



College of Education
University of Missouri

Deprogramming Whiteness to Advance Liberation: A Critical Examination of the “Self” in Social Justice Endeavors

Utah State University – SAFE Speaker Series

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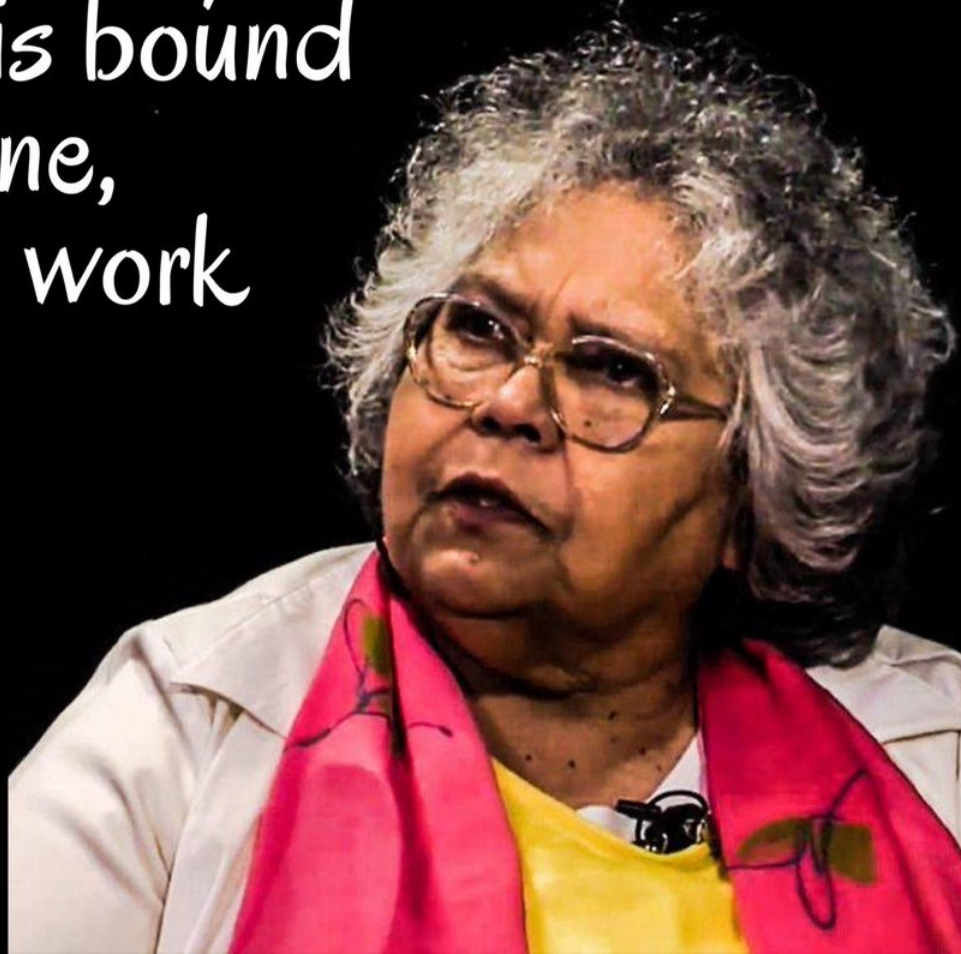
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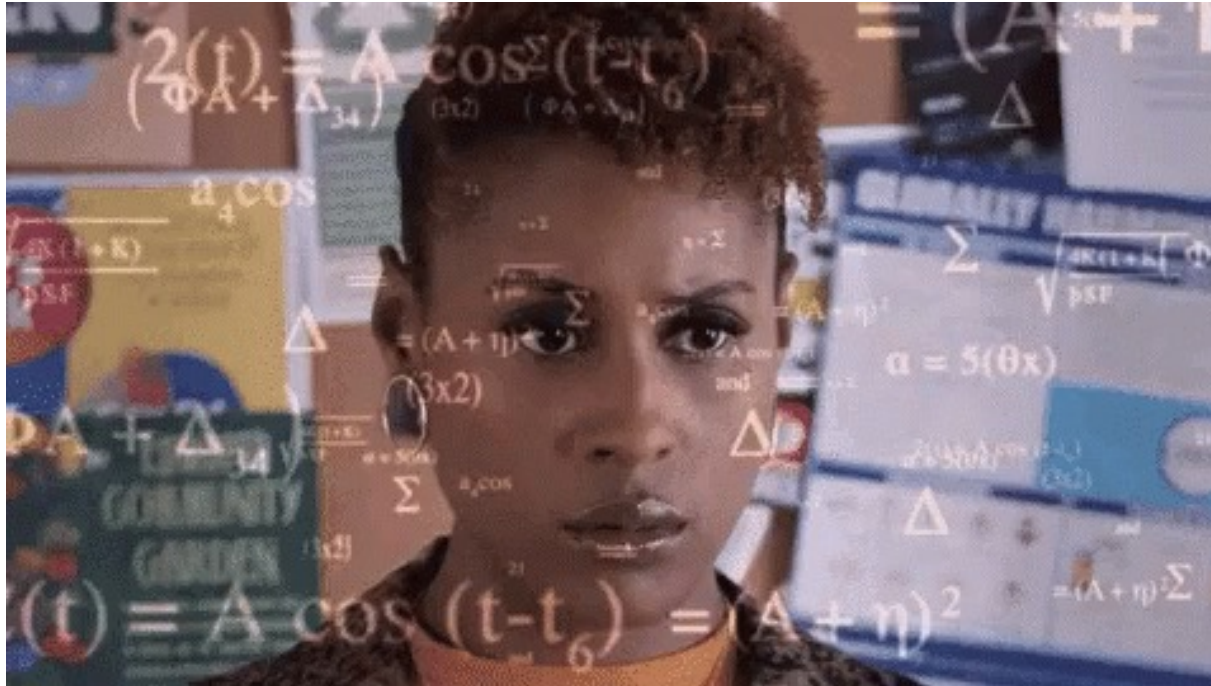


