading to the opinion, regardless of our agreement with it. It is important to have participants connect to the stuff "behind" the opinion, and to consider how that shapes their interactions with others.

Be sure to link in the 2 common readings for today, and invite them to make connections and contributions from the readings they found as well.

The Gallery itself and Personal Reaction:

- Which comments or themes stood out to you? Why did those strike you? What about them?
- What was your reaction to the statements/comments/questions? Push for both intellectual and emotional reactions....
- To what degree did you see your opinion, concerns, thoughts reflected in the gallery? Different, even contrary, thoughts?

Reaction to Others:

- Discuss how you reacted to the opinions and reactions voiced by your groupmates or others in the room.
- What values does your opinion represent for you? What values inform/underlie your position?
- What can you surmise or assume about others based on their opinions and reactions? What thoughts came to mind about what the authors of certain statements must be thinking, feeling, believing, etc? What might others assume about you based on your comments and reactions?
- How does your position/perspective influence your interaction with others? What opportunities and challenges do they present when talking with other people who have similar/different perspectives? If your values/position match the master narrative, this connects you to the social power structure.
- How did the opinions and reactions of others impact on your ability to “stay in dialogue”? When was this hardest and when easiest?
- How did this activity feel?
- When did you feel pinched, angry, shamed, hopeful, hopeless, worried, guilt, irritated, etc.?
- What did you notice in the group?
- What was hard? What was easy?
- When did you feel not completely free to express your real opinion? When do you think others may likewise have distorted some of their real feelings?
- What statements were more challenging?
- Were there any surprises?
- How did you come to your opinion/position/conclusion? Were they challenged? Did they change?
- What experiences helped shape your perspective, feelings, and conclusion?
- What of your racial identity (among others) may have impacted that development, and how?
- How did different identities/experiences bring people to similar/different conclusions and opinions?
- How did similar experiences/values bring people to different conclusions and opinions?
- What impact does this complexity have on our interactions with people who identify and/or think like we do? Who identify and/or think differently?

Exercise#3: *Dialogue about the Dialogue*

Time: 15 Minutes

Procedure: In reflecting on the group dialogue process of today, we also have the opportunity to compare how the group process has changed compared to last session. So

in addition to the questions offered for the meta-dialogue in session 3.8, incorporate the following inquires:

- What, if anything, did people do or notice that was done differently than last week?
- In addition to the different subject matter, how did any changes in how people dialogued change the discussion?

Helpful Hints:

In order to address both process and content issues, push participants to engage with specific differences/commonalities of understanding, in the large as well as the small group.

Buckleya and Quayeb argue that the lofty goals established by racial dialogues don't always manifest at the highest levels, stating that although "we contend that dialogue about experiences can help students learn how to understand and communicate about differences, we also recognize that seeking to know each other's experiences does not necessarily fully address the need to challenge systemic issues of power and privilege" (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 5). Their study of participants of intergroup dialogues focused on understanding the specific actions and experiences of both students and facilitators in terms of the stated outcomes of the process and engagement, specifically related to social justice (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 6).

Buckleya and Quayeb reported that for some participants simply talking to people of other races was a profound experience, such as a participant named Omeed:

*Well, I'm very inexperienced in both topics [race and socioeconomic status]. I was homeschooled for a very long time and the only race I knew was myself. I didn't even know about the other sexualities out there. So up until, I don't know, maybe high school, a couple of years into high school even I wasn't really aware of other races or other sexual orientations. I'm very inexperienced, and I just wanted to hear what people have to say about it, and I wanted to educate myself so I*

*decided this [participating in IGD] is a good way to do that. (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, pp. 9-10)*

They reported that Omeed not only learned about others' experiences but also his own thoughts and feelings about race (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 11). As expected, the authors' noted that dialogue supported participants' understanding of social justice on a micro level, which took priority over the larger social and structural analysis consistent with more content-oriented approaches of teaching about social justice (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 17).

They also noted the limitation of participants in their study grappling with distributive notions of equality in terms of opportunity, outcome or condition, primarily due to how dialogues are structured and function. Buckleya and Quayeb theorize that engaging participants more affirmatively in distributive justice issues could negatively impact the outcomes of the dialogue because of the ways participants would more critically analyze the insituitions they operate in (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 19). They argued that the dialogues they observed "did not directly seek to undercut structural inequities" and offered that these dialogues "may be best for helping students understand and dialogue across differences but may not align with anti-racist and similar pedagogies that seek to uproot structural injustices" (Buckleya & Quayeb, 2014, p. 20).

As discussed earlier, intergroup dialogue has an impact on participants on a cognitive and affective level by design. In fact, the impact of intergroup dialogue appears to be quite significant to building relationships among participants yet it also

contributes to the reduction of bias for both cognitive and affective reasons. Because intergroup dialogue involves complex and analytical thinking about oneself and the society, participants experience a shift in their thinking and value the process due to what psychologists call attributional complexity and the value of knowledge acquisition. Human beings find value in particular cognitive processes and demonstrate “a tendency to seek out, engage in, and enjoy effortful cognitive activity; to acquire information relevant to dilemmas or problems; to engage in problem solving; to generate more thoughts in response to a stimulus; and to translate thoughts into judgments and judgments into behavior” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 96).

Additional benefits from cognitive involvement include taking multiple perspectives, which is “the ability to step outside the constraints of one’s immediate frame of reference” and identity engagement, which is “cognitive centrality of identity and behaviors geared to learn more about one’s identity”, and these result in intergroup dialogues participants being “stimulated to think about their group identities and how their personal beliefs are influenced at least somewhat by the experiences and perspectives they have encountered within their identity groups” (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, pp. 96-97).

Attitudes about race are influenced by a person’s social surroundings, influenced by the proximity, attitudes and behaviors of individuals and institutions, resulting in a positive or negative association with and about other races as well as one’s own race. The emotional implications of intergroup contact reveals the short-

term and long-term impact of intergroup dialogues. While in general, intergroup dialogues increase “intergroup anxiety among both majority and minority group members,” the negative impact is diminished over time, especially for groups with previous interracial group contact and sustained intergroup interaction (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 99).

Gurin, Nagda, and Zuniga indicate that the controversy of much of the research is due to “prejudice as an automatic versus controlled process, also termed unconscious-implicit versus conscious-explicit prejudice respectively” as factors influencing the reduction of racial anxiety during intergroup interactions (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, *Dialogues Across Difference*, 2013, p. 99). Their overriding conclusion is that although intergroup dialogues cannot erase the impact of the psychological damage that racism does to individuals, intergroup dialogue allows students to interrogate the prejudice, bias, and stereotypes they’ve learned to improve intergroup interactions.

