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1. Introduction

On September 2, 2005, hip-hop artist Kanye West's[1] comment that "George Bush doesn't care about black people" rang out loud and charged in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In a country that prides itself on its "superior" democratic ideals and practices, Americans and the rest of the world watched in horror as the people of New Orleans were left to fend for themselves after one of the worst tropical storms – and arguably one of the worst governmental responses – in our nation's history. Such an event spurred an intensely charged climate in which fiery critiques of the government for its less-than-satisfactory reaction and aid to the hurricane's survivors ran rampant.

It was in this environment that Kanye[2] made his assertion about our nation's president on live television. Contributing to the national debate surrounding the government's response to the storm and its survivors and the impact of race on such circumstances, Kanye's statement – although surely controversial – was praised for rightfully calling into question the insufficient

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[1] Kanye Omari West was born on June 8, 1977 to parents Dr. Donda West, an English professor at Chicago State University, and Ray West, a former Black Panther and photographer who is currently a pastoral counselor (Davis, 2004). After his parents divorced at the age three, Kanye was raised by his mother on the south side of Chicago where he stayed until he graduated high school. His music career had already begun making beats for local hip-hop artists, but once he was picked up by production company, Roc-a-Fella Records, Kanye began producing tracks for some of the top performers in the business such as Jay-Z, Ludacris, Talib Kweli, Alicia Keys, Mos Def, Jermaine Dupri, Foxy Brown, and Lil' Kim (Davis, 2004; Serpick, 2009). He launched his own solo career in 2004 with the release of his first album, *The College Dropout*. Since then, he's made four more albums, *Late Registration, Graduation*, 808s & *Heartbreak,* and *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy,* earning a total of fourteen Grammys throughout his career (Davis, 2004).

As a celebrity figure, Kanye is known for his assertive, flamboyant style and behavior. "Kanye West is full of contradictions: He's arrogant but self-deprecating, materialistic but religious, remarkably rude but also sensitive" (Serpick, 2009). His outspoken nature has marked his career with many controversies including his famous critique of former president, George Bush, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, his outburst at the 2009 VMAs during Taylor Swift's acceptance speech, and his frequent blog and Twitter rants (Davis, 2004; Serpick, 2009). Even still, Kanye remains a prominent figure in the hip-hop world specifically as well as U.S. pop culture generally.

[2] For this paper, I will be following the ways in which Kanye West and George Bush are commonly addressed in the mainstream media, referring to Kanye West as Kanye and George Bush as Bush.

and ineffective response efforts that disproportionately affected the lives of Black New Orleans residents. Such a debate had already been initiated by the media and other critics, but due to Kanye's celebrity status and the syndicated broadcast in which he spoke out, his declaration against Bush reached a much broader range of Americans than the typical public critique.

Even when Kanye was initially confronted for making such a charged statement, he stood by his words. In an interview with Ellen DeGeneres shortly after the comment was made, for example, Kanye defended himself saying, "People have lost their lives, lost their families. It's the least I could do to go up there and say something from my heart, to say something that's real" (Lehner, 2005, para. 2). Fellow celebrities stood behind West and continued his call for aid and critique of the government's response to hurricane victims (or lack thereof) (Reid, 2005). Even Chris Tucker – who was present at the time of the accusation – expressed his support for Kanye's critique saying, "maybe it did help, and maybe he was the right person to say it" (World Entertainment News Network, 2007, para. 1) two years after the event in 2007. Thus, Kanye West and his critique of George Bush were seen as a bold, but charged contribution to a pertinent national dialogue.

And yet, even with his own resolve and external backing, five years later, Kanye expressed remorse for saying what he did. On the *Today* show with Matt Lauer in November of 2010, Kanye made the following apology:

> I would tell George Bush, in my moment of frustration, I didn't have the grounds
> to call him a racist. But I believe that in a situation of high emotion like that, we
> as human beings don't always choose the right words. (Bell, J., November 10,
> 2010)

But what is it about this apology that is so significant? By making his initial assertion against

Bush, Kanye had arguably added to the ongoing national dialogue on race relations by bringing

the charge of "racism" to the forefront. That is was situated in a time of a regional/national crisis

served to heighten our attention and awareness and really highlight the polarity of race (and

class). However, one effect of his retraction was the seeming justification of the disregard for all

of the discrimination and insufficient aid on the part of the government that his original

allegation also called into question, undoing a lot of the work such an interrogation had already

done. Moreover, such a retraction solidified an environment in which individuals should not and

do not criticize the standing white president, especially if that individual is a young, Black, male

celebrity. Thus, Kanye's renunciation in 2010 ultimately acted to participates in reinforcing the

status quo that had originally been disturbed by his charge back in 2005.

So why, after all these years, is this statement and its ensuing debate so poignant that it's

garnering such focused attention? What underlying forces made Kanye feel compelled to retract

a tenably valid and rousing critique[3]? Such questions inevitably bring the issue of ideology into

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[3] It is worth noting that Kanye's reputation as an outspoken celebrity figure has evolved considerably since the initial breach in 2005. McAllister (2009) illuminate this trajectory:

> Kanye West seemed like an American willing to take a stand against injustice when he spoke out against President Bush during Hurricane Katrina. Now after another public speaking snafu, it just seems like he merely spoke out of line - again.

> When Kanye West "called out" President George W. Bush by saying that "…George Bush doesn't care about Black people…" after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, he was regarded by many as a hero that was willing to break live broadcasting rules in order to make an important statement about the status of racial injustice in this country.

> With each subsequent, unrehearsed verbal misstep by Mr. West afterwards, however, Kanye has entered the realm of negative credibility, one that diminishes any kudos he may have earned from others. (para. 1-3)

While this is surely important contextual information to consider, and supports my argument regarding discourses of racism, race relations, and whiteness, a full analysis of progression of Kanye's reputation is beyond the scope of this paper.

the picture, for these institutional worldviews have real, direct effects on people's lives (Roberts, 1999). Specifically, dominant ideologies of whiteness and racism are called to the front of the stage as the leading actors in shaping and molding discursive interactions regarding race in U.S. culture. But how do these hegemonic ideologies influence everyday and sensational speech? What role do the systemic worldviews of our society play in the discursive performance of identity and racial understanding?

It was from these questions that this project found its starting point and subsequently based its analysis. An ideological criticism is in order to comprehensively evaluate how these dominant ideologies of whiteness and racism come to shape discourse in such a way that they can suppress alternative, challenging judgments such as Kanye's. An "ideological rhetorical criticism asks what vested interests are protected by the selection of particular rhetorical constructions" (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004, p. 250). So with the intention to analyze and ultimately question the systemic frameworks of whiteness and racism, I decided to embark on a rhetorical critique not of Kanye's discourse, but rather of that of Bush[4], the other main player in this racial conflict. In order to more fully understand the ideologies at work here, it's beneficial to look at the rhetoric that originates from and supports such worldviews. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to assess how the dominant ideologies of whiteness and racism emerge in Bush's rhetoric and affective performances in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

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[4] While Bush is the central subject of this critique, it is important to remember the purpose of this project: to analyze and challenge the dominant ideological manifestations in racial discourse and identity performances. In other words, this paper is not necessarily meant to denounce Bush as an individual, but rather to illuminate how he, like many others, is an actor in the perpetuation of systemic whiteness and racist ideologies through his rhetoric and affective performances. In doing so, I hope to reveal how those ideologies and rhetorics maintain a co-constructive relationship in order to critiques points of discrimination as well as identify potential better alternatives.

In my analysis of Bush's discursive and emotional enactments that responded to Kanye's comment against him, three strategies emerged. What I define as the argument from fallacy represents the rhetorical move by which Bush positions his case against the "perceivably" false argument of his accusers, making his own defense true by default. The rhetorical and affective strategy of patriarchal scolding emerges as a means by which Bush can discipline Kanye and his critics by asserting his superior status as a white male and President of the United States. Finally, the performance of strong, dismissive emotions manifested as a strategy that allowed Bush to enact his emotive displays in ways that model the accepted norms of affect, ultimately positioning himself and his accusers in ways that reflected colonialist frameworks.

The rhetorical strategy of the argument from fallacy proved to be a significant discursive move that dramatically changed the way this racial conflict was viewed and handled. Overall, the discursive effort to redefine the situation at hand is a privilege that finds its origins in the ideology of whiteness and has profound effects on the way subsequent dialogues are structured and moves to resolve the conflict are made. No matter how Bush rhetorically went about doing this – by reframing the accusation, claiming negative views of him were a problem of perception, not reality, shifting the blame from himself to the media and critics, as well as removing the disaster response from the spotlight by instead focusing on the "nondiscriminatory" nature of the hurricane itself – such discursive acts were able to provide a solid foundation upon which Bush could argue that his defense was true by default of his accusers' purported fallacies.

The rhetorical strategy of patriarchal scolding highlights the importance of intersectionality as a methodological component of this analysis. Used in tandem, the ideological systems of whiteness and masculinity open up the space for meaning-making. The way Bush

does this is by adopting a disciplinary rhetoric that has strong implications on the roles and behaviors of both the accuser and the accused. Adopting this corrective role connotes Bush's superior status to his accusers' inferior one. Consequently, the attitudes and actions of the accusers are deemed incorrect and unacceptable. As a result, Bush's rhetorical strategy can work to concentrate on the individualized notions of racism and thus render the institutionalized nature of whiteness and racism invisible.

The use of strong, dismissive emotions as a way to rhetorically and affectively respond to charges of racism enabled Bush to bolster his argument against such accusations. By discursively performing his emotions in a way that modeled the dominant norms of white affect, Bush was able to present himself as in an acceptable and desirable way. His emotional expressions also allowed Bush to preserve his moral image by presenting the accusers – the "others" – as the cause of such an antagonistic emotional response. Additionally, Bush's rhetorical strategy worked to dehumanize Kanye (and other critics) by adopting a colonialist framework whereby whiteness is deemed as the definer of civilization and all else is marked as primitive. The ultimate outcome of this meaning definition and/or redefinition manifested in the shifting of the blame from the accused to the accuser, recentering Bush's place of privilege and innocence.

As follows, this ideological rhetorical criticism moves forward with the following questions in mind: How do Bush's rhetorical and affective strategies reflect the dominant, systemic ideologies of individualized racism and invisible whiteness? In what ways are these discursive and emotional performances guided by and simultaneously work to inform and support these ideological understandings? Finally, what is the outcome of such rhetorical maneuvers as it pertains to Bush and Kanye as participants in this discussion? Also, what is the

effect on the reification of whiteness and individualized racism as institutionalized ideologies in

U.S. culture? My effort to answer these questions is driven by the ultimate goal of attempting to

unveil, challenge, and offer alternatives to the ideologies that contribute to the racial inequality

that still plagues our society to this day.

2. Review of the Literature

Racism and whiteness – two distinct, yet intimately interconnected phenomena – are concepts that have both ideological and rhetorical roots. These two ideological systems are thoroughly entwined with and encompass broader notions of race.

> Race, as a set of attitudes, values, lived experiences, and affective identifications, has become a defining feature of American life. However arbitrary and mythic, dangerous and variable, the fact is that racial categories exist and shape the lives of people differently within existing inequalities of power and wealth. (Giroux, 1997a, p. 297)

Whiteness as an institutionalized ideology upholds and naturalizes those racial categories in such a way that this racial order remains untouched, for such "racial divisions were developed to create a hierarchy that grants privilege and power to specific groups of people while simultaneously oppressing and excluding others" (Keating, 1995, p. 916). Racism further supports this racial hierarchy by solidifying the stratified conception of race whereby the white race is deemed superior to all others. More specifically, racism as an ideology acts to protect the dominant status of whiteness as the guiding framework through which people of all races are positioned (Crenshaw, 1997). In this way, whiteness and racism work together to create and maintain a society in which racial inequities abound.

Both together and separately, racism and whiteness are simultaneously thought of and enacted in various ways that ascribe to societal norms of discourse as well as inform such performances. According to McKerrow (1999), "discourse insinuates itself in the fabric of social

power, and thereby 'affects' the status of knowledge among the members of the social group" (p.

442). Thus, before delving into the intricacies of racism and whiteness, it must first be

established that discourse and ideology are co-constructively created and deeply entrenched in

power and privilege. Racial privilege – as defined by whiteness – is a productive force that

creates and defines meanings and reality in society (McKerrow, 1999). Therefore,

understandings of racism and whiteness (both separately and together) inform how individuals

go about performing their racial identities, for example, and those performances reciprocally

guide and transform how we come to comprehend such issues. Thus, the relationship between

discourse and ideology is constructively reciprocal. By grounding the following analysis with

this understanding firmly in place, I am able to map how this relationship shapes racial

communication and interaction in our society. In particular, the intersection of the ideologies of

whiteness and racism with rhetoric and affective racial performativity will illuminate how each

guides and informs the other. The ultimate outcome of such an analysis will be a critique of the

systems that have such an impact on our day-to-day lives.

2.1. Racism

The weight of race as a significant symbol of identity has evolved over our nation's

history. Allen (1997) asserts that in colonial America, class more than race structured the societal

hierarchy. In fact, whites and Blacks alike were forced into indentured servitude and slavery on

the basis of socioeconomic status and not one's skin color. It wasn't until Bacon's Rebellion in

1676 that the main identity marker of importance was shifted from class to race (Allen, 1997).

That's not to say that class no longer was an issue in the classification and categorization of

individuals within the social sphere, however from that point on, race has come to hold

considerably more influence and priority in social rankings. Race has also become one of the defining identity markers by which individuals come to understand themselves, others and the world around them.

Because race has developed into such a central component of U.S. culture, the ideology of racism emerges as a commanding framework by which race itself is perceived and individuals are classified. The establishment of a racial hierarchy is both produced and sustained by racist attitudes and practices that manifest through discourse (among other channels such as the legal system, government policies, etc.). While racism changes over time in the ways it is embodied and enacted, the ultimate outcome of the systemic oppression and marginalization of racialized groups can be traced throughout history. The purpose of this section is to identify and analyze the ideological roots of race and racism in order to examine the relationship they share with whiteness and rhetoric.

First, a historical grounding is necessary to assess the current structural beliefs of racism in our society today. More specifically, a comparison of racist ideology prior to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s and after that revolutionary era will reveal how racism has evolved over time. The attention paid here to the Civil Rights Movement as a defining moment in the history of racism comes from the apparent collective shift in consciousness, actions, and discourses surrounding the concepts of race and racism that occurred as a result of this particular wave of activism. This is not to say that racism at different moments in U.S. history is less significant. Rather, the 1950s and 1960s marked a collective break from the deeply engrained Jim Crow principles of race and racism to the more "progressive" adoption of colorblindness that emerged after that time.

The Jim Crow society of the U.S. that existed since colonial times supported explicit, direct, and violent expressions of racist attitudes (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006). The Civil Rights Movement was founded upon the need to challenge such a destructive, oppressive racism in pursuit of racial freedom both in the form of legislative as well as social change. While many viewed the Movement as successful in eliminating racism in America, this is not the case. Racism is by no means a thing of the past as many would like to believe. What Civil Rights activists attempted to overcome was the gravely oppressive, discriminatory systems that harmed minority individuals, in effect dismantling the racial hierarchy that privileged whites over all other minorities. The attention called to such an oppressive system as whiteness drove home the need to address and rectify the racial inequities that have evolved and thrived in the U.S. In other words, the Movement unveiled the system of whiteness that until that moment had largely gone unnoticed and unnamed (at least by whites), a matter that will be discussed in further detail below.

While there were some major victories that came from this era (notably the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for example), calling the Civil Rights Movement a complete success arguably did more to serve the white population than it did the members of the non-white community. By marking the end of the Movement, the work being done to question and potentially redefine the ideological system of whiteness was cut short, and the ideology of whiteness continued to operate at its naturalized, invisible state of dominance and racial hierarchies. In this way, racism as an institutionalized ideology that supports whiteness was not abolished; it now manifests differently. In response to the violent, blatant racism the Civil Rights Movement argued against, racism today emerges in softer, subtler forms, rendering it invisible from the dominant consciousness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

The outcome of this hidden and rhetorically manipulated racism is what has been termed "colorblindness" that now guides our ideological understandings of race and guides racial interactions (Riggs & Due, 2010). A historical consideration of the new era after the 1950s and 1960s when concepts of racism changed from explicit Jim Crow practices to inconspicuous colorblindness provides the necessary context by which current racial understandings can be assessed[5]. As our history with race and racism shows, the shift from Jim Crow racism to "colorblind" racism was a significant move from visible to invisible, explicit to implied. However, both perpetuate oppression and discrimination for the marginalized and reinstate power and privilege for the dominant (Guess, 2006). The general claim of a colorblind logic is that race is no longer an issue, and thus all members of society are on an equal playing field, generally expressed in the colloquial "I don't see color, I see people," as well as other rhetoric that relies on meritocracy. But race is still very much a factor in the U.S. in everyday lives, legislatively, and ideologically. Giroux (2003) explains, "race and racial hierarchies still exercise a profound influence on how most people in the United States experience their daily lives" (p. 193). In making assertions otherwise, colorblindness masks racial differences in ways that deny the persistence of racism as well as the accountability of those who perpetuate it (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006).