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“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

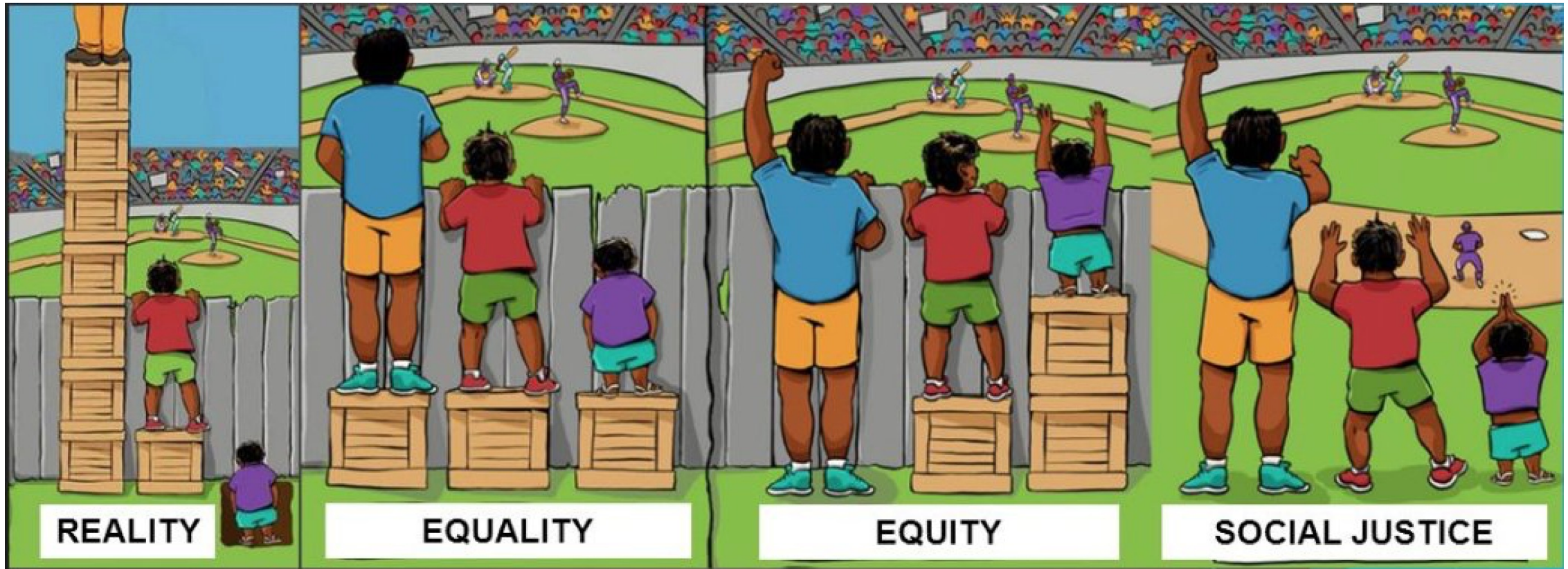
- Lilla Watson





1. What is Social Justice? → How social justice is defined, and what “social justice” requires.
2. What role do you play in Social Justice Endeavors? → Interrogating power, privilege, and perspective.

What is Social Justice?



- Recognition of social inequities.
- Actions that strive to foster equality by addressing the perceived barriers that hinder access, *meaningful* engagement, *valued* contribution, and *reciprocal* outcome.

“A Theory of Justice” (John Rawls, 1972, 1999)

- Justice equates fairness:
 - Right to equal access towards basic liberties in a *similar* vein as others.
 - Right to fair treatment in manner that is *reasonably expected*.
- Based on a liberalism.
 - *Rationale behavior* is determined by what is perceived as beneficial for society operating under the premise that each individual has a fair share.
- Presented as an idealistic “goal.”
 - *Equal distribution* of social values (i.e., liberty, opportunity, income, wealth, self-respect).

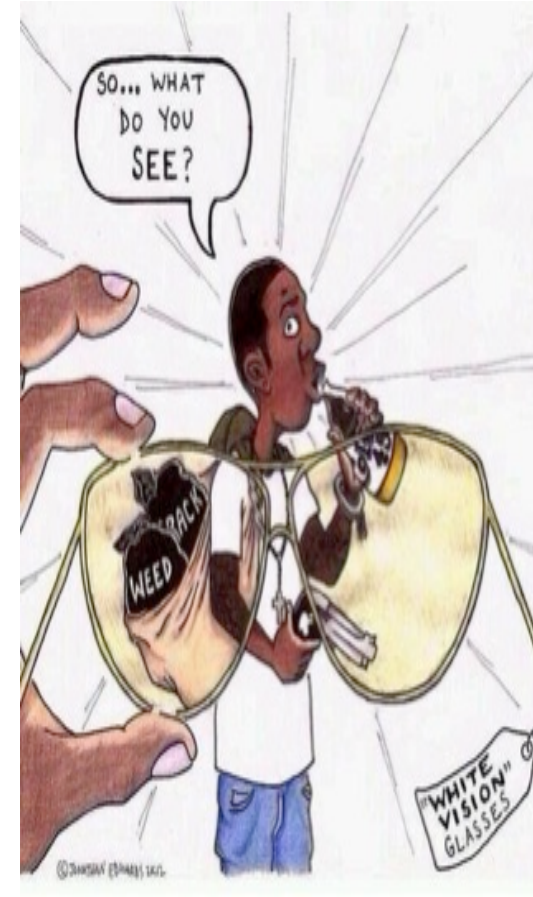
“A Theory of Justice” (1972, 1999)

- Justice equates freedom with equality
 - Right to equal opportunity
 - Right to fair share
- Based on a social contract
 - **Rationale** for a well-ordered society open to all
 - Beneficial for all as a fair share.
- Presented as an ideal
 - **Equal distribution** of primary goods: opportunity, income, wealth, self-respect

Who is (are) the actor(s) and what are their beliefs?