The engaged listening that occurs in race dialogues has a profound impact on participants. In an attempt to understand how listening impacted participants of race and gender dialogues, Zuniga et al., conducted a study where they interviewed 248 participants (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012). Participants offered numerous reasons for why they listened in the dialogue, including

*Some said that they listened because they could identify with the speaker, and others said they listened because they disagreed with or were unable to relate to what the speaker said. Other participants listened because they were struck by how “different” their own*

*experiences or views were from those of the speaker or speakers. Of these, participants in the sample most often described being engaged by a story, an idea, or an experience that they either strongly identified with or that helped them understand or empathize with someone else's experience or perception. (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 87)*

Race dialogues provide the rare opportunity for participants to focus directly on the topic of race by listening to others' race narratives and facilitates intergroup engagement that motivates participants learning from numerous vantage points. In race dialogues participants cited several reasons that facilitated their engagement. Engaged listening occurred in "response to someone sharing a personal experience of racism, to a discussion about racism as a system of inequality, or to a discussion about white privilege" (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 89); as well as when someone "recalled conversations about how racial categories, racial identities, and racial stereotypes were found by participants, including, at times, the person being interviewed, to be confusing, problematic, or fluid. Most of the recollections in this category focused on conversations about, within and across group differences rather than similarities within or across groups" (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 90).

### **Confronting the Internal Struggles of Race Dialogues**

As previously expressed, the scope and type of race dialogues varies based on several factors, including strategies for engaging participants, depth of engagement, purpose of the dialogue, framing the dialogic-engagement process, dialogue content and curriculum, goals of the dialogue/engagement, role and place of conflict, and the

role of the facilitator. These distinctions have been evidenced in the variations among the various race dialogue approaches, especially when comparing the Michigan Model and Transformational Social Therapy. For the purposes of this discussion, it has been most useful to aggregate the dialogue approaches for their relevance to race within the Africological framework. However, as part of exploring the motivations for pursuing this area of intellectual inquiry, those distinctions will be explored here.

Outlining some of the distinctions will provide for a greater depth of analysis within the Afrocentric paradigm to follow. The distinctions expressed herein will serve mostly as a critique of the Michigan Model. While TST is quite known in Europe, it has only become of relevance in the United States for a small group of dialogue practitioners.

Charles Rojzman has outlined some of the distinctions of TST with the Michigan Model. Rojzman argues that TST is quite distinct from traditional dialogue models in that

*TST is not about facilitating a dialogue. The main goal of TST, which begins with group dialogues and leads to transformative action, is to foster the practice and theory of healthy multicultural and multi-ethnic democracies. This work aims to transform institutions by helping people address the hatred and violence that separate them and prevent them from working together. (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 2)*

While the Michigan Model offers useful cognitive and affective goals and a coherent curriculum design that allow for the exploration of interracial conflict, TST's psychoanalytic approach offers to forge a deeper engagement of racial tensions and conflicts. Though the Michigan Model shares many similarities with TST in terms of

ultimate goals and the willingness to engage participants to challenge societal issues related to identity and oppression, the framework in which they operate differ greatly.

In the Michigan Model the stated goal is social justice education and participants are asked to engage in a process where the context is structured towards social justice learning objectives. Consequently, as Griffin and Ouellett, state, the role of facilitators is to “help participants build resilience and internal resources that enable them to think critically and tolerate ambiguity and complexity so that they can choose behaviors and attitudes that are congruent with their commitments to social justice” (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007, p. 107) While TST can be utilized for the same purpose, the orientation is towards solving the problems and addressing the issues of each individual participant to create collective action within the context of an institutional framework. The issues of inequality and social justice are addressed, but the centering of the process on the participants encourages greater depth in individual engagement and reflection.

The focus on the individual experience of participants provides a unique context for organizing for collective action. TST’s more authentic approach in requiring participants to literally *be themselves*, with all their hatred and violence, portends to reach beyond the bounds that the Michigan Model is based on. The emphasis on creating a safe space, respectful dialogue, and searching for commonalities, as one explores the societal conflicts, is central to the Michigan Model.

One of the major factors influencing the exploration of the value of intergroup dialogues for Africology is the unique process of engaging in constructive conflict through dialogue. Rarely does the opportunity present itself within higher education for African-Americans to engage in dialogue with European Americans. While intergroup dialogue offers a “safe space” for exploring race relations on cognitive and affective dimensions, the notion of safety, both in terms of the theory and practice of the various models, reveals the inner tensions among them which have consequences for an Africological inquiry.

The turmoil that oppression creates within social structures and relationships is symbolic of the need to heal as Rojzman explains: “I am not just preaching to the converted. For my approach does not start off simply from good intentions but, on the contrary, from the consideration that racism and violence are the keys to transformation” (Rojzman, 1999, p. 203). Rojzman centers his approach on the need of the deep suffering and degradation of racism to be shared a central aspect of the dialogic process. However, the notion of the depth of the sharing in the dialogue can be confounded by the desire for the creation of a safe space.

However, as valuable of an approach as the Michigan Model is, it is almost antithetical to TST in terms of the place and the expression of the self in the group. In the Michigan Model it is important for the facilitator to maintain a certain amount of control over participants in order to create the desired safe space. TST questions the very value of safe space, positing that groups can’t build together unless they’ve expressed deep emotional conflicts, bias, and prejudices. Rojzman explains that in

*TST we never ask a participant not to take too much space; he's acting in the group as in life and needs to become aware of what he does in life. He'll do it, others will react, if there is enough trust in the group. You have to make room for the violence, etc. This gives the person the opportunity to change. Otherwise they'll be "good" in the group but will go back into their life and be the same. The goal is not to create a good atmosphere. Yes, the facilitator does that at the beginning, because confidence is needed. But afterwards, you show yourself as in life, become aware, and change. (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 17)*

One form of intergroup dialogue that conform to the standards of the Michigan Model is Public Conversations Projects, where the initial steps were "usually highly structured" and the rules included making "no attempt to persuade, speaking for oneself and not as a representative of a group, sharing air time by adhering to limits on speaking time, and using respectful language" (Chasin, et al., Summer 1996, p. 332). Contrary to TST, this method requires participants to negate the reality that brought them into the dialogue in the first place. They believe agreeing to certain ground rules can "encourage the expression of even more intense feelings in a manner that is authentic but not attacking" (Chasin, et al., Summer 1996, p. 338).

Furthermore, Griffin and Ouellett argue that establishing clear guidelines is essential to the dialogue experience. They say that establishing "a safe environment in which participants can discuss ideas, share feelings and experiences, and challenge themselves and each other to reevaluate opinions and beliefs is one of the primary facilitation responsibilities" (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007, p. 95). At the same time, Chasin's model insists on using personal stories to bring conflicts within the group by aiding participants in connecting to one another "as unique and interesting human

beings, not as spokespersons for sides of an issue” (Chasin, et al., Summer 1996, p. 335). Unfortunately, when compared to the TST model, these participant stories can be seen as censored. While intense dialogues emerge and are supported by the Michigan Model, and create a “safe yet communal space to express anger and indignation about injustices” (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, Using Intergroup Dialogue to Promote Social Justice and Change, 2006, p. 303), the notion of safety is overemphasized to the extent that it minimizes authentic expressions.