The specific subject of colorblindness will be explored more fully below, but first it is necessary to acknowledge that in general, racism is a dynamic construct that is always in flux, reflecting the societal context of the time in both ideology and in practice (Solomon et al., 2005). In a society that claims to be colorblind, race is often seen and presented as a nonissue. However,

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[5] It is important to note that this analysis is looking at grand narratives of race after and during the Civil Rights era and not the practices of it. This distinction is made to acknowledge that lived experiences might be otherwise and should not be conflated with the ideological.

concepts of racial identity – both of the self and of the other – are closely related to ideologies of racism in general, and thus must also be taken into consideration. As a "foundational and fundamental structure in the U.S." (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006, p. 182), race has a strong hand in informing the ideological systems of whiteness and racism, determining individuals' subsequent racial identities and performativities, all of which, in turn, create and reinforce a social hierarchy that determines one's access to privilege, power and resources.

However, the construction of racial identities is not simple. Frankenberg (1993) asserts that race is "a socially constructed rather than inherently meaningful category, one linked to relations of power and processes of struggle, and one whose meaning changes over time" (p. 11). As such, racial ideology and discourse maintain a co-constructive relationship ultimately shaping racial identities – the conception of the self and other – and their corresponding behaviors (Martin et al., 1999). These identities are continually fluctuating and find their meaning from a multitude of social markers such as gender, class, sexuality, etc., a topic that will receive further attention and analysis below. Thus, the creation, maintenance, and negotiation of racial identities must be recognized as a dynamic, intersectional, messy process that is contextually grounded in hegemonic ideologies (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995; Moon, 1999). An analysis of those dominant ideologies and their impact on discourse and identity will illuminate that complexity.

Colorblindness, which asserts that "that race has no valence as a marker of identity or power" (Giroux, 2003, p. 198), achieves its naturalization in society due to the individualized ideological framework of race that is currently emphasized. When it comes to notions of race and racism, there are two lenses commonly used through which these topics and their related issues can be viewed: as an individualized or as an institutionalized phenomenon. An institutionalized

view recognizes that racism is deeply embedded in the structures and institutions that make up

our society. An acknowledgement of racism's history in our nation's evolving narrative as well

as its existence in our present society is attempted to establish a more inclusive context from

which assessments of current racism can be made (Solomon et al., 2005). Dominant structures

are pinpointed as the perpetrators of racist ideals, and thus their privilege, power, and

participation in racial matters highlights their accountability (Blitz, 2006). In this way, viewing

racism as an institutional issue removes the veil of silence that insidiously envelops dominant

ideologies, allowing the root causes of racism to be identified, assessed, and (ideally) changed.

Conversely, racism can also be seen through the lens of individualism. An individualized

focus on racism renders its systemic causes and oppressive effects invisible to the collective

consciousness, allowing it to go unmarked and thus unchallenged (Solomon et al., 2005). Instead

of focusing on the historically, economically, politically, socially, and psychologically

entrenched nature of racist attitudes found in and disseminated by societal structures and

institutions, racism is located in the moral, merit-based, and isolated condition of the individual.

An individualized focus on racism allows white-identified folks to isolate instances of racism to

morally corrupt individuals, enabling them to distance themselves from such people, deny that

racism imposes extensive barriers to and discrimination upon a large group of people, and

continue to believe in a just world (O'Brien et al., 2009).

This individualized lens serves as the foundation for colorblind ideologies and rhetorical

strategies that are grounded in this logic. Whereas an institutional framework considers how

racism is a systemic phenomenon that is maintained by dominant ideological systems and has

real, tangible outcomes for both its victims and its benefactors, individualism works to conceal

those important facts. One of the main pillars of an individualized lens is silence. As quoted in

McKerrow (1999), Hall (1985) states, "'meaning is relational within an ideological system of

presences and absences'" (p. 457). The reality individualism is able to create is determined by

what is highlighted in discourse and simultaneously what is left out of the dominant

conversation. As it pertains to individualized racism, dominant privilege and normative

principles are maintained when the root causes of racism and the voices of its victims are

rendered invisible and silent (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006). "Ideology, in this view,

encompasses not only the partiality or "party" interest in any formulation but also the connection

between what is embraced or concealed and the interests served by a particular formation"

(Wander, 2000, p. 108). In this way, individualized racism works to mask the institutional nature

of racist attitudes and practices, ultimately reifying its dominant ideological position in society.

Such an individualized focus has grave effects on the way racism is perceived, enacted,

and managed in the U.S. When racism is defined as an individual act, occurrences of racism are

seen as rare, not commonplace, thus ignoring the need to evaluate its pervasiveness (Augoustinos

& Every, 2010). By not recognizing the frequency and impact of racism on individuals' day-to-

day lives, such an oppressive system is continued and strengthened. Additionally, racism is seen

as something to be had (and thus as something that can be dismissed). As such, an individualized

framework of racism set in the context of a post-Civil Rights society allows for the logic of

colorblindness to equivocally and ambivalently express racist attitudes without consequence

(Barnes, Palmary, & Durrheim, 2001). And as it pertains to individuals' participation in and

enactment of this framework, positioning racism as an amoral, aberrant event allows white

people to deny their role in supporting such racial structures and ideologies all the while

engaging in discursive acts that ensure such an ideology's survival.

Individualized racism is both an ideology and a rhetorical strategy that is employed for the purpose of reinforcing dominant notions of race that are bound by whiteness. By locating racism as something that is espoused and expressed by only morally corrupt individuals, for example, the system of whiteness is able to reinforce its dominant position and subsequent privileges by denying the fact that "racism permeates every institution in American society and continues as a force of oppression to this day" (Blitz, 2006, p. 250). In sum, the framing of racism through an individualized lens (versus an institutional understanding of racism) allows the effects of whiteness to be ignored, the continuing, active participation in racist practices to be denied, and the discursive engagement of racist attitudes that are strategically tailored to appease dominant norms of whiteness to be employed.

2.2. Whiteness

A discussion of race and racism in the U.S. would not be complete without considering whiteness and its role in racial affairs. "As one of the most powerful ideological and institutional factors for deciding how identities are categorized and power, material privileges, and resources distributed, race represents an essential political category for examining the relationship between justice and a democratic society" (Giroux, 2003, p. 200). Race has occupied a place of significance and influence in Americans' lived experiences throughout U.S. history. As an ideological, social, political, and economic marker, race has been used in varying ways and for various purposes during different historical moments. For example, race has commonly been used as a foundation for immigration policy and reform in which selectivity and exclusion shaped such programs (Ngai, 2005). Presently, the system of whiteness and the racial hierarchy it creates maintains the significance of race as an identity marker in our society. Its individualized

and invisible ideological and rhetorical expressions enable the continuation of its unchallenged privilege as well as the racially discriminatory oppression that come with white supremacy.

Before looking at how whiteness is used ideologically and rhetorically to reinforce racial hierarchies and shape individuals' material realities, a general definition is in order. Whiteness must first be recognized as a systemic, institutionalized ideology (Shome, 2000). According to Crenshaw (1997), "whiteness functions ideologically when people employ it, consciously or unconsciously, as a framework to categorize people and understand their social locations" (p. 255). In other words, the ideology of whiteness not only establishes a racial hierarchy in which everyone is assigned a stratified location based on their race, but it also directs the ways in which society members make sense of race as it pertains to themselves and others as well as act in accordance to those understandings (Giroux, 1997a). The material manifestations of this ideology can be seen in the social, economic, political, and psychological privileges it grants its benefactors and the social, economic, political, and psychological obstacles it presents those who it excludes (Giroux, 1997b; Crenshaw, 1997). Therefore, as the dominant ideology of race, whiteness – as both a concept and a construct – remains a pervasive and powerful framework in our society.

What is important about acknowledging whiteness as an institutionalized ideology is recognizing the difference between whiteness and white people. While whiteness has a strong hand in shaping the racial identities of everyone in U.S. culture, it is not an identity in and of itself. As Keating (1995) points out, not "all human beings classified as 'white' *automatically* exhibit the traits associated with 'whiteness'" (p. 907). Although the systemic ideology whiteness acts as a guide for perceptions and behaviors regarding race, not all white people

identify with this way of thinking and acting. Thus, "the distinction between 'whiteness' as a

dominating ideology and white people who are positioned across multiple locations of privilege

and subordination" (Giroux, 1997, p. 383) must be made.

In fact, there exists an alternative ideology of race, anti-racism, that claims to dismantle

the normative notions of whiteness to propose and pursue a more racially equitable society.

Many white folks connect with and support this logic, in many ways critiquing and challenging

the privileges they could enjoy as a result of whiteness[6]. Anti-racist understandings take into

consideration both an individualized and systemic approach to the examination of whiteness and

racism, particularly emphasizing the institutionalized nature of these ideologies. Even though

whiteness and the corresponding privileges it grants white individuals never disappear, anti-

racists' efforts are marked by their investment in unveiling and questioning the invisible logics of

whiteness and the individualized notions of racism in order to eliminate sources of oppression

and move toward a more equitable, inclusive social structure. It is from this place and with these

objectives that this analyses attempts to navigate. This discussion of anti-racism helps make the

distinction between ideological systems and the individuals in those systems.

As it pertains to both the relationship between whiteness and rhetoric as well as the

connection between and across various ideological systems, an intersectional approach to this

ideological criticism must be adopted. "Intersectionality involves analyzing the interlocking

nature of oppression" because all of the various "social identity categories do not operate in

isolation" (Moon & Flores, 2000, p. 110). As will be seen below, the systemic ideologies of

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[6] However, regardless of identification with, or critique of whiteness, one with white skin can never get away from the benefits that come with it. When a white anti-racist critiques whiteness, there might be a temporary break or affective/material distancing from it, but in day-to-day life, white privilege cannot be given up.

whiteness and masculinity manifest simultaneously in Bush's rhetorical strategy of patriarchal

scolding, further emphasizing the need for an intersectional approach to this analysis. By

considering all the ways in which these hegemonic frameworks and discursive moves can work

together in action, a more comprehensive analysis of the inner workings of these dominant

ideologies can take place.

But how does this institutionalized ideology of whiteness retain such authority in our

society? By what means does this ideology, in fact, become institutionalized in the first place?

The answer can be found in whiteness' ability to render itself invisible through appeals to

normativity and rhetorical silence. The systemic ideology of whiteness presents itself as a

naturalized, normative concept (Keating, 1995). The seeming banality or "everydayness" of

whiteness then allows it to go unquestioned, leaving the "hidden signs of racial superiority,

cultural hegemony, and dismissive 'othering'" (Morrison, 1992, p. x-xi) out of the collective

consciousness.

> Whiteness, as an institutionalized and systemic problem, is maintained and
>
> produced not by overt rhetorics of whiteness, but rather by its 'everydayness,' by
>
> the everyday, unquestioned racialized social relations that have acquired a
>
> seeming normativity and through that normativity function to make invisible the
>
> ways in which whites participate in, and derive protection and benefits from, a
>
> system whose rules and organizational relations work to their advantage. (Shome,
>
> 2000, p. 366)

Additionally, this invisibility allows for the racial category of "white" and those who are

classified and identify as such to go unmarked and unnamed (Frankenberg, 1993; Crenshaw,

1997). Whereas this invisibility allows the oppressive consequences of the ideology of whiteness to go unchallenged, so too does the participation and accountability of white folks in maintaining this stratified racial structure go unquestioned. Thus, by making itself normative, whiteness can erase its presence, and in doing so, (re)secure its place of power and privilege within the institutionalized ideological space and racial hierarchy it has created.

This normative invisibility is additionally reinforced by the use of rhetorical silence. As a discursive strategy, silence must be recognized as an active process by which certain concepts and facts are omitted from the collective consciousness (Crenshaw, 1997). Silence about the privilege and oppression that accompany whiteness enable it to go unchallenged and thus unchanged. Crenshaw (1997) further states,

> rhetorical silence protects whiteness because it both reflects and sustains the assumption that to be white is the 'natural condition,' the assumed norm. Rhetorical silence about whiteness preserves material white privilege because it masks its existence and makes the denial of white privilege plausible. (p. 268)

In sum, the invisibility and silence surrounding whiteness as an institutionalized ideology is problematic in that it allows for the uncontested continuation of its unabated, exclusive privilege as well as its material, repressive domination.

Whiteness as an ideological system is infinitely complex. Therefore, its ongoing, dynamic, intersectional, and contextual nature must be recognized (Frankenberg, 1993; Moon & Nakayama, 2005; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Highlighting its intersectionality and its circumstantial character, Giroux (1997b) states that '"whiteness' is produced differently within a

variety of public spaces as well as across the diverse categories of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity" (p. 381). As an ideology, whiteness is "historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 6), resulting in significant and tangible consequences for all within a social system. These consequences of whiteness can be seen in the consequential "material, cultural, subjective and relational categories that are not static. Instead they are co-constructed by historical, contemporary, local and racial variables. However, whiteness has come to be associated with reproduction, dominance, normativity and privilege" (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 159). Thus, whiteness' fluidity as well as its entanglement with other historical, social, political, and economic markers must be recognized in order to identify its material manifestations and effects as an institutionalized racial ideology.

Ruth Frankenberg (1993), a whiteness scholar who contributed to the development of critical whiteness studies takes this dynamism and intersectionality into account by pointing out its three-dimensional nature:

> Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, 'whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are unusually unmarked and unnamed. (p. 1)

By recognizing that the ideology of whiteness is complex and multifaceted, a more thorough and inclusive analysis can be conducted of its sources, its methods, and its consequences. As a standpoint, whiteness defines white identity in relation to non-white others (Guess, 2006; Nakayama & Martin, 1999). In other words, whiteness positions itself as the normative guide with which white-identified people can align their unmarked racial identities and against which

its non-white counterparts are contrasted as the "other" (Crenshaw, 1997). This binary act of

othering requires that white people constantly (re)assert their white identity to set themselves

apart from the non-white minority but in a way that coincides with whiteness' namelessness (Coe

et al., 2004). To do this, attention is directed towards the non-white "other," rendering the

features of whiteness and white privilege silent and invisible.

The binary act of othering is a component of the systemic ideology of whiteness that

shapes how racial identities are made, maintained, and understood. As the dominant ideology

and discourse in our society, its place of privilege allows whiteness to position itself as a system

of thinking and understanding in a way that's superior to alternative frameworks, such as those

of the Black community, for example. The subsequent effect on racial identity can be seen in

how notions of self and other are crafted and negotiated within the public and private space.

Because "race is typically conceptualized as racial difference" (Altman & Nakayama,

1991, p. 120), a binary system has been put into place whereby whites and non-whites are

positioned in direct opposition to its counterpart. Consequently, "whiteness and white identity

were discursively constructed through an oppositional construction of black identity" (Supriya,

1999, p. 137). Othering, as a specific ideological and rhetorical strategy, places the focus on the

other. By highlighting what the other non-white identity is and means, a white identity finds its

own definition, for "constructions of the other imply and entail the construction of the self"

(Supriya, 1999, p. 136).

But just as whiteness as an institutionalized ideology renders itself invisible through

silence, so too does it not mark this strategy of othering. More precisely, the act of othering does

not name the white identity that is defined "in opposition to inferior others" (Guess, 2006, p.

668). Frankenberg (1993) emphasizes this occurrence in her claim that "one effect of colonial discourse is the production of an unmarked, apparently autonomous white/Western self, in contrast with the marked, Other racial and cultural categories with which the racially and culturally dominant category is coconstructed" (p. 17). Even though race (and its corresponding ideologies and identities) hold particular poignancy in U.S. culture, othering, by underlining the race of the other, presents the notion that white people are thus not raced (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004). Therefore, without the marker of race, white people and the privileges they enjoy as a result of the ideological system of whiteness go unexamined and unquestioned.