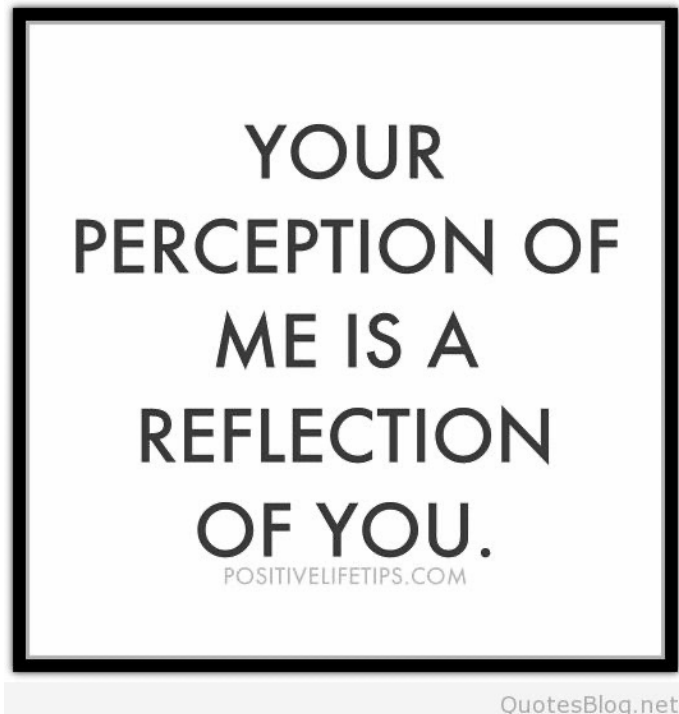
To what extent does their beliefs shape what is seen, designated as unjust, and acted upon? And what specific action is implemented?

What Do You See?



Perception, Perspective, Positioning

- **INFORMED** by our knowledge, experiences, beliefs, characteristics, and understandings
- **SHAPE** our experiences, relationships, and engagement
- **INFLUENCE** our interactions and behaviors
- **DICTATE** how other people perceive, respond to, and engage with us



Who Am I?



<https://tinyurl.com/TRMPubs>

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WILEY

GENERAL SECTION

#BlackGirlMagic: The identity conceptualization of Black women in undergraduate STEM education

Terrell R. Morton¹ | Eileen C. Parsons²

Journal of Diversity in Higher Education