In the Michigan Model the structure of the dialogue is also informed by coherent sequencing organizers that are common to many multicultural education programs utilizing content to facilitate cognitive understanding and ensure affective growth. The content-related sequencing includes moving from the personal to institutional for individuals, and diversity to justice sequencing for groups (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 24). On the affective level, the sequencing moves from lower to higher risk to respond to “participants’ need for feel safe so they can openly engage and examine deeply held beliefs, feelings and confusions” (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, pp. 24-25).

While affect is a key component of the Michigan Model, and occurs at all four stages of the model, the focus on safe space limits the most conflictual aspects of the process until the third stage. In stages one and two, facilitators focus on “creating a safe space for participants to share their thoughts and experiences. They begin to lay the groundwork for future sessions by attending to group building as well as

introducing participants to the meaning of dialogue” (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 26).

Stage three is focused on exploring and dialoguing about controversial topics that bring attention to the major tensions between different identity groups (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 29). This stage has its foundation in the trust that has been developed in the group and fostered by a sense of consciousness raising and relationship building (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 30).

However, TST works to assist practitioners in overcoming their own fears of authentic expression. Rojzman believes that exploring the major problems, fears, and concerns among groups enables participants to go beyond their masks by making connections on the commonalities of their wounds. Rojzman argues that the authentic self must be revealed by participants revealing their true identities, emotions, frailties, flaws, and prejudices. By removing their masks, reflecting their true humanity, then participants will be able to discuss issues related to racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and etc. (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 7).

Rojzman argues that in TST there is a focus on fears “because it helps to build trust in the TST group. It is especially important if you want to go deep with the group and speak about real problems and not superficially, as is common” (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 9). However, the adherents of the Michigan Model see themselves as a movement that invites conflict and desires authentic dialogue, its position contrasts greatly with that of TST.

In the Michigan Model, the conflict expressed in the meetings are carefully constructed, encouraged and presented through the expertise of the facilitator and the design of the curriculum. As Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, and Cytron-Walker explain:

*Creating a conducive climate for learning across differences requires a group environment that supports building relationships in the here and now. It also requires a process that challenges and overcomes patterns of intergroup communication that reflect only, or primarily the dominant group's norms and styles. By using dialogic methods such as speaking and listening activities and talking circles, participants gradually develop the capacity to listen attentively to each other, talk openly and honestly, appreciate different perspectives, and ask naïve or politically incorrect questions. Through planned and sequentially structured activities that provide participants with experiences that increase in difficulty, intensity, and intimacy, relationships are built as the curriculum unfolds. (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 14)*

While the structured exercises of the Michigan Model have value in engaging participants to discuss pre-programmed topics through structured activities, TST argues that participants' real lives are sufficient to foster authentic engagement if allowed. TST's focus on the authentic representation of the self and the requirement that each participant's needs be sought and included fosters a sense of ownership of the dialogue process.

Rojzman defines violence as anger, aggressiveness and most importantly as viewing the other as "as someone who is (a) totally bad; (b) inferior (not a human being like me, but like an animal); (c) responsible for doing things to me. Violence is thinking that the other is not a human being like me and cannot be a partner" (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 11). Rojzman argues that this dichotomy must be fought; that the other must not be seen as "enemies from

beyond the pale who have come to exterminate us” (Rojzman, 1999, p. 207), but they must be learned from. He argues that we resemble our enemies, share their fears, cruelty, and sadism, and share the responsibility for what they are and what they do (Rojzman, 1999, pp. 207-208).

In intergroup dialogues “participants are asked to suspend assumptions, confirm the unfamiliarity with each other” and are “encouraged to collaborate willingly, be vulnerable, and believe in the authenticity of all participant” (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, Using Intergroup Dialogue to Promote Social Justice and Change, 2006, p. 304). While the Michigan Model requires facilitators to assist participants in navigating the various “hopes, fears, expectations, and needs (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 55), they do so by mediating the reality of the participants. Chasin argues that in dialogue people “speak openly and listen respectfully and attentively;” it excludes “attack and defense and avoids derogatory attributions based on assumptions about” the other (Chasin, et al., Summer 1996, p. 325).

Keith argues that empowerment from TST comes from the realization that connections among participants can only come from experiencing the other through the communication of fears.

*Fears and lack of connectedness with others contribute to a sense of powerlessness and victimization: we think that others have to change in order for things to get better, feel powerless because we think others will never change, are unwilling to see and admit to our (partial) responsibility for the way things are, cannot communicate our feelings and knowledge to “strangers,” and believe that change can only come through superhuman, heroic action. Because our fears, deep emotional pain, relationship to authority figures, and lack of trust in*

*others inhibit fruitful dialogue and joint action, TST works to reduce dependence on the facilitator and create connections among participants. (Keith, Urban-Suburban Mirror: Youth, Violence and Community Building. Unpublished paper)*

This process will assist participants to “stop themselves from seeing the other as [the devil], and acquire the capacity to see how their own behavior contributes to the violence” (Keith, Hebdo France 2, 2003). Therefore in order to avoid violence, participants must stop avoiding conflict (Elkouri, 2008).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Race Dialogue and Africological Theory and Praxis**

Contextualizing the relevance of race dialogues within Africological theory and praxis affords Africologists the opportunity to reflect on the practical dimensions of teaching within the field. Facilitating the exchange of ideas within African American Studies courses necessitates an examination of traditional pedagogical practices that are germane to student learning. However, the scope of this dissertation is primarily theoretical in nature, providing a macro level interpretation of race dialogues on a philosophical basis. Yet, the relevance of this Africological investigation on a theoretical level is most important as a means of constructing the historical circumstances reflecting liberatory praxis. Herein lies the importance of Malcolm X's philosophical outlook and political activism.

Malcolm's insistence on radical race relations emerged out of the historical context of the ardent advancement of liberatory practices among African-Americans, as well as African people throughout the world. The confines of Malcolm's capital to influence race relations on a global level rested with his enormous capacity to influence his people's thoughts and behaviors on an ideological level through his political speeches and organizing.

Race dialogues foregrounding of the development of a critical racial consciousness on a systemic, institutional and individual level correlates with Africology's Afrocentric consciousness in a manner that advances Malcolm's

insistence on a Black Nationalist/Pan-Africanist ideological orientation and radical political strategy for organizing and educating the masses of African-Americans and European-Americans.