A prevailing effect of othering is the (re)instated normativity that is centered around ideologies of whiteness. Gordon and Crenshaw (2004) maintain that "through othering, dominant groups rhetorically structure the social world to establish themselves as the normative, central subjects and those who are unlike them as marginal, because of their presumed deviation from the norm" (p. 251). In this way, anything that falls under the umbrella of whiteness – whether that be white identity, emotions, attitudes, behaviors, discourses, etc. – is the accepted standard by which all others must comply (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Minority "others" are subsequently deemed as deviant in contrast to this norm of whiteness. Because of this, othering acts as a disciplining ideology and rhetoric by which rules for proper, accepted behavior are set. Those who deviate from the norm are disciplined accordingly through the marking of their difference, their "otherness."

The ultimate result of this othering practice is the "gulf of experience" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 5) between white people and non-white others. In dictating who fits the norm of whiteness by drawing attention to the difference of the other, binary othering can have a strong

hand in shaping one's sense of self as well as one's worldview. The rhetorics and actions that emerge from these understandings are distinctly different for those who are classified as "other" and those who enjoy an unmarked racial identity – that is, white people. Additionally, "such discourse nonetheless functions to negatively position minority out-groups and to rationalise their continued marginalisation and/or exclusion from mainstream society. […] Contemporary race talk also functions in ways that legitimate and rationalise existing social relations and inequities between groups" (Augoustinos & Every, 2007, p. 137-138). The superiority of whiteness is reinforced by rendering itself invisible via the focus on the non-white "other." The combined outcome of whiteness' anonymity and the act of "othering" is the rejection of difference and diversity in such a dichotomous racial structure, resulting in a situation where one group (whites) benefits to the detriment of the other (non-whites). Hence, "othering" is a means of reifying whiteness as an ideology and the privilege granted to its members by enabling whiteness to evade scrutiny. So not only does othering affect the lives of non-white others in material, felt ways, it also justifies and reifies its perpetuation as a silent rhetorical strategy of whiteness and individualized racism.

As Frankenberg (1993) highlights, in U.S. society, whiteness is a source and location of privilege for those who can be classified as white and benefit from the normative, whiteness ideology. Privileged positions are based on this dominant group membership as defined by whiteness' constructs of identity through othering. As an outcome of membership into the dominant group, "'white privilege' denotes a host of material advantages white people enjoy as a result of being socially and rhetorically located as a white person" (Crenshaw, 1997, p. 255). Such material advantages can include the ability to engage in social, economic, and/or political functions freely and without opposition (Hasian & Nakayama, 1998), the power to define

meaning and reality as it pertains to whiteness' racialized principles, in addition to whiteness'

(and those who sustain its ideological stronghold) knack at avoiding scrutiny (Frankenberg,

1993; Moon & Nakayama, 2005).

This final point brings us to Frankenberg's (1993) third dimension of whiteness which

deals with its elusive, equivocal power. In a similar way that the individualized framework of

racism allowed for the silencing of its institutional roots, whiteness can also escape such

analysis. Herein lies a key privilege of whiteness' position: its invisibility leads to its indefinite

perpetuation no matter how oppressively racist its ideological standpoints and rhetorical

strategies become.

However, the impact of whiteness affects both whites and non-whites alike. Just as

whiteness reinscribes the material privileges that come with such a dominant position, so too

does it deny minority groups members access to the resources and benefits white people can

enjoy. The bleak history of the non-white experience in the U.S. can never speak fully to the

intensity and pervasiveness of the racial oppression and discrimination felt by minorities.

Conversely, the white experience is laden with unmarked (and often taken-for-granted)

privileges.

Whether or not it is acknowledged as such, white privilege manifests through "our daily

practices, interpersonal interactions, and social relations with others" (Hayes & Juárez, 2009, p.

730), reinforcing its condition as an ongoing, dynamic construct. By continuously defining white

identity in relation to others (the dichotomous "othering" mentioned above), whiteness can

structure society to revolve around its principles as the dominant norm (Gordon & Crenshaw,

2004). The benefit of this practice can be found in the ability of white-identified people to assert

their privilege uncontested, move around the world without conflict or discrimination, and define

the realities of others accordingly. It is also important to restate that one of the biggest privileges

of whiteness is its invisibility. Racial privilege allows whites to ignore whiteness' existence as a

hierarchical, exclusionary system and thus continue engaging in racial ideologies and discourses

that are oppressive and discriminatory without consequence (Kendall, 2006). By avoiding

evaluation – or even just simple awareness – whiteness can continue to fester as a dominant,

repressive force.

Regardless of whether whiteness is looked at as a standpoint, a source of privilege, as an

invisible cultural norm, or as a combination of all three, whiteness as a whole is rhetorically

defined. Understandings of whiteness could not be created, maintained, or navigated without

communication (Martin et al., 1999). According to Moon and Nakayama (2005), "whiteness, as a

social identity, deploys strategic rhetoric to reinvent, re-secure, and reposition itself" (p. 91) in

such a way that its hierarchical, oppressive attitudes and practices are silenced. Such rhetorical

strategies allow for the negotiation, reinforcement, and invisibility of white supremacy in our

society and it "functions to resecure the center, the place for whites" (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995,

p. 295) so that their privilege can be sustained.

2.3. Rhetoric and Discourse

Now that the ideological backings of racism and whiteness have been examined, it's

important to also consider how rhetoric comes into play, for as previously mentioned, ideology

and rhetoric maintain a co-constructive relationship to one another. One of the many functions of

rhetoric is the strategic act of persuasion; it works to achieve some goal the rhetor has in

communicating a particular message (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004; Chiang, 2010). To begin with

its persuasion function, Gresson III (1995) argues that shared values, beliefs, and concerns are

used to reinforce their ideological stance. Thus the rhetor's message is presented as "normal" in

that it appeals to common, taken-for-granted understandings and attitudes that lead to the

message's acceptance by the audience. This relates directly to a systemic ideology's appeal to

normativity whereby its naturalness allows it to remain unaltered. When presented in this

normative way, rhetoric can be used as a means of naming and defining reality and meaning in a

way that is beneficial to the rhetor (and/or an ideological system for that matter) (Gresson III,

1995).

In this discussion of the function of rhetoric, it is important to not constrain discourse to

this one role only. Arguably, there are many other purposes rhetoric serves in various contexts

and with various actors. As it pertains to this analysis, however, a consideration of rhetoric's

persuasive potentiality is beneficial in assessing how it is employed in discourses surrounding

racism and whiteness. Thus, as a persuasive strategy, rhetoric is seen to be motivated in nature.

According to Chiang (2010), "a communicative act may be characterized as rhetorical if it is

artfully fashioned to constrain the course of interaction, and produce a desired outcome" (p. 278-

279). For example, the proper rhetoric of whiteness attempts "to present one's views as

reasonable, rational, and thoughtfully arrived at" (Augoustinos & Every, 2007, p. 127). The

outcome of such a rhetorical strategy is that both the message and the rhetor will be perceived as

sensible, credible, and legitimate. Thus, rhetoric can be used as a means of presenting and

reinforcing one's self and views in a way that will be accepted by the larger group. What's

important to note about the implementation of discourse is that the rhetorical strategies used in a

given situation are circumstantial; they match the demands/goals of the context at hand (Barnes,

Palmary, & Durrheim, 2001; Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Chiang, 2010). Therefore, this

flexibility and adaptability make rhetoric incredibly effective in the communicative act of

persuasion and influence.

Rhetoric works to construct rationality, thus recreating and reinstilling dominant

ideologies that affect the larger social system as a whole. "Rhetoric is a transforming power"

(Gresson III, 1995, p. 24) that both defines and disciplines (Sloop, 2000). This power is

maintained through hegemony, leading to the hierarchical privileging of the dominant ideology

and its group members and the disadvantaging of alternative ideologies and the minority

population. Its ability to sculpt meaning and reality in favor of dominant ideologies not only

dictates what is accepted as the taken-for-granted norm but also determines who has the power to

speak and to be heard. As was the case with white identity formation, discourse is largely

centered around logics of binaries. That is, ideas, people, norms of behavior, etc. are contrasted

against what has been classified as "other," marginalizing that/those which/who fall into the

minority category (Coe et al., 2004). This means that rhetoric has the ability to confine

individuals and their thoughts and actions to specific social, political, economic, and

psychological categories that greatly affect their access to resources and power within the social

sphere. In this manner, rhetoric is both visible in that it is a part of and impacts everyday life as

well as invisible in that it eludes analysis, making it an incredibly powerful (and potentially)

dangerous tool in perpetuating ideological dominance and influencing society members' material

lives (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995).

The use of rhetorical strategies is entirely contextual; what one says and how one

communicates that message will be shaped by and reflects the situation at hand. The specific

context in which this rhetorical ideological criticism is being conducted is that of a situation of

racial conflict whereby an accusation of racism is made against a white person (in this case, former president, George W. Bush). As stated by Gordon and Crenshaw (2004), "the accusation of racism or the attribution of a racist motive is a profoundly moral charge laden with negative implications for one's reputation" (p. 252). Hence, the moral baggage associated with accusations of racism lead to strong reactions that emphasize the charge specifically and not the act and/or issue itself (Riggs & Due, 2010).

But before we can investigate the case study of George Bush in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it is first necessary to delineate the specific rhetorical strategies used in such a context. In general, Augoustinos and Every (2010) outline the common motivators and responses to charges of racism:

> Discursive repertoires and rhetorical devices [are] combined flexibly by majority group members to justify negative evaluations of minority out-groups. Those who wish to express negative views against out-groups in the contemporary historical climate take care to construct these views as justified, warranted and rational (Billig, 1988), denying, mitigating, justifying and excusing negative acts and views towards minorities in order to position themselves as decent, moral, reasonable citizens. (p. 252)

The result of such a situation leads to two specific rhetorical strategies that work to achieve this goal: colorblind discourse and apologia.

The individualized view of race and racism leads to colorblind ideologies that ignore the systemic nature of racism as an oppressive force. This colorblind logic also translates into

discourses of colorblindness that work together to reinforce such ways of thinking. To reiterate,

colorblindness sees racism as a thing of the past and race as having no impact on one's location

in society. Furthering this point, Giroux (2003) asserts,

> color blindness does not deny the existence of race but denies the claim that race
>
> is responsible for alleged injustices that reproduce group inequalities, privilege
>
> Whites, and negatively impacts on economic mobility, the possession of social
>
> resources, and the acquisition of political power. (p. 198)

In performing these functions, colorblind rhetoric works to protect white privilege by rendering

such racial issues invisible to the collective consciousness under the claim that "we are all the

same." By making such a claim as race neutrality, rhetorics of colorblindness present itself as

"both reasonable and progressive" (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006, p. 183) and are

subsequently accepted as such. Since a main goal of discourse in general is persuasion – or to

present one's message in a way that will be accepted by the audience – asserting a colorblind

logic as a contemporary and inclusive ideological and rhetorical stance portrays the rhetor in a

positive manner.

Talking about race as a nonissue further secures white supremacy by providing whites

with "an ideological space free of guilt, self-reflection, and political responsibility" (Giroux,

2003, p. 199), thus enabling such ideologies and rhetorical messages to continue without contest.

To achieve this aim rhetorically, the institutional condition of racism is silenced. As we have

seen with the perpetuation of whiteness, silence is an incredibly powerful discursive move that

allows the dominant ideology to evade scrutiny and thus continue on unchallenged. Colorblind

discourse "strategically draws attention away from existing racism […] function[ing] as a

discourse of distraction" (Ono, 2010, p. 229). McKerrow (1999) advances this claim in his

assertion that "the silent and often nondeliberate ways in which rhetoric conceals as much as it

reveals through its relationship with power/knowledge" (p. 442) is incredibly pertinent to the

critical analysis of rhetoric. The privilege to highlight individualized instances of racism and/or

silence the systemic domination of whiteness is an undeniable mark of privilege of whiteness

that ultimately impacts the felt experiences of both the dominant and minority groups.

Furthermore, the invisibility and silence surrounding race and whiteness that

colorblindness creates generates a common perception of racism as only something that is

observable. This principle of colorblindness thus creates "a power-evasive discourse in which

White racism is often reduced to an act of individual prejudice that is neatly removed from the

messy contexts of history, politics, and systemic oppression" (Giroux, 1997a, p. 311).

Colorblindness, by incorporating an individualized framework of race and whiteness, denies the

fact that "racism is not always overtly observable but is often 'inferential'" (Ono, 2010, p. 230).

As such, white people can deny racism's existence and frequency by claiming to have not seen

overt, direct examples of racist actions and modeling their rhetoric to reflect this framework.

In a society that supports an individualized view of whiteness and racism, colorblind

rhetoric and ideologies abound. To summarize, colorblindness is a convenient ideology and

rhetorical strategy for ignoring the systemic nature of racism and whiteness and their

"asymmetrical relations of power" (Giroux, 2003, p. 199). As a rhetorical strategy then,

colorblindness emerges in all racial talk, for an individualized framework of racism makes it

necessary to communicate those ideals. Simultaneously, an ideology of individualized racism

and the invisible ideology of whiteness could not exist without the support of colorblind discourse.

Even though many white folks do not see the pervasiveness of racism in our society, they have very strong stances against racist behavior (O'Brien et al., 2009). As mentioned above, a racist charge is laden with moral implications (since racism is an issue of morality as defined by the individualist framework), and a response to such an accusation becomes a matter of (re)asserting one's moral standing and salvaging one's positive reputation. The rhetorical strategy that emerges from this context is apologia, or the speech of self defense (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004). According to Marty (1999) "this speech genre enables rhetors to defend their moral character against accusation and attack […] as they deflect any recognition of wrongdoing or of the need for accountability" (p. 52). By shifting the focus to issues of individualized morality, apologia "function[s] to perpetuate racism through their rhetorical silences about White privilege" (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004, p. 247). Put differently, this individualized white apologia allows its rhetors to ignore the systemic nature of racism, deny their accountability, and continue to reinstate their white privilege by concentrating instead on defending their moral character.

Apologia as a rhetorical strategy would not be able to maintain its impact and effectiveness without the privileges of whiteness. Gresson III (1995) states that rhetorical racial "recovery in America largely depends on the power to control others or the power to escape this control" (p. 5-6). Rhetorical power manifests in the ability to define meaning and reality for the larger societal group. Since whiteness is a system that grants white-identified people privilege in our society, such individuals have the strategic advantage of performing such a task. Apologia,

or more specifically what Gresson III (1995) terms "recovery rhetorics," allow white folks to reacquire or reconnect to the privileged position that was challenged in the making of a racist accusation against them. Because of their privileged location, whites can persuasively name and define a situation of racial conflict in a way that serves their individual interests as a dominant group member and follows the normative privileges of white supremacy.

A common discursive move made in apologia rhetoric is denials. As a discursive act marked by morality, saving face also becomes a priority, for as Wander (2000) noted, "when morality attaches itself to words, it is all a matter of appearances" (p. 120). Denials serve the strategic rhetorical functions of (re)securing a positive self-presentation by allowing one to present a version of the self and the situation in a particular way (Chiang, 2010). As a result, the rhetor can achieve his/her goal of being perceived as a reputable, credible member of society. Moreover, the denial of racism is often prioritized over challenging racial ideologies (Marty, 1999). Rather than consider the institutionalized nature of racism in the U.S., racism denials embrace an individualized approach that distracts attention away from the systemic racial inequities still present in our society today. The result of such a practice is the reification of whiteness and the individualized ideology of racism (Giroux, 2003; Barnes, Palmary, & Durrheim, 2001).

All told, rhetoric is incredibly powerful in perpetuating – as well as informing – dominant, ideologies surrounding race, racism, and whiteness in our society. Its strategic function enables rhetors to pursue the goals of persuasion and positive self-presentation that reflect and answer to the context at hand. In situations of racial conflict where an accusation of racism is made against a white person, colorblind rhetoric and apologia are often employed to

denounce such a racist label, ultimately resecuring their position of power and privilege

individually as well as reinforcing the dominant, oppressive ideologies of whiteness and

individualized racism generally.