A Phenomenological and Ecological Perspective on the Influence of Undergraduate Research Experiences on Black Women's Persistence in STEM at an HBCU

Terrell R. Morton

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Cultural Studies of Science Education

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FORUM



A day of reckoning for the white academy: reframing success for African American women in STEM

Terrell R. Morton¹ · Tara Nkrumah²

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Being vs. Becoming: Transcending STEM Identity Development through Afropessimism, Moving toward a Black X Consciousness in STEM

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Ashley N. Woodson

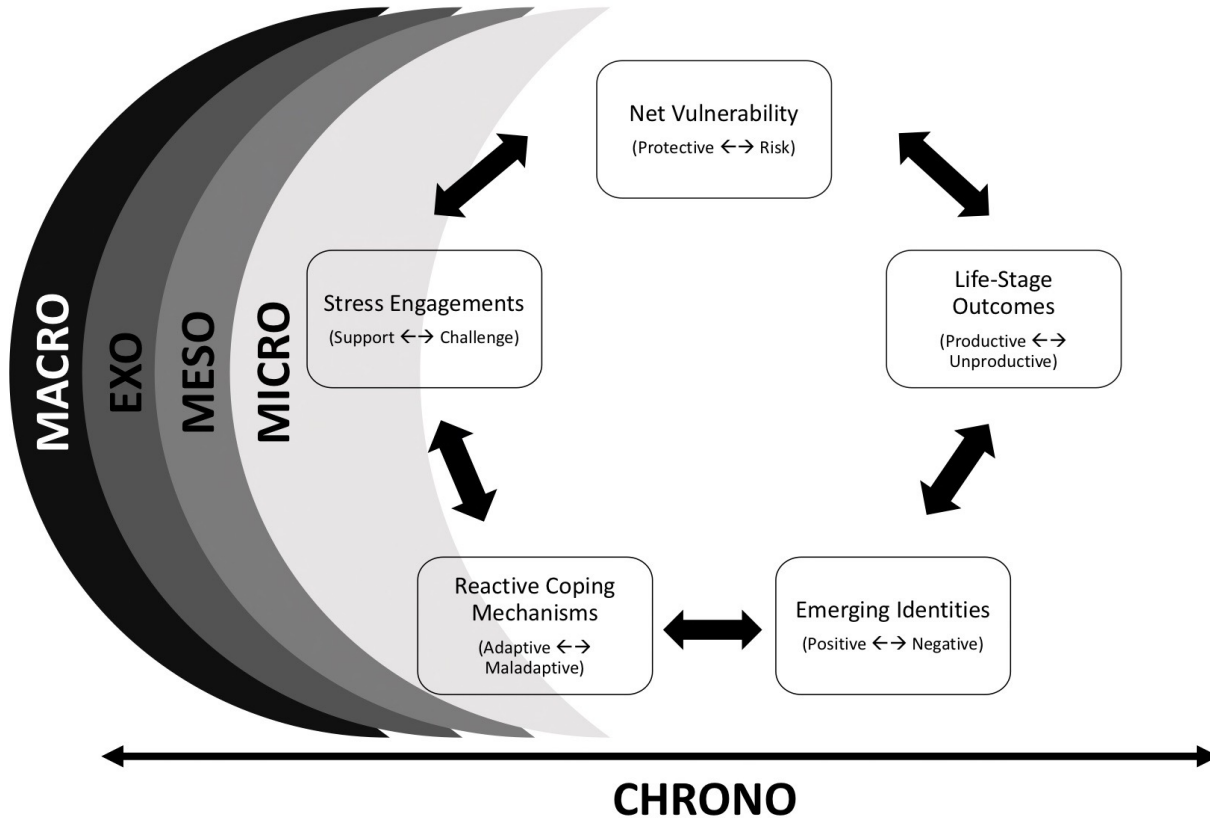
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What About Us? Exploring the Challenges and Sources of Support Influencing Black Students' STEM Identity Development in Postsecondary Education