Malcolm X was focused on developing a systematic approach to African-American liberation, grounding his practice in Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism. By all accounts, Malcolm X was in the midst of profound shifts in his political positions and developing new theoretical and conceptual frameworks related to his desire for the liberation of African people in America and elsewhere. While he assiduously advocated for Black Nationalism, he continued to expand the terrains of his thinking and activism to include African people throughout the diaspora, as well as other oppressed people throughout the world. Williams Sales clearly defines these theoretical dilemmas that African-American liberationists continue to struggle with today:

*In this period of Pan-African internationalism, Malcolm X's formulations were not finished theoretical products but a rapidly developing perspective which he was never allowed to complete. Many questions which Malcolm addressed, therefore, were incompletely answered or not answered at all. There were also other important questions he did not take up before his death. It is clear that Malcolm X felt that the Eurocentric international system had to be transformed into one which could extend justice and equality to all of the world's peoples. It is equally clear that cultures and nationalities and not through the forced homogenization of "integration." He had only begun to formulate the actual contours and mechanisms which would empower such new social forces, and most often with specific reference not to the entire Third World but only to Afro-America and Africa. (Sales, 1994, pp. 84-85)*

As a critique of Africological pedagogy, intergroup dialogues may advance a more critical praxis than traditional African American Studies teaching methods, especially related to the active engagement of students in constructive conflict as a means of furthering the understanding of issues pertinent to the discipline. Zuniga explains:

*Unlike feel-good types of cross-group encounters that attempt to promote understanding by avoiding, masking, or overcoming conflicts, intergroup dialogue recognizes that communicating about and, if possible, working through conflict are both positive and necessary parts of the intergroup encounter. Such disagreements and conflicts can become valuable opportunities for participants to engage in significant conversations about different perspectives and tensions shaping relationships. (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 15)*

In Transformational Social Therapy, Rojzman asserts that to best solve intergroup problems “participants’ emotions and their shadow side need to surface in order to remove common blocks to open dialogue. This permits the circulation of information that is usually kept secret or is heard only by trusted in-group members, and creates a ‘collective intelligence.’ The TST process involves maximally diverse groups, whose knowledge, once tapped, can produce a creative and productive synergy” (Keith, Urban-Suburban Mirror: Youth, Violence and Community Building. Unpublished paper).

Rojzman argues that the eradication of racism will not occur if we don’t allow individuals to confront the violence, hatred and fears that constitute who they are as members of an oppressive society. He believes that TST provides a framework for the expression of the authentic self, which can be hateful, aggressive, angry and violent,

in order to “create positive environments that help the best in ourselves come out, rather than hatred and fear” (Elkouri, 2008).

Racial dialogues are one attempt at societal transformation at the individual level with the desired hope of institutional transformation. Accepting that transformation is a desired goal because of historical and contemporary racial conflict is arduous, but necessary, work for societies recovering from historical racial conflicts. Sarah Maddison explains:

*Continued relational divides within a post-violent conflict society are likely to hamper efforts at institutional transformation and wider social reconstruction. Thus, in order to develop better capacities for dealing with these challenges, what is required in divided and postviolent conflict societies is long-term, ongoing effort towards the transformation of underlying historical and relational conflict. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1014)*

Rojzman says that the “goal of this work is also to help people become conscious of their own violence and also their own responsibility” (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 6) in order to co-construct new ways of engaging people who are different from themselves. He argues that divisions must be broken down and “to do that, you have to actually force people who do not want to sit together, giving them a ‘space for conflict’ that will reduce their fears” (Elkouri, 2008).

For Rojzman, improved interracial relations can only come about when groups move from violence to conflict. For him, conflict is a natural, normal part of life because of the diversity of experiences, thoughts, practices and ideas. People are violent when conflicts are not able to express themselves in a peaceful manner. He

argues that “in order to avoid violence, we should stop avoiding conflict. In practical terms and in terms of practice, this means creating encounters between people who no longer meet one another, who, as a result, come to have paranoid fantasies about ‘others’” (Elkouri, 2008).

The basis of Transformation Social Therapy is the group. As a group-centered process, the core of TST revolves around motivating participants to address their true needs, issues, problems and concerns on an individual and group level (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 9).

*The group is a way to repair these wounds: in the group, people are no longer humiliated, fearful, etc.; group members become conscious of their own violence and can help others become conscious of it. The violence is what prevents us from working and living together. This is what happens in the society, institutions, in the group. TST tries to heal these wounds, so people can see what they are doing, become responsible, not only a victim of other people, you can change. We don't ask people to change, but they change because they heal their wounds. The pain we have inside us makes us violent toward other people. The violence is usually very soft, but we can humiliate. (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 12)*

Therefore, Transformation Social Therapy provides a framework for exploring the most compelling, emotional conflicts without fearing violence.

Race dialogues offer the opportunity for a deep engagement where African-Americans and European-Americans can intimately and intentionally examine the most important issues of the discipline utilizing an approach that seeks transformation. As Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker state:

*By engaging deeply with people different from themselves and by recognizing how their own identities and social locations affect*

*themselves and others, participants learn to care about how people from both privileged and disadvantaged groups are affected by social injustice, to feel responsible for social injustice, to feel confident in their skills and abilities to develop and sustain relationships even when conflicts exist, and to feel hopeful about the possibilities of working together across differences toward a shared vision of social justice. (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, p. 17)*

Over two decades ago Molefi Asante argued that the issue of values was central to the Afrocentric enterprise (Asante, Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge, 1990, p. 11), arguing that Kemet culture should provide a framework for scholarly inquiry (Asante, Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge, 1990, p. 56). Given that Asante argued that Africologists should view Kemet as the foundation for all “African speculation in religion, art, ethics, moral customs, and aesthetics” (Asante, Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge, 1990, p. 46), it is conceivable that he would agree that the issue of pedagogy should be viewed similarly due to its foundational orientation to the discipline.

One likely opposition to race dialogues by Africologists rests with arguments challenging the educational value of educating European-American students, especially as part of the process of racism eradication. However, having students engage in race dialogues within the context of an African American Studies courses offers the opportunity for a deep engagement where African-Americans and European-Americans can intimately and intentionally examine the most important issues of the discipline utilizing an approach focused on transformation. Zuniga et al. report that

*Participants in race/ethnicity dialogues reported having gained new awareness and knowledge about the nature and extent of racism and white privilege, including the effects of racism on people of color, particularly the effects of negative stereotypes and overtly racist behavior. For example, a white man in a race/ethnicity dialogue reported that hearing firsthand accounts of racism from students of color during the testimonials activity made him realize that discrimination really gets in the way of achieving one's full potential, affects job advancement, and results in racial profiling. From these realizations, he learned that "there really IS such a thing as institutional racism in America." This participant also gained awareness of his own white privilege, noting that he could go through his "whole life never having to deal with that". (Zuniga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012, p. 94)*

Obviously, as demonstrated through the above example, the impact on participants, both White and Black, can be quite profound on both a cognitive and affective level. In envisioning African American Studies as more than a mere collection of courses about African-Americans, pedagogical issues become more prominent. Developing disciplinary standards is a necessary function of expanding the discipline, as well as legitimizing disciplinary status and enhancing curricular offerings. Therefore, the pedagogical and curriculum implications of race dialogues can be explored within the context of Kemetian constructs of social transformation.