2.4. Affect and Racial Performativity

A consideration of the concept and emergence of affect as it pertains to racial

ideologies and identities is undeniably relevant in the analysis of racial conflict. Affect and

emotion are not only produced in and through the ideological systems of whiteness and racism,

but they also work to construct and articulate those logics and the respective discourses and

identities that materialize from them. Whiteness and racism affect the lived experiences of

everyone, lived in the sense of one's social, political, and economic experiences, but also one's

psychological and emotional state.

Muñoz (2006) explores these psychological and emotional registers of non-white

individuals in his writing on Brownness.

> Brownness, like all forms of racialized attentiveness in North America, is enabled
>
> by practices of self-knowing formatted by the nation's imaginary through the
>
> powerful spikes in the North American consciousness identified with the public
>
> life of blackness. At the same time, brownness is a mode of attentiveness to the
>
> self for others that is cognizant of the way in which it is not and can never be
>
> whiteness. (Muñoz, 2006, p. 680)

Though distinct from feelings of Brownness, Blackness, too, carries with it the strong sense that

one is the "other," the binary opposite of what is seen as right and good in our society. This

"displaceable attentiveness" (Muñoz, 2006, p. 679) marks minorities' every move within our white world, stirring up emotions of shame, fear, and hopelessness. Similar to Massey and Denton's (1993) culture of segregation, brownness is the affective response to institutionalized racism that is framed and justified through an individualized lens. Because it is presented in this way, the system of racism can continue unchallenged and minorities must live with their pain.

The individual emotions felt by various members of society are a private experience that shape the way they view themselves, others, and the world around them. But the public display of affect is a whole other issue entirely. Muñoz (2006) calls this act "racial performativity" to acknowledge the active display of one's race and all of the emotional, social, political, and economic dimensions that comes with it. He further describes racial performativity as "a political doing, the effects that the recognition of racial belonging, coherence, and divergence present in the world" (Muñoz, 2006, p. 678-679). Thus, whiteness as a system comes into play again here in that the principles of this ideology serve as the point of departure from which the meanings behind the "racial belonging, coherence, and divergence" of the performance of one's racial identity are based. As the maker of meaning and reality then, whiteness becomes "the affective ruler that measures and naturalizes white feelings as the norm" (Muñoz, 2006, p. 680). Belonging is marked by the racial hierarchy whiteness has established, and the expression of emotions is modeled after the normative standards of whiteness and its commissioning of white identity. Therefore, "'white' is coded as orderliness, rationality, and control, while 'black' is coded as chaos, irrational violence, and total loss of control" (Dyer as cited in Keating, 1995, p. 907). By viewing white racial performativity as the norm, the emotions expressed by white people are hence seen as rational, appropriate, and valid. However, the display of non-white

affect is often dismissed as unreasonable, rash, and unfounded, making it "partially illegible in relation to the normative affect performed by normative citizen subjects" (Muñoz, 2006, p. 679).

Now that the racial performativity of "white" and "non-white" has been established, it's important to look at how the two come together to form – and be formed by – racial ideologies. According to Muñoz (2000), race can be understood as "affective difference," or "the ways in which various historically coherent groups 'feel' differently and navigate the material world on a different emotional register" (p. 70). In this way, the affective responses rendered from the experiences of race and whiteness are different for each individual within U.S. culture's racial hierarchy.

But in what way are they different? And how do these affective reactions relate to the systemic ideologies of racism and whiteness? These two questions can be answered simultaneously, for it is the implementation of such dominant ideological systems that shapes the way individuals experience – and thus feel – the world around them. "People don't need to respond to what they can pretend they do not know, and they don't know what they can't feel" (Segrest, 2002, p. 162). As it pertains to the invisible systems of whiteness, emotion is also buried beneath the surface in such a way that is confined to a limited range of articulation. In fact, Segrest (2002) suggests that white-identified people create an "affective void from which feelings and perceptions have been blocked in oneself" (p. 169). Whereas discursive silence is one way that systems of whiteness are rendered invisible, this "affective void" is another means by which whiteness continues on unnoticed. In this way, feeling is knowing, and knowing implies action (Segrest, 2002); an absence of the first subsequently leads to the absence of

awareness and engagement, ultimately enabling the systems of whiteness and racism to carry on uncontested and unchanged.

Since whiteness maintains its position of dominance through its namelessness, stripping the institutions of whiteness of their invisibility brings into view the oppression and harm wrought on non-white individuals, often stirring up feelings of guilt, shame and confusion (Kendall, 2006). In a system where "emotional lack" (Muñoz, 2006) persists, such feelings can be overwhelming and difficult to grasp. The messiness such an emotional experience generates – in both the cognitive processing of such feelings as well as the call to action it implies – would spotlight the dominant systems of whiteness and the need to question the privileges granted by such an ideological institution at the expense of non-white individuals. Thus, just as systems of whiteness escape scrutiny via discursive silence, eliminating those emotional experiences also leads to the avoidance (and even resistance) of interrogation.

This affective void, or what Segrest (2002) terms "the anesthetic aesthetic" (p. 162) of racism and whiteness encompasses one of the main principles of whiteness as an ideological institution more broadly as well as the white experience specifically. Whiteness gains most of its strength from its discursive silence and lack of emotion, thus being able to sustain its normative standards surrounding racial performativity, for example. This affects the white experience in two ways. First, the "anesthetic aesthetic" of whiteness creates a space where white-identified people do not "feel" their race, nor do they feel the pain that it inflicts in others from its privilege. They do not know what it feels like to be white in the same way that Black and Brown individuals constantly and continuously feel the "affective difference" of their Blackness/Brownness while navigating through a white world. In this way, white people suffer

from an "emotional lack" in their day-to-day experiences. Second, the succession of whiteness as

the guiding ideological system of race in our society dictates what emotions can be felt and how

they are to be displayed. Because white affect is perceived as rational and controlled, individual

racial performances must model this criterion. And because the performance of those emotions

that fall outside of the normative affective register are viewed as irrational and erratic, their

feelings – no matter what they are or how they are communicated – are incontestably funneled

into this negative category. Therefore, whiteness confines and limits the acceptable range and

meanings of emotions and their expression for all – whites and non-whites alike – within its

system.

In a world where racism is seen as rare and the victims are blamed for their own

hardships, the African American psyche is bound to be impacted in a way that is harmful to their

spirits and sense of self. In their research of segregation and the creation, maintenance, and

intensification of the Black ghetto, Massey and Denton (1993) have termed this diminished

Black psyche "the culture of segregation" (p. 167). The structural barriers that institutional

racism has imposed on members of the Black community severely limit their abilities to succeed,

priming their emotional and psychological states negatively.

> Given the lack of opportunity, pervasive poverty, and increasing hopelessness of
>
> life in the ghetto, a social-psychological dynamic is set in motion to produce a
>
> culture of segregation [...] Precisely because of the ghetto residents deem
>
> themselves failures by the broader standards of society, they evolve a parallel
>
> status system defined in opposition to the prevailing majority culture. (Massey &
>
> Denton, 1993, p. 184)

As such, the persistence of institutional racism in society affects the Black psyche insofar as their self-esteem is acutely belittled and a sense of despair settles amongst the entire community. The emotional and psychological ramifications can be seen in the "tough, cynical attitude toward life, a deep suspicion of the motives of others, and a marked lack of trust in the goodwill or benevolent intentions of people and institutions" (Massey & Denton, 1993, p. 172). Black Americans are removed from systems of privilege that disproportionately disadvantages this social group, something they are reminded about and are forced to make sense of everyday.

But how can we bring this all back to the ideology of individualized racism? Even though the systemic structure of U.S. culture is formulated in such a way that African Americans face greater obstacles and disadvantages, most often their failings as (non)contributors to society are used against them to blame them for their plight. In this community of opposition to the oppressive white norm, their actions and attitudes, as viewed from outside the ghetto, are seen in conflict to the individualized notions of meritocracy and morality, for example. In this light, "good," "successful" people work their way up in the world and exemplify the characteristics supported by this individualist frame. However, because the structural implications of racism have driven African Americans into a culture of segregation where their "psyches are diminished" – and thus one of their only options for resistance is to deviate from the dominant norm – their behaviors and outlooks are bound to be seen as abnormal and aberrant from the perspective of whiteness. Using Blacks' deviance as a case against them, the ideological system of whiteness is thus able to support its argument that Black Americans' disadvantaged status is their own fault.

In this way, the effects of institutionalized racism (the diminished psyche/culture of segregation of the ghetto community) are reframed as an individualized problem of the victims themselves, ultimately reifying the institutionalization of racism as a practice and an ideology. Thus, a vicious cycle of individualized institutionalization occurs whereby those who suffer the most socially, politically, economically, and especially emotionally/psychologically are further oppressed with diminished opportunity. The importance of this consideration of diminished non-white affect is to see how the frameworks of racism (institutional vs. individualized) and the emotional and psychological component of racism and its consequences are intimately related. Understanding the deep, personal connection between racism and emotion reveals how harmful an individualized framework can be on those to whom it targets.

So, whiteness as an invisible, hierarchical, and preferential system shapes the ways in which racial identity can be performed and interpreted. The privilege of whiteness to carry out this function not only enables it to reinstate itself as the taken-for-granted, normative ideology, but also works to impact the lived experiences of all members of society. For whites, it bolsters their position of privilege and their power to express their emotions within an intelligible and monitored framework and performance without contest. At the same time, white folks are allowed to get away with not feeling their whiteness and thus not interrogating the subsequent privilege and oppression such a system creates. For minorities, racial performativity as guided by whiteness rejects the real, tangible emotions produced by the inequities of whiteness and individualized racism, furthering the pain and despair they already must cope with everyday. Consequently, the inferior non-white position is reified and even worsened on an emotional level while the invisible ideologies of whiteness and individualized racism carry on.

With all of this in mind, it's important, then, to look at how emotions emerge and are assigned meaning within such a system. If the ideological institution of whiteness is so constraining and limiting for both whites and non-whites alike, how are emotions performed? What affects typically emerge and do these racial performativities generally remain within the intelligible and accepted framework defined by whiteness? Also significant is the consideration of how individuals' emotions are perceived by others. Guided by the affective normative standards of whiteness, how do others receive an individual's emotional display? How confined are their notions to this ideological system, and what effect do such perceptions have on the reputation of the individual as well as the reification of whiteness' normative standards? These questions bring to bear how race and emotion come together to both guide and be led by the ideological systems of whiteness and racism, ultimately influencing the performances and lived experiences of all involved.

2.5. Methodology

Whiteness and racism emerge both as ideologies and as rhetorical practices which co-constructively inform and impact each other. As such, whiteness and racism are intimately and complexly embedded in issues of power and hegemony, for it is through these means that dominant understandings and normative communicative acts surrounding questions of race are sustained. Thus, ideological criticism – which recognizes the existence and power of dominant interests as situated in a historical context – is best suited for the analysis of these issues (Wander, 2000).

Because ideology and rhetoric share such a complexly interconnected relationship, the combination of ideological criticism with critical rhetorical analysis yields a more inclusive

investigation of race in our society. The persistence and influence of these racial ideologies is (re)created and maintained through discourse. Incorporating a rhetorical analysis into ideological critique recognizes their co-constructive relationship.

McKerrow (1999) asserts that critical rhetoric also explores the relationship between power and freedom in order to locate where the inconsistencies and sites of discrimination lie. In doing so, ideological and rhetorical critique serves to unmask and scrutinize the role of power in our society in order to challenge and change its oppressive effects. (McKerrow, 1999, p. 448). Thus, the purpose of critical rhetorical analysis is to unmask "the integration of power/knowledge in society – what possibilities for change the integration invites or inhibits and what intervention strategies might be considered appropriate to effect social change" (McKerrow, 1999, p. 441-442). The goal of this paper is to unearth the underlying, dominant ideologies of whiteness and racism (as seen in the discourse/rhetoric) that perpetuate inequality and oppression in our society in order to ultimately locate where in the discourse changes can be made to improve multicultural dialogues and interactions.

3. Analysis of the Rhetorical Strategies

3.1. Introduction

Life in New Orleans has long been wrought with class and racial tensions. In the areas affected by Katrina, African Americans "were strapped by incomes that were 40 percent less than those earned by whites. Before the storm, New Orleans, with a 67.9 percent black population, had more than 103,000 poor people" (Dyson, 2006, p. 5) living within its city's boundaries. With a poverty rate of 28 percent (Hartman & Squires, 2006), New Orleans was ranked as one of the highest impoverished cities in the U.S. and the quality of educational, health, and economic opportunities for these people reflected such a poverty-stricken condition (Dyson, 2006). The economic gap between whites and minority populations (specifically African Americans) was astoundingly large; "the black poverty rate of 35% was more than 3 times the white rate of 11%" (Hartman & Squires, 2006). Accordingly, the majority of the storm's survivors and victims remained because they didn't have the means to evacuate. In addition to – and as a result of – these economic and racial disparities, New Orleans was an intensely segregated city. The neighborhoods hardest hit by the storm – such as the Lower Ninth Ward – housed 80 percent of the city's minority population, meaning most of the damage suffered from Katrina was inflicted upon those who already suffered from the unequal distribution of opportunity and resources as a result of race and class (Dyson, 2006). As such, Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on a city already battling an ongoing storm of its own. The racial and economic inequities that plagued the city's Black population have been "the cumulative result of a long history of institutional arrangements and structures that have produced current realities" (Hartman & Squires, 2006, p. 3). Thus it is important to take away the historic and systemic

construction of racism and classism as a significant contextual factor to framing the aftermath of Katrina and the subsequent federal response (or lack thereof) that followed.

On Monday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, a Category 3 storm, made landfall upon the shores of Louisiana and Mississippi. The city of New Orleans in particular was ravaged by the storm itself as well as the impending flooding that occurred after the breach of the city's levees. Because of the segregation in the city due to historic racial and classist tensions, the storm impacted minority groups disproportionately (powell et al., 2006). Many areas were completely submerged as the storms' survivors tried to make their way to higher ground. The SuperDome became a place of temporary refuge for disaster victims as they awaited the long-overdue federal aid to the area (Dyson, 2006). The city, state, and federal governments battled over appropriate response efforts, further delaying the deployment of people and resources to attend to the needs and safety of the survivors. The media representations of the condition of New Orleans and its citizens sent the country up in arms over the horrific conditions under which these people were placed. Fiery accusations were made against the government for taking too long to respond and not doing enough to protect and care for the people trapped in New Orleans.

On Friday, September 2, 2005, a live televised benefit concert, "A Concert for Hurricane Relief," was produced and aired by the NBC broadcast network in order to raise funds for the American Red Cross (de Moraes, 2005). During one segment of the program, hip-hop artist, Kanye West, deviated from the script and began a 65 second rant in which he criticized the delay in government response as well as representations of hurricane victims in the media as racially discriminatory, concluding with the assertion, "George Bush doesn't care about black people" (de Moraes, 2005).

Excerpt 1: Kanye West's Accusation

MYERS: With the breach of three levees protecting New Orleans, the landscape of the city has changed dramatically, tragically and perhaps irreversibly. There is now over 25 feet of water where there was once city streets and thriving neighborhoods.

KANYE: I hate the way they portray us in the media. You see a black family, it says, "They're looting." You see a white family, it says, "They're looking for food." And, you know, it's been five days because most of the people are black. And even for me to complain about it, I would be a hypocrite because I've tried to turn away from the T- to the TV because it's too hard to watch. I've even been shopping before even giving a donation, so now I'm calling my business manager right now to see what's- what is the biggest amount I can give, and- and just to imagine if I was- if I was down there, and those are- those are my people down there. So anybody out there that wants to do anything that we can help- with- with the set-up-- with the way America is set up to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off, as slow as possible. I mean, this is- the Red Cross is doing everything they can. We already realize a lot of the people that could help are at war right now, fighting another way- and they've given them permission to go down and shoot us!

MYERS: And subtle, but in even many ways more profoundly devastating, is the lasting damage to the survivors' will to rebuild and remain in the area. The destruction of the spirit of the people of southern Louisiana and Mississippi may end up being the most tragic loss of all.

KANYE: George Bush doesn't care about black people!

[Cut to Chris Tucker]

MYERS: Please call-

TUCKER: In the past few days, America and people has been steppin' up- have been steppin' up to donate money, to do all they can to help people in New Orleans and all over. Please do what you can. Send water, trucks, whatever you can, do what you can, and help one another. Uh, save lives, and we all the one. The people of New Orleans need us. Mississippi need us. Please, please, please, please, do all you can to help, help, help, help, help, help, help, help. Thank you.

