

Public Abstract

First Name:MICHAEL

Middle Name:WAYNE

Last Name:KATEMAN

Adviser's First Name:Pilar

Adviser's Last Name:Mendoza

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title:THREE TEARS FOR THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE: SELF-REALIZATION OF RACIAL IDENTITY AS A HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR

A better understanding of one's racial identity can help eliminate racial injustice in higher education. Critical whiteness studies posit that white identity must be revealed. Using scholarly personal narrative, this study explored how self-realization of racial identity led to a more authentic acknowledgment of racial injustice, support for its elimination, and empathetic understanding of the injustices experienced by marginalized people. The personal narrative is that of a White, male higher education administrator, constructed around three data units, including student and professional experiences at the University of Missouri System. This study was prompted by two compelling questions posed by a professor: How can you love your country and be patriotic when it allowed by law chattel slavery? Would you trade places with a Black man?

This study explores how racial identity can provide insight and inform strategies for higher education leaders who are seeking to eliminate racial injustice. Based on Helms's (1993) White racial identity development model, the research design uses a growth continuum informed by Conquergood's (1985) moral map to critically examine how a personal journey within the Black-White racial context led to greater, empathetic understanding of the racial injustices experienced by Black friends, classmates, colleagues, and others.