Karenga makes a strong argument for the leadership role that African American Studies has historically held and should continue to have in redefining both American education and intergroup relations in the U.S. He argues for an Afrocentric conceptualization of multiculturalism that would advance the following ideals:

*1) mutual respect for each people and culture; 2) common recognition that human diversity is human richness and that the challenge is not simply to tolerate it but to embrace and build on it; 3) mutual recognition that neither U.S. society nor the world is a finished white*

*product, but rather an ongoing multicultural project and that each people has both the right and responsibility to speak its own special truth and make its own unique contribution to the forward flow of social and human history; and 4) mutual commitment to an ongoing search for common ground in the midst of diversity necessary to build a just and good society and a peaceful and freedom-respectful world. (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, pp. 46-47)*

The Kemetians offer two major constructs that are integral to the African American Studies pedagogy that will be explored here. Firstly, the Kemetians basic conception of the divine nature of human beings represents a major challenge to contemporary notions of race and race relations, particularly in regards to the human capacity for learning regardless of racial background. Secondly, the ethical and moral standards advanced in Maat establish a framework for pedagogical expectations and strategies, especially in regards to race and facilitating racial dialogues.

Kemetian educational constructs are central to the Afrocentric paradigm for very substantive reasons. As Asante argues:

*One can claim at that the revolutionary idea of Afrocentricity creates what the ancient Egyptians referred to as djed, and the ancient Greeks as a stasis, meaning in both cases a strong place to stand. It is a paradigm in the Mazamian sense because it enthrones the centrality of African agency, thus creating an acceptance of African values and ideals as expressed in the highest forms of culture while terminating always in a creative function bent toward mental liberation. (Asante, An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance, 2007, p. 15)*

In the area of pedagogy, African American Studies finds considerable grounding in Kemet. Asa Hilliard provides an exemplary summarization of Kemetian educational theory relevant to both the mission and scope of its educational processes:

*In the ancient Egyptian educational system, little thought seems to have been given to the question of the 'inept intellectual capacity' of a person. Much more attention was given to the character as impediment or as a facilitator of educational development. While learning was obviously done by individuals, the picture that we get of the method used is that it was a collective rather than an individual effort. The educational process was designed in such a way that it seemed to be a true rebirth that occurs through successive series of personal and social transformations. (Hilliard, 2003, p. 275)*

There are three significant factors that Hilliard offers that are important for the present discussion. The Kemetians conceptualized human beings as, firstly, having unlimited potential, being of divine origin (which includes people of European descent); secondly, that this unlimited, divine potential oriented the educational system (based on religious practices) to aid humans in a lifelong transformative process; and, thirdly, there was an emphasis on developing the moral and ethical character of the person through the teaching of Maat.

The Kemetians organized their society around the Ausarian idea of human divinity. Each person has the potential to realize his or her oneness with *Neter*. Hilliard explains that the Kemetian focus on the educability of the student reflects the Kemetian ontological understanding of the transformative nature of human beings, focusing on their orientation to learning as an essential human quality. In Selections from the Husia, Maulana Karenga affirms this idea by arguing that the Kemetians focused on human transformation was an integral part of their spiritual system (Karenga, *Selections from the Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*, 1984) . The entirety of Kemetian culture was centered on their ideas of the eternal life. As Wallis Budge stated, they “believed in a future life” and the “doctrine of eternal existence is

the leading feature of their religion, and is enunciated with the utmost clearness in all periods” (Budge, 1967, p. iv).

Ausar, or Osiris as the Greeks called him, represented humans personification as a divine being. This is a most ancient idea of Kemet, for as Budge states, the Kemet conception of Ausar existed long before the pyramid texts were written (Budge, 1967, p. cxiii). Ausar represented “eternal existence and the symbol of immortality” being what “the deceased hoped to become when, his body having been mummified in the prescribed way, and ceremonies proper to the occasion having been performed and the prayers said, his glorified body should enter into his presence in heaven; to him as ‘lord of eternity,’ by which title as judge of the dead he was commonly addressed, the deceased appealed to make his flesh germinate and to save his body from decay” (Budge, 1967, p. cxiii). As Monteiro-Ferreira explains, Ausar correlates to what she calls the African holistic cosmology:

*the African holistic cosmology, the sense of interconnectedness of all that exists, and the sense of purpose and responsibility of human beings’ existence towards keeping balance and harmony of the community and the world render the European philosophical problem of immanence obsolete for the African sense of existence, if they can center themselves in their African philosophical and spiritual traditions. (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2010, p. 110)*

In Life in Ancient Egypt Adolf Erman describes the very divine nature of humans by writing the following:

*They did not consider man as a simple individuality; he consisted of at least three parts, the body, the soul, and the ghost, the image, the double, or the genius, according as we translate the Egyptian word ka. The latter is evidently the most important; it is an independent*

*spiritual being, living within man, and through its presence bestowing upon the man 'protection, intelligence, purity, health, and joy'. (Erman, 1894, pp. 306-307)*

“One must do Maat and keep Maat in the heart in order to be fully human” (Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*, 2000, p. 114).

Given the wealth and expansiveness of Kemetian religious, ethical and moral conceptualizations, it may be best to advance the paradigmatic appreciation of Maat that Karenga utilized in his 1994 dissertation. He argues that embracing Maat as the moral ideal of Kemet offers a “critical understanding of and discussion of the ancient assumed practice” without a significant concern for the challenges to practice which, as he states, “are at best, only speculative and at worst prejudicial and reductive” (Karenga, *Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics*, Volume 1 (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation), 1994, p. 2). Maat was the crystallization of the Kemetian desire to bring order to the world, as was the case from the beginning of time when the world was unified. As Asante states, as a core cosmological concept, Maat is the reflection of the “quest to make the world one, to establish the interconnection of all things, to reconstruct the universe as it was in the beginning” (Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*, 2000, pp. 2-3).