While Kanye was surely not the first to imply racism was a prominent figure in the government's response to the storm, this highly-publicized charge contributed to a national dialogue in which the issue of race was brought into the picture. Although Bush received countless critiques of his participation in the federal disaster relief efforts from critics from all sides, this particular accusation made by Kanye West struck a chord with Bush that has left him answering to the charge to this day. How George Bush goes about rhetorically discussing and refuting Kanye's allegation against him is the subject of this project. The use of ideological criticism and rhetorical critique will be used to flesh out how the concepts of whiteness and individualized racism emerge in ways that guide the ensuing conversation.

The analysis of the rhetorical strategies utilized in situations of racial conflict is fruitful in unveiling the ideological forces that underlie such discursive performances. Since ideology and discourse maintain an intimately connected, co-constructive relationship, the rhetorical moves that emerge in racial contexts serve as evidence for the accompanying ideologies (Augoustinos & Every, 2007). In examining the systemic issue of whiteness, this practice is infinitely valuable for exposing how such dominant norms are perpetuated and the ways in which systems of whiteness and racism sustain themselves. While the specific rhetorical strategies used by

individuals to support ideologies of whiteness may not be exactly the same, the ultimate outcome

– that is, the reification of whiteness as the dominant racial ideology – has become a patterned

norm of interaction, for example. Thus, the purpose of examining the rhetorical strategies

employed by George W. Bush in response to racist accusations made by hip-hop artist Kanye

West is to investigate how that connection between discourse and ideology manifests. By

interrogating his rhetorical acts and affective performances, the dominant ideologies of

individualized racism and invisible whiteness can be unveiled, opening up the space to question

its hegemonic norms of discourse and behavior. The ultimate goal in conducting such a critique

is to challenge these systemic ideological structures in order to present alternatives for generating

more inclusive, humanitarian racial communication.

    The texts used for this analysis are taken from Bush's direct, documented, written and

spoken responses. Four interviews and one chapter from his memoir provide the foundation upon

which the following ideological critique is grounded. First, Bush's memoir, *Decision Points*,

published in November of 2010, is a substantive text for this analysis in which he spends an

entire chapter reflecting on the transpiring events of Hurricane Katrina and specifically answers

to the charge of racism made against him. Three of the four interviews are in regards to this

publication. During his book tour promoting his new memoir, Bush met with NBC's Matt Lauer

to discuss the book in detail. It is during this segment that a discussion is held about what Bush

writes in his memoir concerning his response to Katrina. Another interview with Matt Lauer that

aired on the *Today* show also reviews the context of conflict that emerged following Kanye

West's comment. Bush also met with Oprah on her talk show to review the major stories of his

memoir as well as to take up the racist accusation specifically. Also under consideration is

Bush's interview with NBC reporter, Brian Williams, which was conducted on December 12,

2005 to discuss a variety of topics that were defining of the presidency at that time, one of which was the government's response to Hurricane Katrina. The span of time between the event itself and the resultant response is actually beneficial in allowing for a comparison of the rhetorical strategies used by Bush in different moments and the implications for such discursive acts. As will be seen below, the message of Bush's rhetoric is relatively consistent over this five year period. This is significant in noting how the rhetorical strategies used are meant to perform a certain function as well as acknowledging the felt vehemence and pertinence for which a response was deemed necessary.

For George W. Bush, responding to what he conceived as "accusations" of racism following Hurricane Katrina created a unique situation in which not only his person as a white male and as president of the United States was challenged but also normative ideologies of whiteness and racism were called into question. In such a context, Bush was presented with a situation in which the tension and conflict created by the racist charge needed to be resolved. To do so, he employed three rhetorical strategies as a means of restoring order – in other words, reifying his place of privilege and innocence. The rhetorical strategy that I will refer to as the *argument from fallacy* emerged in this analysis as a means to redefine the nature of the accusation, enabling Bush's rhetoric to position himself in an argumentatively advantageous location. The performance of what I conceptualize as *patriarchal scolding* was another strategy that tapped into the ideologies of whiteness and masculinity as the underlying frameworks for locating Bush's superior status vis-à-vis his inferior accusers, ultimately disciplining their "bad" behavior. Finally, the display of what I define as *strong, dismissive emotions* allowed for the presentation of Bush's moral, sensitive character as well as the binary othering of his accusers. The subsequent chapters explore each rhetorical and affective strategy in detail in order to reveal

the ideological underpinnings that ultimately resecure the dominant, hegemonic norm of the individualized conception of racism as well as whiteness in general.

3.2. Argument from Fallacy

The most prominent rhetorical strategy used by Bush both immediately following and five years after Kanye West's public statement against him was the argument from fallacy. As I define it, an argument from fallacy is built on the premise that the opposing opinion is based on false claims and thus maintains no merit in its assertion. Put into context, Bush's argument from fallacy declares that he can't be racist because it simply is not true. To achieve this end, Bush's argument is based on two initiatives: his ability to (re)define the situation under scrutiny so as to support his case and positive self-presentation.

In order to prove that the claims made against Bush are, in fact, false, the rhetorical strategy used by Bush was tasked with reframing the conflict in a way that complimented his message. This rhetorical strategy serves a defensive purpose similar to that of apologia. While the root of the word apologia implies that an apology is being made, it is actually the speech of self-defense (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004). Taking this definition into account, the use of an argument from fallacy is a way for Bush's rhetoric to defend his moral character by making new meanings out of the current situation. To reiterate, meaning-making is a material privilege of whiteness with profound effects on structuring the felt realities of society at large. Rhetorical criticism is the tool by which such meaning is assessed. The purpose of (re)writing reality is to meet the needs of the rhetor, whatever those may be in a specific context. In the aftermath of Kanye West's words against Bush following Hurricane Katrina, Bush was presented with a very

delicate situation, for public discourse threatened to unveil the systemic ideologies of whiteness

and individualized racism that was undeniably ingrained in the disaster response.

In a mainstream political culture where racism is often understood as an individual – not

a systemic – issue, the rhetorical strategies Bush used framed the context in a way that reflected

an individualized framework of race and racism. First and foremost, Bush talks about being

called a racist in some way in all of the texts used in this analysis (see Excerpts 2-5). Bush's

rhetoric strategy consequently reframed the charge made against him from a statement that said

he didn't care about black people to "he's a racist" (Excerpts 2-6), thus adopting an

individualized foundation upon which he could base his argument.

Excerpt 2: Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010

BUSH: The other thing that really, *really,* irritated me was when they said my response was slow

because I was a racist.

Excerpt 3: Interview with Brian Williams – December 12, 2005

BUSH: You know, a couple of people said — you know, said, "Bush didn't respond because of

race, because he's a racist.

Excerpt 4: Interview with Matt Lauer on the **Today** *show – November 10, 2010*

BUSH: And ah, nobody wants to be called a racist.

***Excerpt 5: Bush's memoir:* Decision Points**

BUSH: But the suggestion that I was a racist because of the response to Katrina represented an all-time low.

The significance of this act of reframing lies in its ability to shift the focus and content of the ensuing discussion. Dyson (2006) points out that as the face of the government as a whole, "West was thus calling into question […] the apparent lack of political concern by a public figure whose duty it is to direct the resources of the nation to those areas that cry out for address" (p. 29). Therefore, the critique was not necessarily meant to single out Bush as the one and only racist perpetrator guilty of the lacking disaster relief efforts. While it can be said that Kanye's allegation does call into question Bush's attitudes toward African Americans, the heart of the claim was founded on challenging the administration's response and aid given to hurricane victims. One of the main outcomes of Kanye's comment against Bush was attention directed to the institutionalized racism that emerged in the aftermath of Katrina. In critiquing the government's response, the underlying ideologies that informed such (in)action was also called into question. However, Bush's rhetoric redirected attention from this matter by instead reinterpreting the original claim to say "George Bush is a racist." Even when the distinction between Kanye's comment and Bush's interpretation of the charge is made, Bush rhetorically asserts that his version is synonymous to the original (Excerpt 6) when in fact they are two very different statements with two very different implications.

Excerpt 6: Interview with Matt Lauer about Decision Points – November 8, 2010

LAUER: … And at one part of the evening I introduced Kanye West. Were you watching?

BUSH: Nope.

LAUER: You remember what he said?

BUSH: Yes, I do. He called me a racist.

LAUER: Well, what he said was, "George Bush doesn't care about black people."

BUSH: That's, "he's a racist."

But what is it about this rhetorical act that is significant? First, the word "racist" is term

loaded with moral insinuations that has the potential to negatively affect one's reputation

(Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004). Hartman and Squires (2006) also note the political and cultural

baggage that come along with such a term because of the fact that it implies wrongdoing and

assigns blame to a particular individual. "Contemporary race talk, therefore, is strategically

organized to deny racism" (Augoustinos & Every, 2010, p. 251). For example, in their research

on the rhetorical strategies of racism denials, Barnes, Palmary, and Durrheim (2001) concluded

that the fundamental purpose of rhetoric in this context was to separate the rhetor from

attributions of racism. As such, "talk functions not only to align oneself with a particular

viewpoint but also to deny counter viewpoints" (Barnes, Palmary, and Durrheim, 2001, p. 325).

But if the racist label holds so much baggage for an individual navigating a public dialogue

dealing with the issue of race, why would Bush voluntarily make reinscribing the meaning of the

charge to be centered around racism central to his rhetorical strategy?

As I conceptualize it, an argument from fallacy's main rationale is that the

counterargument is false, thus the rhetor's argument is true. The indicted rhetor's main purpose

is to highlight the accuser's claims as unfounded and/or incorrect in order to prove his/her case.

By default, their truth is implied by the other's evident fallacy. In an environment where a racist

designation has negative implications, discursive arguments made by the accused must prove

that the accuser is wrong. Thus, just as it is important for Bush to discursively present himself in

a way that aligns with the normative notions of whiteness, so too is it essential that he rid himself

of a racist charge. By making the accusation made by Kanye explicitly about racism – and not

implicitly about the institutional nature of racism such an allegation also implied – Bush has

rhetorically created a space in which he can counter such a claim. As stated by Barnes, Palmary,

and Durrheim (2001),

> The "I'm not prejudiced" statement serves quite different functions. It is often
>
> used to portray the speaker as a reasonable and nonracist individual and thereby
>
> claim membership of the "moral community" of the nonprejudiced. In this way,
>
> discourse allows for the construction of a particular version of the self and of the
>
> situation, making attitudes something that we negotiate through discourse as
>
> opposed to mental entities that determine what we say. (p. 324)

In this way, Bush's rhetorical move to make the charge about him being a racist gives him the

necessary foundation upon which he can base his argument from fallacy's rationale. Now he can

devote his discursive efforts to disproving that he is a racist instead of examining the systemic

discrimination that burdened Hurricane Katrina and its victims.

This rhetorical act of naming the situation at hand is "rarely innocent but [is] often [a]

strategic project" (Moon & Nakayama, 2005, p. 90), implying that such a performance carries

out a specific function for the rhetor. Since whiteness positions itself apart from racism under the

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trope of colorblindness, one strategic motive of naming the accusation as a charge of racism

against Bush specifically is to set up the concept of racism as something the project can work

against. In other words, by bringing racism to the forefront, a colorblind rhetoric can be

employed to prove Bush's distance and disaffiliation from racist practices. So while it may seem

counterintuitive that such a rhetorical strategy would position Bush in the tumultuous and

treacherous territory of racism, it actually serves as a solid platform from which later rhetorical

strategies can be launched.

By rewording the allegation made against him to one that's explicitly about charges of

racism, Bush's rhetoric is able to redefine the meaning of the accusation in a way that ultimately

guides the way it is handled. But, the rhetorical privilege to have his voice heard in the first place

is a material advantage that the system of whiteness grants its members. So it can be said that the

discursive attempt to rewrite the implication of the accusation could not have been so (or at least

could not have been the same) without the benefit of his position as a white-identified individual.

Thus, by making the claim concentrate on George Bush being a racist, such a rhetorical strategy

allows for the spotlight to be turned away from the larger issues at hand to instead focus on Bush

himself. "This shift in the locus of meaning from the group to the individual creates a special

rhetorical situation: the individual must both make meaning for the self and convince others of

its integrity" (Gresson III, 1995, p. 3). Thus, by uprooting the original message in preference of

an explicit racist charge, Bush's rhetorical strategy has created the space by which his new

meanings will be heard and considered.

With this space for meaning-making secured, the implications of putting forth a new,

alternative truth for the audience to accept can be seen in the ensuing understandings of and

action toward the conflict. According to Martin et al. (1999), "the names or labels, the words we use in regard to events, objects, experiences, and even self-identity, become indicators of possible action, influencing our attitudes and behaviors" (p. 30-31). As a result of shifting the message of the accusation from a critique of the institutionally enacted racist practices in response to Hurricane Katrina to a focus on Bush as an individual, a discussion about systemic racism and the presence and prevalence of whiteness is avoided. In their research of racial apologies, Gordon and Crenshaw (2004) found that there is a typical pattern of behavior in situations in which a racial charge is made:

> There is no mention of the ongoing systemic and institutionalized racism that exists today or any real substantial advocacy of a change in material White privilege. Rather, the apologies are constructed as a response to an accusation about past immoral behavior. (p. 261)

In making the accusation about racism, the subsequent conversation and means of resolution is thus directed to address Bush as an individual and not the institutional issue of racism that was ubiquitous in the disaster response efforts (or lack thereof). "There was no discussion of the myriad ways race informed the social, economic, and political factors that converged long before Katrina made landfall" (powell et al., 2006, p. 64), nor was there a conversation about the implications this historical context plus the aftermath of the storm would have on the survivors of Katrina. Instead, such attention to the individual follows in line with the individualized conception of racism in which the act is isolated to certain people who lack a sufficient moral code as well as to the notion that racism is a performance that occurs only rarely. All attention is

paid to the individual object of the present circumstances, and the issues that really matter –

whiteness and racism as systemic, hegemonic, oppressive ideologies in society – are silenced.

It is important to locate how this individualized ideology of racism manifests, for "how

society frames racism dictates its response to it or lack thereof" (powell et al., 2006, p. 65).

Consequently, the presences and absences of racial discourse signal what functions it performs

for the existence of whiteness and white privilege in society. In the case of whiteness, "rhetorical

silences often protect the invisibility of the White norm in our culture and the material privilege

that accompanies it" (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004, p. 262). Accordingly, how the situation is

managed is guided both by what is said as well as what is not. So by silencing any opportunity

for a larger, systemic critique of the issue of whiteness and racism and their material effects in

favor of presenting the accusation as an explicit charge of racism against Bush, his rhetorical

strategies are able to remap the terrain for understanding and responding to the conflict between

Kanye and Bush as a whole. The outcome of utilizing a rhetoric directed by systemic ideologies

of whiteness and racism is that it "spares [white people] from having to think critically about

their own racial privilege. What's more, it frees whites of culpability in the persistence of racial

disparities and releases them from any obligation to do something about institutionalized racism"

(powell et al., 2006, p. 66). This is the main function of such a rhetorical strategy as reframing:

to evade the need to acknowledge and answer to the accountability for perpetuating

institutionalized racism as well as supporting the persistence of whiteness as the dominant

ideology.

Another way Bush rhetorically positions Kanye West's charge against him as an

argument from fallacy is by purporting that such an accusation resulted from unfounded

perceptions of him by others. By diverting the responsibility from himself to his accusers, Bush is able to rhetorically position himself in a place of privilege and innocence. He establishes this privileged location by highlighting the fallacy of the accusers' claims; because everyone's perception of Bush was wrong, he is right. Again, his discursive move to make such a claim enables him to firmly ground his argument and thus prove his innocence. In this case, the rhetoric of Bush redefines who is to blame in this situation of racial conflict: both society at large as well as Bush's critics and the media.

First, society members are discursively imparted with accountability for perceiving Bush incorrectly. This rhetorical act is most prominent in Bush's memoir where he discusses Hurricane Katrina in some depth.

Excerpt 7: Bush's memoir: **Decision Points**

BUSH: I made an additional mistake by failing to adequately communicate my concern for the victims of Katrina. *This was a problem of perception, not reality*. […] In my thirteen visits to New Orleans after the storm, I conveyed my sincere sympathy for the suffering and my determination to help residents rebuild. Yet many of our citizens, particularly in the African-American community, came away convinced their president didn't care about them. [emphasis added]

Excerpt 8: Bush's memoir: Decision Points

BUSH: [In speaking of the photo taken of him flying over New Orleans] That wasn't how I felt. But once the public impression was formed, I couldn't change it.