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ReAnna S. Roby

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Cornell University
Vanderbilt University

Phenomenological Variant Ecological Systems Theory & Critical Race Theory



Critical Race Theory Constructs:

Racial Realism

Interest Convergence

Critique of Liberalism

Whiteness as Property

Counter-Storytelling

Intersectionality



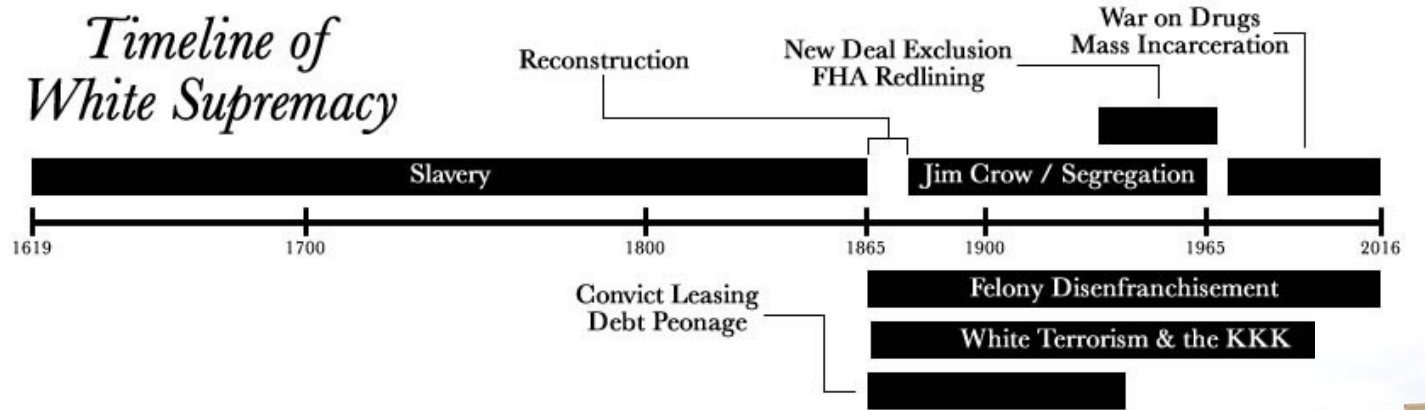
What's wrong with the fish?



What's wrong with the lake?



Timeline of White Supremacy



Diversity Numerical Representation	Inclusion Attention to Voice
Equity Accounting for Barriers	Anti-Racism ?????