In terms of African American Studies pedagogy, Maat provides the framework for methods of instruction. Asante states:

*Maat becomes a vast array of ideas of Egyptian culture. It is a mental attitude, a way of thinking about everything. African culture today cannot renew itself without being revitalized from its ancient classical past. There must be an African reality to the renaissance. Because of the petrified system of culture that we have inherited from our oppressors, a historical drive leads us to return to the philosophical resources of our national identities for our cultural and psychological salvation. I think that we can return to Kemet by going first to our own national cultures and building upon those cultures in a link to Kemet which is much more than a reflection of our study. It must become a leading edge, a symbol of our Afrocentric consciousness. (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance*, 2007, p. 70)*

As an axiological construct, Maat orients the relations between instructors and students, as well as among students, and serves as a central quest for classroom dynamics and learning outcomes.

In defining Maat, Wallis Budge asserts that there is “no one word which will exactly describe the Egyptian conception of Maat both from a physical and from a moral point of view; but the fundamental idea is the world is ‘straight,’ and from the Egyptian texts it is clear that *maat* meant right, true, truth, real, genuine, upright, righteous, just, steadfast, unalterable, etc.” (Budge, 1967, p. cxix). Mazama argues that the Kemetians believed that Maat was the foundation of education experienced through the oneness with God which was “achieved through the unity of the person, the group, and unity with nature, as well as the development of social responsibility, social character, and spiritual power” (Mazama, 2003, p. 30).

In Selections from the Husia, Karenga defines Maat as the way of truth, justice and righteousness whose

*value is lasting and it has remained unequalled and unchanged since the time of its Creator. It lies as a plain path before even the ignorant*

*and those who violate its laws are punished. Although wickedness may gain wealth, wrong-doing as never brought its wares to a safe port. In the end, it is Maat, the way of Truth, Justice and Righteousness -- that end ones and enables the upright to say 'let is the legacy of my father and mother'. (Karenga, Selections from the Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt, 1984, p. 41)*

As a critical response to contemporary academic values steeped in European culture, Maat offers an African orientation to life that affirms African values and promotes a more collective and humane approach of human relationships. As an exemplar of African culture in general, the Kemites believed that living a life based on Maat preserved one's spirit in the afterlife. As the deceased enters the great hall of judgment, the deceased

*had to appear and confess his sins. If he could declare that he had neither stolen, nor committed adultery, nor reviled the king, nor committed any other of the forty-two sins, and if the great balance on which his heart was weighed showed that he was innocent, then Thoth, the scribe of the gods, wrote down his acquittal. Horus then took the deceased by the hand and led the new subject to his father Osiris, just as in this world an earthly prince would present a deserving man to the Pharaoh. (Erman, 1894, pp. 308-309)*

Maat exists a major spiritual, moral and ethical standard that must be sustained by members of the discipline. As there are no value-neutral pedagogies, African American Studies must clearly articulate an axiological frame that is consistent with the mission and scope of the discipline. Just as the Kemites established Maat as means of judging the conduct of themselves and their leadership, Maat must be the standard for the discipline.

In his presentation of the Books of Wise Instruction, Karenga argues that there was a moral and spiritual obligation of each person to preserving and practicing Maat

in and for the community and “each person, not just the pharaoh, was urged to preserve and practice maat. For he or she was judged by it and granted long life on earth as well as eternal life in Amenta (paradise) or death and non-existence based on this” (Karenga, Selections from the *Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*, 1984, p. 39). The Kemetian standard is quite consistent with the dictates of the founding of the discipline in terms of its liberation thrust.

The predominance of a hegemonic Eurocentric educational system from the elementary to post-secondary levels leaves very few learning spaces for people to engage in a cursory or exhaustive study of African people in the world. Additionally, due to the pervasiveness of systematic racial segregation and racial antagonism, there are few opportunities for European-American students to critically examine their own racial identities, especially in connection to African-Americans. Furthermore, there are even fewer spaces for European-American and African-American students to participate in healthy, authentic, meaningful dialogues about race, racial identity, racial privilege, racial subordination, internalized racial identity, and racial conflict, let alone participate in a process of racial reconciliation or community building. African American Studies is the primary place in the academic world where students can explore race in a healthy and productive manner in order to advance their knowledge, enhance their racial consciousness, forge racial alliances, and interrogative their moral and ethical conduct related to race.

Basing this analysis within the confines of Kemetian constructs of Maat and Ausar affords us the opportunity to better understand the nascent transformation of

Malcolm's ideology for race relations and their implication for race dialogues. The perspective of European-Americans promulgated by Malcolm X through the NOI teachings was an ontological one because racism was presented as being endemic to the very nature of Whiteness itself. Malcolm X's shift was from an ontological conceptualization of White identity to a sociological understanding and questioning of the impact and imposition of White racial ideology on the European-American masses. Because Malcolm shifted from an ontological perspective to a sociological one, he was able to more clearly and accurately define the nature of White oppression in terms that correlated with both White culpability and responsibility for changing the racist nature of American society. In response to a question at a speech, Malcolm X said:

*I told him, "What you are telling me is that it isn't the American white man who is a racist, but it's the American political, economic, and social atmosphere that automatically nourishes a racist psychology in the white man." He agreed.*

*We both agreed that American society makes it next to impossible for humans to meet in America and not be conscious of their color differences. And we both agreed that if racism could be removed, America could offer a society where rich and poor could truly live like human beings. (X, 2012, p. 406)*

As has been the case historically, "African American Studies cannot be relevant to the needs of the Black community if it is not dedicated to the task of bringing about political and social change within the entire society" (Anderson & Stewart, Introduction to African American Studies: Transdisciplinary Approaches and Implications, 2007, p. 35). The power of African American Studies is that is

establishes an academic framework for students to engage each other in an exhaustive exploration of historical and contemporary issues related to race, power and oppression. African American Studies pedagogy must embrace this dimension of its pedagogy as part of the transformation process advanced by the discipline. Race dialogues are structured, both in terms of curriculum and pedagogy to support the transformation of African-American and European-American students. While the ultimate goal is societal transformation, both African-American and European-American students are seen as integral to the social transformation based on their individual transformation.

Anderson and Stewart argue that as part of the origin of African American Studies was the inclusion of an expressive and affective phase that not only raised the consciousness of African-Americans but “indirectly benefits Whites by helping to change their false notions of superiority and correcting many of their distorted views of African-American life and history” (Anderson & Stewart, *Introduction to African American Studies: Transdisciplinary Approaches and Implications*, 2007, p. 35).

This is not a new issue within the discipline as it has been recognized that European-American students played a role in the founding of the discipline. Talmadge Anderson notes that the “movement by Black students and Black intellectuals for educational institutions at all levels to integrate the study of African-Americans into textbooks and curricula was often joined by white students who understood their own need to learn of the Black American’s experience” (Anderson, *Black Studies: Theory, Method and Cultural Perspectives*, 1990, p. 1).

If we accept Asante's explication of the Kemites notion of transformation, we can argue for the role of African American Studies being a transformative space of human development through consciousness-raising (Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*, 2000, pp. 17-18).