By portraying public perceptions of him in this way, Bush's rhetoric is able to suggest that society's opinions did not reflect reality, a claim that rejects the legitimacy and relevance of what others think about the conflict. Moreover, the quote in Excerpt 9 highlighting the public's views as static and unchangeable insinuates an intolerance and close-mindedness that Bush is purportedly above. This is a strong case against the accuracy of an accusation of racism made against him, all the result of his rhetorical moves.

Additionally, Bush's rhetoric implies that these perceptions formed immediately following the event in 2005 were too hasty and emotionally-charged to be considered valid for a defensible argument against him:

Excerpt 9: Bush's memoir: Decision Points

BUSH: Soon after the storm, many made up their minds about what had happened and who was responsible. Now that time has passed and passions have cooled, out country can make a sober assessment of the causes of the devastation, the successes and failures of the response, and, most important, the lessons to be learned.

Just as whiteness establishes rationality and control as some of the normative feelings to be expressed by individuals in the public sphere, this logic carries over to society and their conveyed perceptions of Bush. By implying that the public's opinions were clouded by their emotions, Bush is positioning those individuals in contrast to the dominant norms of white affect, a matter that will be taken up in greater detail below. Since white emotions are grounded in a sense of clear-headedness and composure, the impassioned, unreasonable assessment of Bush by society must therefore be discounted since it does not model the norms of whiteness and white racial performativity.

Moreover, this is an incredibly powerful assertion to make, for in this passage, Bush has rhetorically positioned himself in a superior realm whereby meaning and reality can consequently and "accurately" be defined by him rather than by the public. By presenting society's perceptions of Bush as irrational, Bush's rhetorical strategies have enabled him to step in and fill in the "true" facts that ultimately ground his argument against the racial accusations that were made. In any case, Bush's discursive strategies have colored society's perceptions in a negative light, establishing a firm line of reasoning in his overarching rhetorical goal to argue the fallacy of such a racist charge made against him.

The general public was not the only group to blame for holding invalid perceptions of the president in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The media and critics of Bush were also presented as perpetrators of the ensuing misconceptions. According to Moon and Nakayama (2005), "the media, as a forum for public discourse, reinforce and play a strategic role in constructing social identities" (p. 89). For Bush in the years following the hurricane, he had to combat and negotiate the attention paid by the media to the issue of racism in the disaster response. Such concentration on the racism issue framed Bush in a way where a negative stigma became attached to his identity. Now in 2010, Bush was able to rhetorically contest that stigma by flipping the blame back on the media.

Excerpt 10: Interview with Matt Lauer on the* Today *show – November 10, 2010

BUSH: It wasn't just Kanwe- Kanye West who was talking like that during Katrina. I cited him as an example. I cited others as an example as well.

This quote from Excerpt 10 serves to emphasize the fact that Bush's retort to the accusations made against him is not just to Kanye West specifically. The media and critics of the president were also accountable for charging Bush with the racist stigma. As such, Bush's rhetoric directly acknowledges that many people are responsible for bringing this allegation against him. Just as the rhetorical act of refocusing the content of the claim from "George Bush doesn't care about black people" to "George Bush is racist" changed the meaning and subsequent negotiation of the conflict resolution, so too does highlighting all of the players working against Bush in this situation. By discursively calling attention to those who brought down such an "awful" indictment charge, Bush is able to set the stage to rhetorically positioning himself as the innocent victim of their wrath. Again, Bush is working with binary logics here. Since the process of othering is centered around calling attention to the non-dominant "others" and highlighting their presumed deviance, Bush's rhetoric is able to recenter his position and his argument as the normative focal point from which all judgment is made. Thus, by spotlighting his accusers, Bush's rhetoric is establishing a binary by which guilt and innocence can be distributed to its appropriate characters (the accusers and the accused, respectively). How he does this is revealed in the following rhetorical utterances:

Excerpt 11: Interview with Matt Lauer on the **Today** *show – November 10, 2010*

BUSH: I was talking about an environment in which people were willing to say things that hurt.

Excerpt 12: Bush's memoir: **Decision Points**

BUSH: In a national catastrophe, the easiest person to blame is the president. Katrina presented a political opportunity that some critics exploited for years.

> **Excerpt 13: Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010**
>
> BUSH: There's no justification for that whatsoever, and frankly it speaks to the ugliness of the American political scene.

Rhetorically emphasizing how the media and critics participated in negative behaviors at the expense of Bush is successful in presenting Bush as the nobler person in this situation. Stressing how the media and critics "hurt" him (Excerpt 11; Excerpt 24), were quick to point the finger (Excerpt 12), "exploited" the opportunity to debase him (Excerpt 12), and discussing the "ugliness" of the members of these groups (Excerpt 13) serves to reify Bush's position of innocence and to recenter his privilege to name and redefine the context at hand.

As we have seen thus far, the shift of the accusation to a racist charge accomplishes two ends: 1) it individualizes and isolates the occurrence of racism and the ensuing conversation about such an event away from the institutionalized conception of racism, and 2) it amplifies the allegation. This second point deserves further attention, for in making the accusation explicitly about racism, Bush is able to position himself as the innocent victim of Kanye's violent attack against him. Where Bush was once the villain when the charge was initially brought against him, now, thanks to his strategic rhetorical moves, Bush was able to trade the villain role for that of the victim. He reiterates this point by discursively emphasizing how much of a damaging effect the media and critics had on him by professing how "the legacy of fall 2005 lingered for the rest of my time in office" (Bush, 2010, p. 330) in that their exploitation of him "cast a cloud over my second term" (Bush, 2010, p. 310). Being seen as the victim presents Bush with the greater opportunity for public sympathy in his efforts to recreate the meaning and reality of the racial conflict. Once again, Bush has created a dichotomous representation of his character vis-à-vis

Kanye West. By casting himself as the victim, Kanye must then be the villain in this story line.

This further supports Bush's argument from fallacy, for Kanye's case is discredited by this

antagonist status that has been placed upon him though Bush's amplification of the charge.

Another result of this seemingly simple recasting is Bush's ability to disguise his fallibility in the

government's hurricane response efforts. Instead of focusing on the content of the accusation

itself, attention is now being paid to Kanye's character as the villain in contrast to Bush's

innocence. In so doing, Bush is able to rhetorically maneuver in ways that benefit his motive: to

disclaim any racist allegations and to reaffirm his white privilege.

Finally, Bush was able to rhetorically redefine the content of the broader discussion by

calling attention to the fact that others were affected by the storm as well.

Excerpt 14: Interview with Brian Williams – December 12, 2005

BUSH: … This storm hit all up and down. It hit New Orleans. It hit down in Mississippi too.

And people should not forget the damage done in Mississippi.

WILLIAMS: Biloxi was hit terribly hard.

BUSH: Absolutely, and Pascagoula and Waveland. You know it. You saw it firsthand what it's

like. We had people from all walks of life affected by that storm.

By claiming that "the storm did not discriminate" (Bush, 2010, p. 325), such a rhetorical move

diverts the gaze away from the majority of the victims of the hurricane (a predominately Black,

poor population) to focus on the storm itself and not the government's response in its aftermath.

Such a discursive act also shifts the focus away from the institutional inequities that emerged, yet

another example of the repression of racism conversations to examine the systemic nature of

racial discrimination in our country as well as the recentering of whiteness as a result.

Positive self-presentation is another central means by which an argument from fallacy

can be made. Asserting oneself as moral, honest, and reputable, for example allow the rhetor to

position his/herself in opposition to the accuser. In the context of a racial conflict such as this

one, positive self-presentation (also known as "saving face") on the part of the accused is

incredibly important and valuable to refuting racist allegations. According to Chiang (2010),

self-presentation, or "face," is "a self-image projected in terms of socially approved attributes in

situ" (p. 276). Consequently, how one goes about saving face will reflect the context of the

situation at hand. Since colorblind ideologies are rooted in notions of morality, the need to

positively present oneself becomes a priority for anyone charged with racism. Thus, presenting

oneself positively in specific ways that speak to this enveloping issue of morality that emerges

within an individualized conception of racism is one rhetorical mechanism by which this

discrepancy can be resolved. This "motivation to appear nonprejudiced" (Sommers & Norton,

2006, p. 118) creates a situation for Bush where he must discursively assert his moral integrity as

well as his anti-racist sentiments to achieve this end. The rhetoric used by Bush follows this

same vein in his two methods of positive self-presentation, on a personal and a professional

level. By discursively asserting his morality and anti-racist attitudes in both his personal and

professional lives, Bush is able to accomplish a reification of this colorblind rhetoric as well as to

resecure his white privilege.

Professionally, Bush argues against the racist charge by recounting all of his anti-racist,

"pro-minority" policies as a politician:

> **Excerpt 15: Bush's memoir: Decision Points**
>
> BUSH: I was proud to have earned more black votes than any Republican governor in Texas history. I had appointed African Americans to top government positions, including the first black women national security adviser and the first two black secretaries of state. It broke my heart to see minority children shuffled thought the school system, so I had based my signature domestic policy initiative, the No Child Left Behind Act, on ending the soft bigotry of low expectations. I had launched a $15 billion program to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa. As part of the response to Katrina, my administration worked with Congress to provide historically black colleges and universities in the Gulf Coast with more than $400 million in loans to restore their campuses and renew their recruiting efforts.

By listing all of his political efforts to help minority citizens, Bush is able to rhetorically present himself as someone who couldn't be considered a racist. He also asserts this same, but abbreviated message in his interview with Oprah:

> **Excerpt 16: Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010**
>
> BUSH: And ah, I ah, ah-ah-ah-ah, I put policy in place that I really felt helped [OPRAH: (interjecting) But do you underst--] people from all races in America.

This rhetorical effort to positively self-present serves to support the notion that the accuser's allegation against him is, in fact, false. A "real" racist wouldn't have done so much for "people from all races" (Excerpt 16), and thus Bush cannot be one himself. Bush's past actions and policies for the benefit of minority Americans refute the connection between the slow governmental response to Katrina and racism on his behalf.

On a personal level, Bush's rhetoric portrays his innocence by asserting his antiracist sentiments as well as his good intentions in the aftermath of the hurricane.

Excerpt 17: Bush's memoir: Decision Points

BUSH: I was raised to believe that racism was one of the greatest evils in society.

Because of his claimed-to-be positive, antiracist background, Bush is able to rhetorically assert an ethical self-presentation that stands in contest to the accusation of racism. Here Bush is conflating the idea of care and the absence of racism; because he "cares" about the Black community, he therefore can't be racist. However, this is not the case for any individual. Because racism is institutionalized and often unintentional, racism and care are not correlated. And yet this conflation is the exact message Bush's rhetorical strategy is trying to put forth. He underlines the falsity of the accuser's allegation by equating his current attitudes and practices toward race with the lessons he heard growing up, further emphasizing his truth by default. Bush also stresses this antiracist outlook on the *Today* show with Matt Lauer:

Excerpt 18: Interview with Matt Lauer on the Today show – November 10, 2010

BUSH: I'm not a hater. I didn't hate Kanye West.

…

BUSH: … nobody wants to be called a racist if in your heart you believe in equality of race.

Such an honorable claim to anti-racism rhetorically positions Bush in a place of innocence and integrity. He uses these discursive moves to argue against allegations of racism by portraying his

outlook on race in general in a positive light. Against such claims, how could one argue that

Bush is racist? This is the question Bush's rhetorical strategies aim to raise in order to challenge

and ultimately overthrow the negative and potentially damaging charges made against him.

Bush's rhetoric also attempts to present his thoughts and actions in the aftermath of

Katrina as sympathetic and well-intentioned. As quoted in Marty (1999), Ware and Linkugel

(1973) contend that a self-declared antiracist "'who is charged with some despicable action often

finds a disclaimer of intent as an attractive means of escaping stigma'" (p. 58). Thus, Bush, who

presents himself in progressive, anti-racist ways, can rhetorically maneuver to support such an

argument. Bush's memoir is the most substantive discursive effort to declare these good

intentions:

Excerpt 19: Bush's memoir: **Decision Points**

BUSH: …all I could think about was what the people on the ground were enduring […] I

worried about the people stranded […] I said a silent prayer for their safety.

Furthermore, Bush does not mark race as a relevant element in the context of the storm.

This is a significant absence considering the fact that race was/is such a central aspect of life and

racial affairs in New Orleans (not to mention the rest of the U.S.). In not acknowledging race as

the huge elephant in the room, Bush's rhetorical strategy is able to avoid getting into the

poignant, complex discussion of race in our country, instead focusing his attention on presenting

himself and his argument as the truth by default of his accusers' fallacy.

In presenting himself as this concerned, compassionate individual, Bush is able to

rhetorically defy that he didn't care about Black people. This is used as an argument to disprove

the accuser's claim that Bush's response to Hurricane Katrina was racially discriminatory. By presenting himself positively in regards to race relations – both in his practices and his good intentions – this rhetorical strategy was able support Bush's effort to refute racist stigmas, ultimately working to resecure his position of privilege and the dominant, individualized notion of racism that exists in society.

4. Analysis of Affect & Racial Performativity

4.1. Introduction

The remaining two rhetorical strategies are distinct from the previous chapter in that they incorporate aspects of affective performances as defined by whiteness. In order to fully encapsulate Bush's (and Kanye's) racial performativities, then, it is necessary to illustrate some of their rhetorical enactments. Thus, throughout this chapter I have scattered descriptions of Bush's interviews[7] as well as the initial catalyst when Kanye made his famous statement against Bush. The addition of these narratives will serve to demonstrate how Bush's affective performances take place and what emotions those performances consist of, ultimately aiding in the critique of the systemic ideologies of whiteness and racism that shape such enactments.

September 2, 2005[8]

The camera pans across the TV set, focusing briefly on a solitary trumpet player rounding out his somber tune. As his final notes fades, the camera settles on comedian, Mike Myers, and hip-hop artist, Kanye West. Three, flat-screen TVs are positioned behind the two men, each displaying a different image related to the broadcast; all three transition between various photographs of hurricane survivors, wreckage from the storm, as well as the title of the broadcast, "A Concert for Hurricane Relief," with its NBC logo. Swaths of white cloth extend

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[7] All of Bush's interview transcripts had the corresponding video footage of the conversations with the exception of the interview with Brian Williams. Because that particular interview took place in 2005, it was no longer accessible on the public archives I accessed. This is a noted limitation to this study as a visual representation of Bush's rhetorical strategies at work would provide valuable insight for the analysis of the underlying ideologies at work. However, the remaining interviews present sufficient evidence for the purpose of this project.

[8] See Excerpt 1 for transcript.

from the floor to the ceiling, contrasting against the stark black background that fades into shadows. Both men stand side-by-side. Kanye is wearing a navy blue and white rugby shirt with white detailing overlaying the front. His hands are dug into his white pants, and he stands completely still. Myers is dressed in a black shirt and blazer with faded jeans; he is holding is hands behind his back and shifts awkwardly as he begins speaking.

Myers rocks back and forth on his heels while rushing through his lines. The monotony of the voice and the speed with which he is talking alludes to the teleprompter that is probably standing next to the rolling camera. With the end of Myers' piece, Kanye clears his throat before beginning his turn. Myers looks at him briefly before returning his gaze to the camera/teleprompter. As he begins, Kanye's speech sinks into a rhythmic pattern, breaking up his sentences to have matching cadences and always ending each phrase with the same rising inflection. At each break in between cadences, he takes a visible breath, almost gasping at the end of each phrase. As he starts talking about his own participation (or lack thereof) in hurricane relief initiatives, his speech picks ups pace, resulting in much shorter, but faster, phrase cadences. This quickened but condensed pattern continues for the remainder of Kanye's turn, capturing in audible form the rushed and fragmented thoughts coming from Kanye's mouth.

Myers expression remains unchanged throughout Kanye's entire discourse; the only indication that he is grasping what is happening and what Kanye is saying is through his increasing, nervous glances over to his speaking partner. In his last glance at Kanye to ensure he is done talking, Myer takes a deep breath, turns back to the camera, anxiously scratches his nose and begins reading from the teleprompter again. The monotony of Myers' tone remains from his previous lines, but his speed is markedly faster. He reads his lines quickly, taking no pauses in

between sentences, as if he were rushing to get to the end of the script. Upon reaching the end of

his lines, Myers gives a slight and singular nod as if in a bow to signal the conclusion of his part.