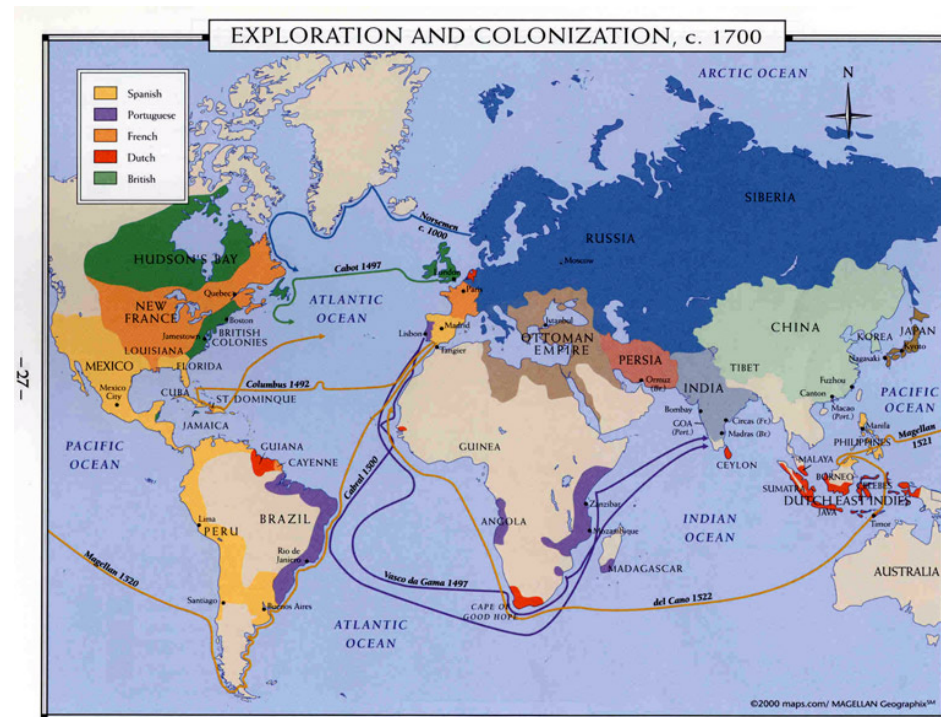
The practicing of justice (recognition and action) are driven by individual and societal philosophical ideologies of reality, knowledge, and ethics (morality)... *where the underlying conceptions of normality are rooted in a culture of whiteness...*

Whiteness as a Cultural Phenomenon

- Whiteness as Property (Cheryl Harris, 1993)
 - Right of disposition: Transference (not) of whiteness → assimilation & accommodation.
 - Right to use and enjoyment: Weaponizing of whiteness → maintain dominance.
 - Reputation and status property: Regality of being white → white = clean, pure, whole, prestigious.
 - Absolute right to exclude: Defining whiteness by determining what is “not white”
- Phenomenology of Whiteness (Sara Ahmed, 2007)
 - Shapes and informs perceptions, standpoint/position, understandings and experiences of reality and life.
 - Outcome of social stratification processes that in turn determine social mobility, social-psychological-physical safety.
- Emotionality of Whiteness (Cheryl Matias, 2016)
 - Constant centering of whiteness through emotions that facilitate the stalling or quashing of race-related conversations and work.
- Hegemonic Whiteness (Nolan Cabrera, 2018)
 - Maintenance and reinforcement of white racial dominance through *de facto* social stratification.

Whiteness and Western Colonialism

- Physical and cultural imperialism as the forced establishment of a new dominant ideology, perspective, and notion of normality.
- Epistemic injustice and the dejection of Indigenous and Afrocentric ways of knowing, doing, and being.