Asante so aptly explains:

*The early Africans believed that the first impulse of the One is to realize consciousness. The neter must realize its own consciousness in order to be divine. Without consciousness there can be no creation because there is no sense that creation is necessary or even possible. It is only through consciousness that the One realizes aloneness, uniqueness, and distinctiveness. (Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*, 2000, p. 17)*

Asante further explains that the Kemetian representation of the divine powers of transformation, as exemplified in the scarab beetle, provide the foundation for universal existence. He states: "They believed that the scarab beetle held the secrets to the meaning of transformation, evolution, and even in a political sense, radicalization, if one understood that all change had to do with the discovery of stages and the movement from one stage to another. Indeed *Khepri* is the act of becoming rather than the process of becoming. Nothing is ever static" (Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*, 2000, p. 18).

Since, as Asante says, there "is no mass movement in the white community to educate itself out of ignorance regarding the question of race" (Asante, *Erasing Racism: The Survival of the American Nation*, 2003, p. 186), African American Studies can continue to conceptualize its mission, pedagogy and curriculum for its transformational thrust focused on liberation. African American Studies has always

included this dimension as part of its pedagogy, however tacitly. The functional dimension of the discipline serves as a critique of education generally in the United States. Talmadge and Stewart argue that in “a multiracial society, education must be made relevant to the cultural, political, and social interests and aspirations of all racial/ethnic groups. An educational system must be pedagogically designed to influence positively the cognitive and affective learning outcomes of all the racial-ethnic groups in relation to ethos and culture. Academic programs and curricula that have the effect of abetting oppression are irrelevant to oppressed racial/ethnic groups. Such an educational system only benefits the vested interests of the racial/ethnic collective it is designed to serve” (p. 34).

Talmadge Anderson argues for the relevance of the discipline as reflective of its emerging paradigm: “As world and universal conditions change new paradigms and theoretical constructs are founded and put forth in response to orders of social, political and economic phenomena and events. Black Studies is an academic result of inevitable changes in the American order” (Anderson, *Black Studies: Theory, Method and Cultural Perspectives*, 1990, p. 9) with African American Studies being “significantly ideologically and philosophically distinct from European social scientific theory” (Anderson, *Black Studies: Theory, Method and Cultural Perspectives*, 1990, p. 4).

African American Studies has created an educational space in which African-American students experience a level of agency of expression that facilitates a more genuine intragroup and intergroup exchange of ideas, thoughts, perspectives and

emotions. As Mazama has postulated as part of the Afrocentric paradigm, “Afrocentricity’s aim is our liberation, the Afrocentric methodology must generate knowledge which will free us and empower us. Our primary task is to generate knowledge that opens our heart” (Mazama, 2003, p. 26). The inclusion of Kemetian contributions to the discipline as posited here is an attempt at expanding the discourse in some very vital areas. The goal herein was to explore how racial dialogues contribute to African liberation and to determine if there is relevance to the African spiritual center reflecting human unity, despite differences in racial identity.

In Fabio Rojas’s study of Black Studies departments, he explores the political challenges of maintaining the discipline within the confines of conservative academic institutions. One of his main conclusions is that the successful programs have modeled and been modeled by traditional academic culture arguing that “black studies and the academy are partners in a coevolution process” (Rojas, 2007, p. 219). While Rojas argues that African American Studies departments occupy an “ambiguous position in the academy”, it has been a leader in the larger multicultural movement as part of the “racial diversification of the academy” and was the leader in creating spaces for “women, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans to push for their own disciplines” (Rojas, 2007, pp. 2-3).

Rojas offers valuable analysis of the political and organizational factors impacting the sustainability of African American Studies departments rightfully arguing that faculty and administrators must operate within the bureaucratic and curricular confines of their institutions (Rojas, 2007, pp. 14-15). While student

protest and the larger Black Nationalist Movement are responsible for the creation of the field, African American Studies has lost ground in institutions where departmental leaders have not adequately navigated institutional bureaucracies in a manner that reflects a cogent understanding of emergent political, academic and social issues.

Rojzman's argument is consequential to the dilemma that race dialogues delineate for Africology. The restorative nature that Africology offers to race relations in the United States is mediate by racial fears, while concomitantly revealing the transformative nature that race dialogues offers to the field. In very practical terms, the pedagogy and curricular foundation of racial dialogues provide a theoretical and philosophical context for advancing Africological paradigmatic constructs. Rojzman's TST process advances the most important dimensions of race dialogues by addressing the central problem of racial violence (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, pp. 1-2).

Rojzman views the engagement of the **other** by exploring fears as the means to developing trust among groups in conflict. He states that this work is not "psychotherapy, not to heal somebody" but an approach to "make connections between people, in order to build the group" (Keith, Notes from Certificate in Diversity Facilitation Course 1, 2009, p. 7). He believes that exploring the major problems, fears, and concerns among conflicting groups will enable them to go beyond their masks by making connections on the commonalities of their wounds.

Another major area of an Afrocentric critique of race dialogues is the curricular and pedagogical impact on improving race relations. It can be argued that African American Studies is the leading discipline in academia researching and teaching about race and contributing to improving race relations through its mission, curriculum and pedagogy. In Introduction to Black Studies, Maulana Karenga argues, that African American Studies (as well as other forms of Ethnic Studies) is important as a discipline because of the contribution that it makes to U.S. society gaining a better understanding of itself, primarily in terms of the area of race (Karenga, Introduction to Black Studies. Second Edition, 1993, p. 16). Karenga argues that the evaluative quality that African American Studies provides of U.S. society is a definitive characteristic of the discipline that has been particularly beneficial to White students, providing one of the few opportunities to assist both African-Americans and European-Americans to develop better relationships.

Anderson and Stewart argue that because of the limitations of traditional disciplines to contribute to the liberation of African-Americans, African American Studies must not only expand the knowledge of the academy through inclusive scholarship, research and policy analysis, but for the sake of

*authenticity and to realize its full potential, African American Studies must extend beyond traditional approaches developed by other disciplines. African American Studies must approach history with a critical eye and with the goal of educational and social improvement. The most challenging purpose and rationale for African American Studies are to effect social reform of the racist tradition of American society. (Anderson & Stewart, Introduction to African American Studies: Transdisciplinary Approaches and Implications, 2007, p. 7)*

Given that African American Studies is one of the few educational programs in higher education to actively contribute to eradicating racism, it is important to explore and understand the meaning and value of race dialogues on a curricular and pedagogical level from an Afrocentric perspective.

Consequently, one of the key aspects of the intergroup dialogue process is the honest, open sharing of thoughts, emotions, feelings, and conflicts, not just by the subordinated, but also the dominant groups. Given that the purpose, goals, and process of intergroup dialogue creates educational opportunities for the most genuine, often unspoken, racial issues to be communicated, it is conceivable that Africology could utilize race dialogues on a curricular and pedagogical level to advance its own agenda.