As soon as Myers has finished, Kanye jumps in confidently and defiantly to say, "George Bush

doesn't care about black people." Kanye's mouth shuts and he stands there waiting in such a way

that announces the end of the segment. Myers takes a deep breath and looks at Kanye upon the

conclusion of his statement at which point the camera abruptly cuts to comedian Chris Tucker.

Tucker is standing backstage in front of a refrigerator covered in pictures, papers, and

magnets. A sign for the relief concert is hung in the background with two yellow ladders leaning

up against the wall nearby. As the camera refocuses on Tucker, he is glancing earnestly offstage

as though someone from the crew was waiting to give him the signal that he was on air. Myers'

voice is heard over this new image, feebly asking for viewers to call before his microphone is cut

off for Tucker to begin speaking. In a striped, button-down shirt and with a piece of paper in

hand, Tucker begins talking uncertainly, pausing frequently and occasionally stumbling over his

words. The redundancy of his message and his hesitancy in formulating his thoughts implied that

Tucker was working without the help of a teleprompter in this segment. He gestures with open

hands sporadically throughout his speech. At the end, however, his right hand closes into a fist

which he pumps rhythmically and assertively, punctuating each beat of his closing sentences and

eventually each repeated "please" and "help." He concludes his speech with an affirmative

"thank you," winking and pointing at the camera.

November 10, 2010[9]

Two days after their extensive and thorough interview covering Bush's memoir, *Decision Points*, Matt Lauer and George Bush meet again for a promotional appearance on the *Today* show. A rather beige set is the backdrop of this *Today* show interview alcove. Beige walls meet the beige carpeting upon which beige chairs are positioned perpendicularly. The only color in the room comes from the band of blue glass tiles that stretch around the circumference of the set. A side table sits in between the two chairs upon which some books and a flower pot have been placed. To the right of the set and next to George Bush's chair is a beige footstool with a decorative tray and knick-knacks. Both men are wearing suits and ties for the occasion, with Bush patriotically wearing red, white, and blue and his American flag pin on his jacket lapel.

As the interview begins, Bush posture takes a somewhat awkward form. With legs crossed and hands folded in his lap, his cocks his head to the side while listening to Lauer. This may not sound all that awkward at first, but his head was cocked just a little too far, his hands placed a little too precisely on his knee, his legs seem stiffly entangled, and upon closer inspection, his grin looked more like grimace. Bush simply appears uncomfortable, in this pose physically and perhaps in this situation as well.

Lauer introduces the Kanye West topic, specifically what Bush has written about the incident in his memoir, very early on in the interview. Now, with hands gripping the arms of his chair, Bush acknowledges the subject with a quick nod of the head and an affirmative "yeah" over Lauer's dialogue. Rather than go into what exactly Bush had written, Lauer begins by

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[9] See Appendix 4 for transcript.

speaking about Kanye and the controversy his accusation made in the media. When Lauer tells

Bush that he spoke with Kanye on the show only the day before, Bush gruffly feigns interest.

After a brief introduction of Kanye's "changed tone," the screen cuts to footage of Kanye's

interview. Kanye's body language makes his dialogue appear to be a confession more than an

interview. His eyes are diverted downward as if in shame of what he's done. His hands are

folded in his lap and his legs are squirming nervously. As the footage of Kanye continues rolling,

the screen switches to a picture-in-picture-like format where viewers can see both Kanye and

Bush looking on. Aside from blinking, there is no change in Bush's calm expression as he listens

to the remainder of the footage. Upon returning to the current interview with Lauer and Bush,

Lauer suggests that Kanye has regret for what he said and asks for Bush's reaction. Bush takes a

deep breath and affirmatively expresses his appreciation for Kanye's words. He then takes a

moment, looking off into the distance as if he's contemplating a new thought before continuing

on. His facial expressions remain rather unemotional until he mentions his other critics, at which

point he makes a sour face, suggesting those "other examples" were not satisfactory.

Bush gestures here and there, but for the most part, he remains still in his responses.

When asked if his faith would allow him to forgive Kanye, Bush replies immediately that it

would, shrugging as if that was an obvious question. Struggling for a moment to find his words

in continuing on with his thoughts, Bush stares downward shaking his head just slightly but very

quickly. His demeanor throughout most of this segment is calm, composed, and matter-of-fact

with very few signals of an affective reaction. It is not until Bush starts talking about his personal

beliefs in "the equality of race" that his face softens momentarily and a subtle smile crosses his

lips. But soon thereafter, he returns to his stolid, cool manner as the interview moves on to other

subjects.

4.2. Patriarchal Scolding

Now that some narrative examples have been presented, an assessment of Bush's remaining rhetorical strategies can be conducted. As was (and will be) seen, one such discursive maneuver that emerged in this analysis was what I conceptualize as patriarchal scolding. In this particular strategy, the rhetor asserts his masculine, superior status to discipline a wrongful, child-like delinquent. In doing so, the rhetor is able to present his case favorably and acceptably, simultaneously discrediting the argument of his accusers. This analysis will first look at how the accusers are infantilized to establish this superior/inferior hierarchy. The resulting reification of Bush's privileged status as a white male will conclude this section.

Within Bush's various discursive responses to Kanye West's allegation of racial discrimination, patriarchal scolding emerged as both a rhetorical strategy as well as an example of affect and identity performativity. This tactic is unique in that it also taps into the issue of masculinity as both a complimentary and constructive identity marker in relationship to race and whiteness. As stated by Moon (1999) "'whiteness' is complex and crisscrossed by other identities that can change its meaning(s)" (p. 179). Thus, the introduction of white masculinity into the context of white rhetoric shapes and guides ensuing understandings of self and other as well as multicultural interactions. Additionally, the affective norms supported by these ideological systems dictate and confine the "proper" ways of performing racial identities and their corresponding emotions. The complexities of these two issues will be explored in this section as it relates to Bush's rhetoric and affect in light of racist accusations made against him following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The function of patriarchal scolding in his discourse manifested in his infantilizing of the accuser which ultimately enabled his rhetoric to recenter his

place of privilege as a white male in the context of this racial conflict. Similarly, Bush's patriarchal performance served to reify existing dominant norms of affect and identity performance, positioning himself in the superior location and simultaneously framing Kanye and Bush's other critics in a negative light.

A look into the ideology of masculinity and patriarchy proves beneficial to understanding the intricacies of Bush's rhetoric and affect as it manifested in response to the allegations of racism made against him. This gendered ideology is intimately interwoven into issues of the privileges of whiteness, for "whiteness as a strategic formation of racial privilege [is] enmeshed with other social identities such as heterosexuality and masculinity" (Moon & Nakayama, 2005, p. 89). Consequently, it is important to note that, like whiteness, masculinity also rhetorically and affectively establishes itself as the norm by which all others are compared and disciplined. As it influences discourse and identity performance, masculinity and whiteness have profound effects on individuals' worldviews and, when put together, racial and/or gender dialogues and displays.

Thus, before looking into the ways that masculinity and patriarchy emerge within Bush's rhetoric, it is useful to explore how whiteness and masculinity come to be related as rhetorical, affective, and ideological scripts. Both ideologies are deeply enmeshed in the systemic institutions of our society. As historical, social, and cultural constructs, these ideological systems have material effects for all that manifest politically, economically, socially, and psychologically (Coe et al., 2007; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Masculinity and whiteness are dynamic and contextual, always shifting to reassert their dominance in accordance to the situation at hand. Separately, "people are constructed as masculine by positioning themselves, or by positioning others, as embodying a set of cultural practices and expressions that carry the currency of

manhood" (Coe et al., 2007, p. 33). This "currency" or set of norms emerges in masculinity's

call for rationality, assertiveness, dominance, discipline, strength (physically, emotionally, etc.),

and success, to name a few. These masculine norms guide understandings of the self and of

others and have a strong hand in directing one's rhetoric and identity performances. Together,

both the norms of whiteness and the norms of masculinity are used as the guiding scripts by

which rhetoric and the expression of emotions must follow. Thus, their complexity as concurrent

ideologies lies in both their contradictions and their consistencies, the ways in which their

normative standards work together or against each other to position oneself in a place of

privilege or oppression.

Since masculinity is upheld as the dominant norm in U.S. culture, those who qualify as

members of this group enjoy a position of privilege. Whereas whiteness serves as the

institutional ideology that supports and maintains white supremacy, patriarchy emerges in a

similar fashion to bolster the dominance of masculinity as the prevailing gender ideology. It must

be remembered, however, that race and gender work simultaneously to determine one's

membership into a privileged group. As such, the combination of the systemic ideologies of

whiteness and masculinity situate those individuals who can claim such an identity in an

advantageous location. Even within the realm of whiteness, for example where ultimate privilege

is assumed to be granted to those who identify as white, patriarchy can further stratify privileged

statuses within the dominant white group based on gender as a main identity marker. Nakayama

and Krizek (1995) further this point by highlighting how "white males, by occupying a more

strategic position than white females, have been accorded essentially a label-free existence" (p.

302). Therefore, asserting one's whiteness as well as one's masculinity is a powerful rhetoric and

identity performance by which a hierarchy of privilege and oppression can be reinstated.

Before moving forward with the analysis to see how Bush's rhetorical strategies and affective displays reflected and supported the norms of whiteness and masculinity, it's necessary to outline the relationship between affect and rhetoric. Affect is a part of discourse. It unavoidably finds its way into the conversation and has a profound impact on what meaning(s) are being communicated and how that is being done. Hence, a rhetorical analysis benefits greatly from the consideration of the affective performances that also manifest in these circumstances and in what ways those performances speak to the dominant ideologies guiding thought and action. Thus, Bush's emotional displays will be assessed in conjunction to his rhetoric. What he says is surely important in such situations, but *how* he says it can drastically change the tone and the outcome of his message. For example, Bush's calm demeanor throughout his interview with Lauer on the *Today* show with only occasional moments of bitter facial expressions says a lot about how Bush is managing his affective performances. As seen already, descriptions of Bush's emotional displays will be integrated into this rhetorical critique in order to solidify how his discursive and affective performance supports the ideological systems of whiteness and masculinity. My definition of patriarchal scolding includes the assertive use of reprimands to position Bush as the all-knowing father figure in contrast to the immature and irrational accusers. The following excerpts demonstrate these declarative, disciplinary statements.

Excerpt 20: Interview with Brian Williams – December 12, 2005

BUSH: Somebody I heard — you know, a couple of people said — you know, said, 'Bush didn't respond because of race, because he's a racist.' That is absolutely wrong. And I reject that. Frankly, that's the kind of thing that — you can call me anything you want — but *do not call me a racist*. [emphasis added]

Excerpt 21: Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010

BUSH: It's one thing to say you thought he could have done a better job, he maybe should have

put troops in. *You don't call a man a racist*. [emphasis added]

Excerpt 22: Interview with Matt Lauer about **Decision Points** *– November 8, 2010*

BUSH: It's one thing to say, you know, "I don't appreciate the way he's-- handles his business."

It's another thing to say, "This man's a racist." I resent it. It's not true.

As it pertains to this particular event of racial conflict, the roots of patriarchal scolding lie

in the individualization of the racial charge made by Kanye West. Bush took the message put

forth by Kanye as an attack on his personal character and subsequently framed his rhetorical

response along this line of understanding (Excerpt 3; Excerpt 6). The result of this discursive

move was a shift away from a discussion about the systemic nature of racism in our society as

well as the oppressive nature of whiteness in such a context. So in this situation where the public

institutionalization of these issues becomes privatized and personal, Bush's rhetoric attempts to

redress the conflict at hand (and ultimately defend his position of privilege) by reprimanding

Kanye and the others who made the racist accusation against him. Founding this rhetorical

maneuver upon the dominant ideology of patriarchy enables Bush to claim this superior position

of privilege. Furthermore, his racial performativity reflects the emotions triggered by such an

attack, a topic that will be explored in more detail in the following section.

For Bush, drawing from both the normative standards of whiteness and masculinity was

one way to discursively and affectively bolster his defense against the racial allegations made

against him. According to Coe et al. (2007), "when the nation – and, by extension, the

presidency – is challenged, performing familiar varieties of masculine identity is one way a

president might seek to assert control" (p. 35). The privilege of a masculine/patriarchal ideology

enables Bush to take command of the conversation and how the conflict is subsequently

managed, ultimately recentering his superior status.

        To do this, normative principles of whiteness and masculinity such as rationality and

assertiveness emerge in both Bush's rhetoric as well as his emotional displays. As "the affective

ruler that measures and naturalizes white feelings as the norm" (Muñoz, 2006, p. 680), the

system of whiteness defines the proper emotions to be felt as well as the acceptable way of

expressing them. The ensuing rhetoric models this guide to behavior by highlighting only those

emotions that are deemed appropriate. For example, the promptness of Bush's responses to

questions from Lauer and Oprah as well as the certainty of his statements all work to present

Bush as a confident, composed individual. The result of this performance is the assertion of

control with which Bush can use to his advantage in his ensuing rhetoric. Thus, the material

display of normative emotions such as assuredness and composure provides the foundation upon

which Bush's rhetoric will be read. When modeled accurately after the systems of whiteness and

patriarchy, identity performativities allow for the use of rhetorical strategies to control the

meaning-making function of discourse that shapes the felt realities of those involved.

        The assertive demand to not call Bush a racist – as seen in Excerpt 20 when he states,

"you can call me anything you want — but do not call me a racist" – has strong disciplinary

implications for the target(s) of such a rhetorical move. Sloop (2000) states that "mainstream

discourse illustrate[s] the rhetorically material ways that those who do challenge dominant

ideology are ideologically disciplined" (p. 169). These three instances above demonstrate both

the rhetorical and performative move to discipline those who challenged the dominant ideology

of whiteness and masculinity/patriarchy. In Bush's rhetoric, there are two corrective methods

that emerge in his discourse: direct commands and the suggestion of a better/more proper

alternative of critique. First, the direct commands (such as "You don't call a man a racist" in

Excerpt 21) define what should *not* be done, in this case, to accuse Bush for being a racist.

Secondly, the suggestion of a better alternative to critique ("It's one thing to say you thought he

could have done a better job" (Excerpt 21) is an assertion that Bush knows best and thus his

message should be accepted over the others'. These rhetorical acts ultimately perform the

function of meaning (re)definition that Bush had already employed in his argument from fallacy

strategy which has significant effects on the way the circumstance is viewed and how the

ensuing rhetorical efforts to resolve the conflict are handled.

Defining what should not be done – also known as rule-making – is a powerful rhetorical

strategy for assigning meaning to reality. "Rules in the social system of 'race' relations play a

vital role in 'the construction of meaning,' as well as the application of 'sanctions' […] Rules

represent knowledge of procedure or mastery of techniques of doing social activity" (Guess,

2006, p. 662). Rules for behavior also position the conflict's participants in ways that benefit

Bush's privilege as a white male. In making his direct demands during his interviews with Oprah

and Lauer, the sternness and insistence of his tone not only implied a personal sense of

conviction about the matter, but also established Bush in a superior position, one from which

discipline can occur. We now turn to Bush's interview with Oprah to see just how this was

accomplished by his performance.

November 9, 2010[10]

Oprah and George W. Bush sit on an expansive talk show set. The curved, asymmetrical stage maps out different alcoves and nooks throughout the space. The stage floor itself is waxed so much that it reflects the steely blue background with "Oprah" sprawled in huge, white letters projected on the main screen behind the two individuals like a mirror. Those blue walls are marked by angular recesses – in stark contrast to the rounded edges of the stage – that further demarcate where one stage alcove ends and another begins. Free-standing flat-screen televisions are positioned in the unused nooks where they too display Oprah's signature. In the alcove where Bush and Oprah are situated, a large ivory rug lies on the stage floor. The two sit in ivory armchairs positioned perpendicular to each other so that the live audience can see both of their faces. Between their chairs stand two small side tables where glasses of water, and Oprah's notes, lie. Both are dressed professionally, Bush in a grey suit and navy blue tie, and Oprah in a navy blue dress with silvery grey pinstripes. Two silver bracelets grace Oprah's wrists, and the soles of her shoes glow a Christian Louboutin red.