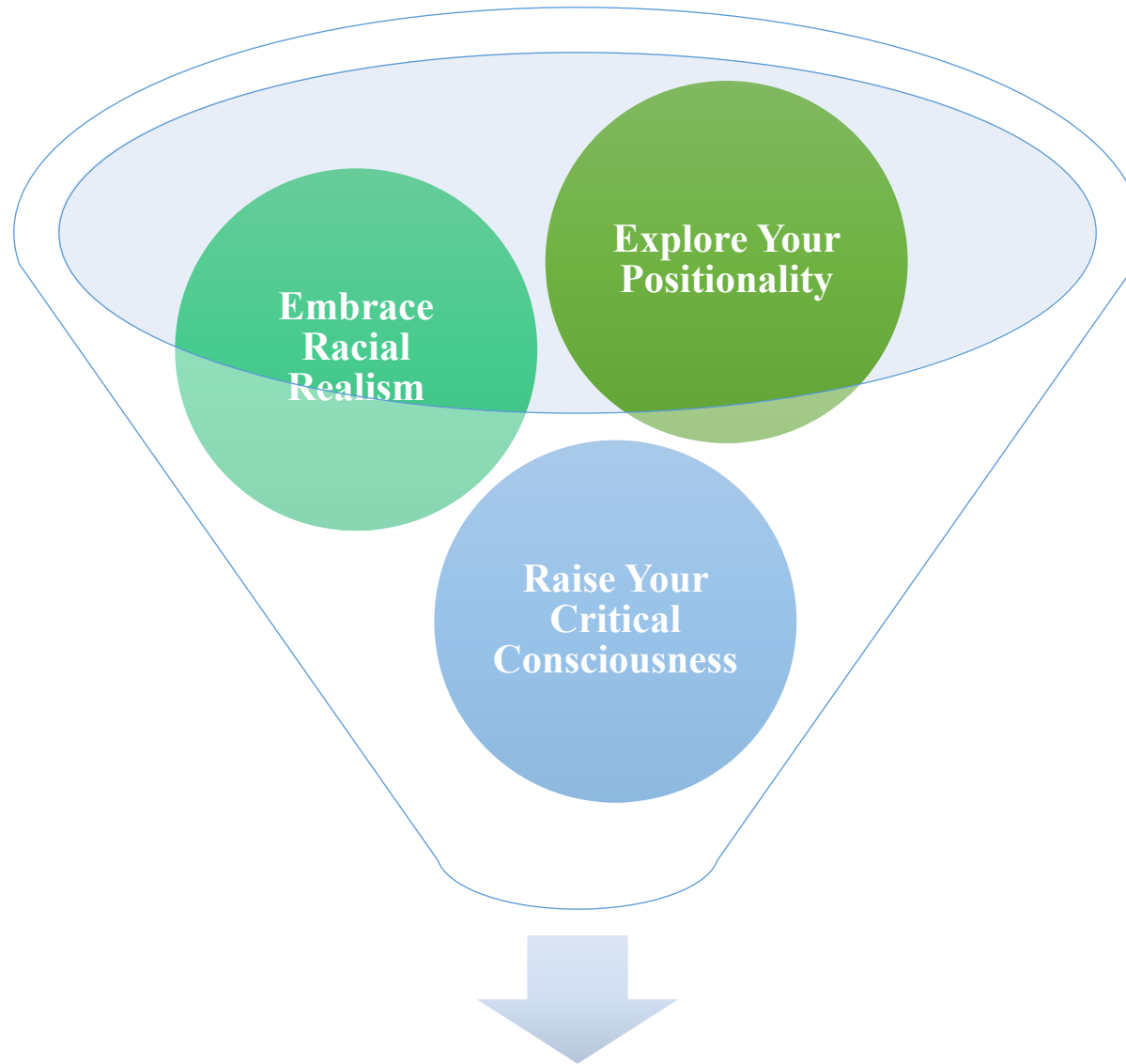


Whiteness in/ through Liberalism & Social Justice

- Conflating the Dismantling of Structural Oppression with DEI
 - Social Mobility = Individual Effort → Pathologizing of Social Conditions.
 - The Rationale Behavior of White Guilt → Fetishizing or Ignoring of Black Trauma.
 - The Individual as the Unit of Measure → Tokenism & Martyrdom.
- Continued Centering and Re-Centering of White Interests
 - Working towards Equality → Lack of Divestment in Power Across All Dimensions.
 - Acknowledgement of Social Injustice → White Gaze in Naming Problem, Solution, & Benefactors.
 - The Individual as the Unit of Measure → Hierarchy of Enacted Activism (Least to Most Involved with Individual Divestment in Power).



What Does This Have to Do with Me?



Take Dialogic Action!

Because your liberation is bound up with mine...

- Check Your “Self” – Biases, Privileges, Position, Power, Commitments, and Actions
 - What is your motivation for doing this work?
 - Who is truly benefitting from your actions and in what ways?
 - Are you divesting from power in ways that can detrimentally impact your standard of living?
 - Whose voice, needs, desires, goals, and feelings are driving the work and determining the outcomes?
- Consider your Role, its Power and Privilege:
 - Perpetrator – Leveraging privilege and power to **explicitly contribute** to oppression
 - Bystander
 - Ally
 - Advocate
 - Co-Conspirator
 - Conspirator – Leveraging privilege and power to **explicitly combat** oppression specific to your identity group.





The master's tools will never
dismantle the master's house. They
may allow us temporarily to beat
him at his own game, but they will
never allow us to bring about
genuine change.

— *Audre Lorde* —

AZ QUOTES



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