The White inclusion issue of African American Studies is the dilemma of intergroup relations in the United States in general. What real and existential space exist for improving race relations (as well as those based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, etc.), while simultaneously affording social identity groups the ability to fortify their internal organizational operations and strategies to secure their own freedoms politically, economically and psychologically?

While the foundational disciplinary focus was on intragroup development, the present circumstances offer an opportunity, and even necessitate, for African American Studies to be inclusive in its course offerings and recruitment of both African-American and non-African-American students, faculty and administrators for course enrollment, teaching, and support. Given the lack of an external Black

Nationalist movement, Martin Kilson is correct in stating that “the only possible situation in which an all-black separatist educational pattern would be somewhat justified is under circumstances where black militants *formed and paid* for their own all-black college or Black Studies institute” (Kilson, 2007, p. 39).

Regardless of the practical arguments for the inclusion European-American students in the discipline, African American Studies must develop cogent pedagogical theories and methods that are consistent with its founding in terms of its vital function for eradicating racism. Consequently, the major arguments made above require more serious pedagogical inquiries consistent with the mandates of the Afrocentric paradigm.

### **Contribution of the Dissertation to Africology**

In Katherine Walsh’s book, Talking about Race, she examines community racial dialogues throughout the Midwest. She valued race dialogues because they serve as an “antidote to political polarization” (Walsh, 2007, p. 244). She argues that dialogue provides a way to advance civil discourse and improves intergroup relationship. She says that “Rather than people demonizing those of a different perspective, this form of communication represents an attempt to listen to the views of others. These programs are an example of people around the country trying to address divisions within their communities in a productive fashion” (Walsh, 2007, p. 244).

One of the more profound perspectives relevant to Africologists may be the recognition by many adherents of race dialogues is that dialogues are one part of the process of racism eradication. Dialogues exist to assist in the liberation process, not as a means of condoning racism, forcing or imposing interracial contact on African-Americans or advancing an assimilationist agenda. As Maddison argues, dialogue is one method, process and approach to assist those advancing political strategies to respond to the endemic racial conflicts in the United States:

*Conflict is not resolved nor eliminated, and relationships are not 'restored' as in a more normative sense of reconciliation. Rather, as a contribution to struggles intended to transform underlying social conflict in deeply divided societies, agonistic dialogue that is sustained, intensive and relational in focus may help to transform enemies into adversaries prepared to engage in the type of non-violent conflict that is sustaining of democratic engagement. (Maddison, 2015, p. 1028)*

Harold Saunders concurs with Maddison, in arguing that in many parts of the world where violence has mediated intergroup relations, if there is no recognition of the harm that has been done, the communities will continue to be in disrepair:

*At one end of the spectrum are those communities or countries where present or past violence threatens their integrity and even their existence, and certainly blocks their capacity to build a better future together. As one moves across that spectrum, one may find communities that have either not been torn apart by violence or that have ended violence by agreement but have not addressed or healed the deep divisions that remain under the surface. Next are communities that may be living in peace and may enjoy just enough trust among citizens to permit them to work together in necessary ways but little more because of feelings that persist under the surface. (Saunders, Sustained Dialogue in Conflicts: Transformation and Change, 2011, p. 29)*

The purpose of this dissertation was to provide an Afrocentric critique of race dialogues with a particular focus on their implications on the curriculum and pedagogy employed in Africology based on the application of Afrocentric theory. As previously explained, race dialogues boldly advance African liberation as one of their goals by providing an approach, curriculum and pedagogy that supports consciousness-raising among African people and strives to eradicate racism among Europeans. This Afrocentric critique of race dialogues intended to explore the plausibility of African agency, Afrocentric consciousness-raising and liberatory action with this educational approach. As Mazama has postulated, “Afrocentricity’s aim is our liberation, the Afrocentric methodology must generate knowledge which will free us and empower us. Our primary task is to generate knowledge that opens our heart” (Mazama, 2003, p. 26).

At its highest level, Africology proposes to be an effective remedy to intergroup violence and conflict by improving race relationships through intellectual and emotional exchanges and political action. The academic space created by the discipline is a testament to the transformative nature of the learning process it facilitates. In 1970, Nathan Hare, one of foremost founders of the discipline, argued that African American Studies had a transformative value to African-American and European-Americans saying that “as we transform the black community, through course-related community activities, white students duplicating this work in their communities—predominantly—may operate to transform the white community and thus a racist American society” (Hare, 2007, p. 21).

One intent of this dissertation was to determine whether race dialogues advance Africological modes of inquiry, teaching and learning. The resulting data generated the content and context for applying Afrocentric theoretical constructs in determining the effectiveness of dialogue to advance African agency and European development relative to participant outcomes, consciousness-raising, and racism eradication. An important dimension of the Afrocentric paradigm, as explained below by Wright, is the achievement of change on both a collective and individual level, which is the goal of race dialogues:

*The only way that an individual can enact change to alter the circumstances for themselves and their broader community is if and when the individual recognizes, embodies and is culturally conscious. This cultural consciousness is necessary due to the intent of one's actions. In other words, the individual seeking change should have the best interest for themselves and their communities at heart when considering how to improve their current and future life circumstances. This critical point is integral to ensuring that the community healthfully flourishes and thrives beyond the boundaries of global white supremacy. However, cultural consciousness includes more than a mere general heightened awareness. Motivation is also required to enact the will to want to change within an individual. (Wright, 2016, pp. 85-86)*

As a method for advancing Afrocentric curricula, this dissertation intended to explore the historical and philosophical foundations of African-American desires for intergroup relations with European-Americans. Such analysis provided a theoretical context for investigating substantive factors that can be explored within the context of racial dialogues from an Afrocentric perspective and reflected the specific dialogue content resulting from Afrocentric methods of inquiry. Additionally, pedagogical factors explored within this critique served to affirm Africological teaching

approaches for their transformative value and exposed areas for improvement. Either way, the dissertation provided a valuable opportunity for advancing the discipline using investigative tools and methods consistent with Africological modes of inquiry. Given the centrality of race and race relations to the founding, mission and philosophy of Africology, all curricular and pedagogical approaches espousing relevance to the advancement and liberation of African people must be heavily scrutinized by Africologists.

Defining the disciplines' position on novel and longstanding approaches to improving race relations seems to be quite requisite for maintaining disciplinary integrity, relevance and knowledge advancement intrinsic to African liberation. Such critiques can empower African people to integrate effective strategies into their own approaches, or provide a substantive argument for dismissing them for their limitations. This dissertation intended to offer such conclusions in the very specific instance of race dialogues and hoped to provide a theoretical framework to be applied elsewhere.

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