Bush initiates the racism topic by making a rather charged statement, "The other thing that really, *really,* irritated me was when they said my response was slow because I was a racist." Upon each remark of "really," Bush nods his head in emphasis, with the second utterance being the most forceful. As he continues with his statement, his jaw is clenched and tense, and he shifts in his chair, settling into a new position. When Oprah interjects to provide the background context of the racist charge, Bush looks away and down then back to Oprah, pursing his lips, and shaking his head in response to Oprah's narration. In her pause before going on with the story,

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[10] See Appendix 3 for transcript.

George quietly but assertively murmurs that the charge "really hurt." He says this, again, looking away and down, with a small shake to his head. As Oprah goes on reading an excerpt from Bush's memoir, *Decision Points*, Bush closes his eyes, slowly shakes his head, and licks his lips, as if those words are so repulsive he can't help but physically express that revulsion.

Throughout most of Oprah's speaking and even into the beginning of his response to her, Bush does not make eye contact. It is not until he says "don't ever accuse me of being racist," that his eyes lock on Oprah's. When making such a statement, his eyebrows are raised, but yet there is sense of gentleness to his eyes and mouth. He is not necessarily attacking Oprah, but he is obviously upset. When he goes on to present his case for implementing racially-sensitive policies as president, his eyes find their way back down in front of him. As he makes this claim, he shrugs his shoulders and puckers his lips in a tentatively suggestive way, as if to imply that such an effort (making policies that helped "people of all races") was worthy of consideration if not acceptance. Again, when mulling over why someone would make such a charge against him, Bush's eye contact reconnects with Oprah's only to divert away once more. He emphasizes the statement "There's no justification for that whatsoever" with a head nod to every beat of the sentence.

While Oprah takes her turn to try to clarify to Bush why some people would take offense to his actions, Bush looks at her with his head tilted to the side and a gentle grin on his face. As she is speaking, his grin fades; he raises his eyebrows and nods his head grandly and slowly as if in a moment of realization and agreement simultaneously. Bush begins speaking to Oprah's question of whether he can recognize other's perceptions of his actions during and after Katrina before she can even finish. While responding, Bush's eyes wander somewhere above out in the

audience but never really focusing on anyone or anything in particular. His head nods

rhythmically while he speaks; he brings his right hand up in a fist to further punctuate the weight

of the accusation. As soon as he speaks the word "racist," his eyes go back to Oprah. At this

same moment, Bush's eyes narrow as if exploring Oprah's face for signs of her understanding

his message. All the while, Oprah looks at him with a furrowed brow as if she is captivated

and/or concerned. Bush continues with his turn to bring home his point that such a charge hurt

him and such a charge should not be made. The final strike with his fist comes down when he

asserts that the charge was "disgusting." He physically demarcates the consistency of his

reactions even with such temporal distance between them by gesturing to his feelings today to

his right and the emotions felt then to his left, as though those sentiments can be placed in either

location. When Bush presents alternative means of critique, his speech speeds up slightly and he

gestures distinctly. Before going on, he takes a moment to shake his head and purse his lips as if

previewing what he is about to say next. Upon the next sentence when he assertively declares

that "you don't call a man a racist," he speaks at his original pace and he reverts back to the

rhythmic nodding he used before. His eyes dart quickly to Oprah's before finding their place

back downward as he concludes the conversation.

Particularly evident in the Oprah interview, Bush's body language and facial expressions

suggest a patronizing attitude. The tilting of his head, the small grins while listening to Oprah

speak, and the inquiring eye contact when presenting his case implied a sense of condescension

in his demeanor. This point has not been made to say that Bush was directly confronting Oprah,

but rather that this emotional performance functioned to establish a patriarchal tone and

hierarchical status for Bush. In other words, by presenting a normative performance of

masculinity that is grounded in notions of male dominance and authority, Bush is able to suggest

his superior status, thus positioning himself and his argument in that superior site. Therefore, the

subsequent act of disciplinary rhetoric implies a superior moral location for the disciplinarian

and an inferior, immoral one for the disciplined.

Bush recreates and redefines the meaning of the accusation itself in order to guide the

ensuing response to it by himself and others. Bush's rhetoric attempts meaning-making here by

critiquing the behavior and legitimacy of his accusers. Bush's rhetorical strategies work to

belittle the accusers through the infantilization that patriarchal scolding attempts. By infantilizing

the accuser through disciplinary nature of this patriarchal rhetoric, Bush discursively repositions

Kanye and Bush's critics as unreliable and even irrational – thus discrediting any of their claims

made against him – as well as redefines "proper" behavior for critiquing a president. The

utilization of reprimands such as Bush's implies that a breach of rational affective decorum has

occurred, and the culprit is therefore worthy of rhetorical discipline. In sum, a patriarchal,

corrective rhetoric has distinct effects on the targets of its discursive acts via infantilization.

But how is this infantilization able to take place? How is Bush able to rhetorically

position his accusers in an inferior status by scolding them? As was the case with racial

identities, the concept of binaries comes into play in the disciplinary nature of Bush's discourse.

As stated by Coe et al. (2004), "binary discourse requires a central organizing object that

provides a foundational meaning to the surrounding language and emphases […] that is, the

audience must have strong beliefs and an interpretation perceived as widely shared about the

object" (p. 235). By drawing upon the discursive and affective norms of whiteness and

masculinity, Bush is able to position himself in a way that asserts the privilege that corresponds

with these identity markers. Hayes and Juárez (2009) point out that whiteness in particular "was

invented and continues to be maintained to serve as the dominant and normal status against

which Racial Others are measured. Whiteness serves to make 'others' less privileged, less

powerful, and less legitimate" (p. 740). It can be argued that masculinity and patriarchy serve a

similar function. In other words, by behaving in a manner that matches the dominant norms of

whiteness and masculinity such as rationality, control, and orderliness, Bush discursively

presents himself in ways that appease to and are accepted by these dominant standards.

Therefore, by rhetorically performing his whiteness and maleness in a dominantly normative

way, he is able to present himself as the "central organizing object" (Coe et al., 2004, p. 235)

from whom others are judged.

      Moreover, Bush's affective performance responds to the behavior of the other serving as

a critique of their character. In his interview with Oprah, his visible reaction (the shaking of his

head, and evident revulsion) to her reading from his memoir about what was said against him

revealed a lot about the acceptability and respectability of his critics' behavior. The result of this

rhetorical act is the positioning of Bush as the valiant, logical, noble "father-like" figure up

against an immature, irrational, dishonest other. So if Bush enacts a corrective rhetoric counter to

the accusers' allegations of him, this discursive act implies that the accusers are in the wrong.

Bush as the disciplinarian suggests morality, whereas the role of the disciplined signifies moral

lack. This again follows in line with a binary framework, for "binary oppositions inherently

suggest competition between two forces […] [and] binary concepts almost without exception

have moral power" (Coe et al., 2004, p. 237). And in such a context where morality has acute

significance (due to the moral baggage of a racist charge), Bush's ability to position himself as

the ethical character up against the binary opposite is a result of both his privilege as a white

male as well as his patriarchal discourse and performance of reprimanding the other.

The result of this binary positioning has effects on both Bush and his accusers. By redefining the role of the accusers through the infantilization of his patriarchal discourse, Bush discredits their message(s) in favor of his own, for it is "by defining the boundaries of a group, [that] a speaker defines the entitlements of that group" (Augoustinos & Every, 2007, p. 132). In other words, the framing of Kanye and Bush's critics in this inferior way enables Bush's rhetoric to reverse the impact of their original message as well as limit their future ability to engage in the conversation and be heard. This is most clearly seen in the clip of Kanye's retraction of his charge on the *Today* show. While such an accusation was certainly controversial, it also held a lot of validity in critiquing the institutionalized response to hurricane victims. However, I would argue that the repositioning of Kanye in such an infantilized and negative way resulted in him renouncing his own assertion, which ultimately undermines any opportunity to unveil and challenge the ideological systems that created this situation in the first place. This also sets up a cautionary tale for the future. By withdrawing his comment against Bush, Kanye's actions discourage any further critiques of father-like figures such as Bush to be made again. The images of Bush as the noble father and Kanye as the repenting "child" are now present in our consciousnesses, serving as a direct example of what should never happen again. Therefore, in redefining his accusers' status through the infantilization of patriarchal scolding, Bush's rhetoric decidedly shifts the ensuing conversation and actions made to resolve the racial conflict at hand.

It is also important to acknowledge Bush's role as the president of the United States. Throughout history (and until our country elects a female to the presidency), the president has been conceptualized as the national "father." He is who the rest of the nation turns to in times of crisis to make sense of the world around us. And as the father of the nation, the president looks out for and takes care of his country, just like a father would care for his family. In this way,

Bush's position as (former) president grants him an accepted place of patriarchal superiority from which he can speak down to and discipline the rest of the nation.

By rhetorically engaging in patriarchal discourse, Bush is able to resecure his place of privilege as a dominant (and dominating) white male. To reiterate, "'whiteness' as an invisible discourse that constructs invisible racialized subjects, […] is never neutral, nor innocent" (Hasian & Nakayama, 1998, p. 184). Thus, the rhetoric that surrounds the ideology of whiteness serves to meet strategic ends: to maintain its privilege in a racial hierarchy. But as the discourse and ideology are both rendered invisible, so too are its felt consequences on the oppressed minority as well as the dominant majority.

> Whites as the privileged group take their identity as the norm and the standard by which other groups are measured, and this identity is therefore invisible, even to the extent that many whites do not consciously think about the profound effect being white has on everyday lives. (Martin et al., 1999, p. 28)

For Bush, his patriarchal scolding of his accusers calls attention to their inferior status rather than exploring the issue of the institutionalization of whiteness and patriarchy as main players in the rhetoric's poignancy. The disciplinary rhetoric of Bush in his response to the racist charge made against him diverts the gaze from these systemic ideologies to the subjecthood of his accusers. But it is exactly through its invisibility that whiteness and patriarchy are sustained (Gordon & Crenshaw, 2004).

According to Nakayama and Krizek (1995), "the discursive frame that negotiates and reinforces white dominance in U.S. society operates strategically. […] this strategic rhetoric is

not itself a place, but it functions to resecure the center, the place for whites" (p. 295). The

simple act of making assertive demands implies that Bush has the power and privilege to do so.

However, it is the acceptance of this rhetorical act by the accusers and the outside audience that

signifies the successful attainment of his goal. In other words, Bush's efforts to rhetorically

recenter his place of privilege is not a given. Hypothetically, he can make discursive moves to

achieve such an end and still fail. His success depends on the tolerance and recognition of such

rhetorical acts by those who are involved in the conversation either directly or indirectly so.

Therefore, by not critiquing Bush further for redefining the allegation or for attempting to scold

them for speaking out, the accusers ultimately cede their leverage in the conflict, enabling Bush

to conquer the upper hand and guide the subsequent conversation. "This recentering of whiteness

ensures that the focus of the discussion remains on white people" (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 156)

in such a way that their participation in and accountability for oppressive structures is not

revealed. As such, the recentering of white privilege depends on both the rhetorical and affective

assertion of whiteness as the dominant ideology as well as the acceptance of that discursive act

by the oppressed minority participants.

All told, patriarchal scolding served as a powerful rhetorical strategy whereby Bush could

draw from his white and male privilege to infantilize the accuser, ultimately securing his place of

power. The direct demands to not accuse Bush of being a racist are rooted in the normative

standards of whiteness, masculinity/patriarchy, and affect that imply an entitlement by the rhetor

to make such commands. In addition, the offering of better alternatives to critiquing his behavior

and the emotive reaction to their actions against him suggests the immaturity and infantilization

of the accusers in contrast to Bush's all-knowing status as the disciplinarian. In performing these

rhetorical and affective functions, Bush's discourse is able to redefine the character of the

accuser and the accused, assigning a subordinate, immature, and immoral role to the accuser in binary contrast to Bush's morality, authority, and good judgment. Additionally, his patriarchal performance disciplines us into knowing and speaking right from wrong; this is what fathers (and presidents) are expected to do. Bush's rhetorical strategy maintains that father-like figures such as the fact that the President of the United States should not be challenged, thus discouraging future critiques. In performing these functions, Bush's rhetorical strategy renders his racial and gendered privilege invisible, thus recentering his position of opportunity and advantage in the racial hierarchy of society.

4.3. Strong Dismissive Emotional Responses

In his various responses to the allegations of racism made against him following Hurricane Katrina, the rhetorical expression of strong, dismissive emotions performs many functions that aid in the reification of whiteness and racism ideologies. First, Bush's display of emotions outlines the intelligible and accepted framework for racial performativity created by whiteness. Since ideological systems like whiteness have such influence over affective performances, the ability to unmask those normative principles is fruitful in assessing why Bush's emotions may have taken their particular form. In the context of his rhetorical recovery, the expression of emotions enables Bush to discursively present himself as a moral, sensitive individual in line with the individualized conception of racism. Thirdly, his emotional response to the racist accusations is a way to, once again, redefine the meaning and reality of the racial conflict by critiquing the behavior of the accuser through binary othering. Particular events warrant particular emotions that support a particular framework. With this in mind, Bush's emotional response is marked as proper. Finally, this rhetorical strategy relates very much to the

previous two strategies of the argument from fallacy and patriarchal scolding in a variety of ways. In regards to patriarchal scolding, Bush rhetorically recharacterizes the accuser, thus shifting the blame and rendering his white privilege invisible. And like the argument from fallacy, meaning-making becomes an integral component of this discursive strategy's function and outcome, serving to resecure Bush's white privilege and innocence, arguably the main consequence of his rhetorical response.

The discussion of the racism and whiteness – especially in the context of the racial conflict being considered here – would be incomplete without further reflection on emotion and racial performativity. Solomon et al., state that "race is a contentious issue and emotion and pain are part of the process" (p. 164). Because race and whiteness shape individuals' lives in very tangible and profound ways, emotions are inevitably a part of their everyday realities and thus impact the performance of their identities. Muñoz (2000) defines emotion as "the active negotiations of people within their social and historical matrix" (p. 71). The distinction between Brownness, Blackness, and whiteness encompasses the "affective difference" that emerges for those within the racial hierarchy. Because race has such a strong hand in shaping one's access to social, political, and economic opportunities and resources, and because emotions reflect that context in which individuals navigate their day-to-day lives, the emotions felt and the subsequent performances of those feelings is markedly different between and across white people and non-white individuals.

The rhetorical expression of emotion can serve to reify and/or challenge the dominant ideologies and discourses that command the societal circumstances of the time. According to Barnes, Palmary, and Durrheim (2001),

[emotions] are not stable individual traits but are variable expressions that are

used strategically in shifting contexts. In other words, discursive accounts identify

a close relationship between context and opinion and emphasize an analysis of

context in the interpretation of opinions. (p. 324)

The "active negotiation" (Muñoz, 2000, p. 71) and discursive performance of emotions and racial identity are undeniably guided by the dominant ideological system of whiteness. As a guide for what emotions are acceptable and preferred as well as a guide for how those emotions and identities are to be expressed, whiteness has created an intelligible framework whereby controlled rationality is favored over all else. By staying in line with the normative standards of white affect – that is, by displaying acceptable emotions and in the correct way – Bush is able to (re)assert his authority in this situation. At the same time, the use of binary othering is used to cast Kanye's emotions as unacceptable and improper in contrast to Bush's normative white feelings.

Because white feelings that adhere to the white register are established as the norm, a clear outline is established whereby proper emotions and their performances are delineated. In regards to *what* is deemed desirable, reasonableness, clear-headedness, restraint, and maturity make the list. Not only are these emotions preferred over others, but they also hold more weight, more validity in the public sphere as a means of bolstering one's reputation and credibility. Whiteness also dictates *how* these emotions are to be expressed. While the display of emotions (as long as they are the correct emotions) is acceptable, there is a limit as to how much, how intensely, and in what ways those affects are to be performed. There is such a thing as too much emotion when it comes to racial performativity. Even if one's emotions fall within whiteness'

normative definitions, there is the potential to be excessive and thus be perceived by others

negatively. Conversely, too little emotion in certain contexts signals detachment and apathy

which does not serve an individual's case if he/she is working to save face over a contentious

issue. So for Bush in this situation, he has to navigate the confines of the norms of white affect as

dictated by whiteness. In his effort to denounce the racist charge made against him and preserve

and defend his privileged position, Bush has to make sure to express the right emotions, the right

amount of those emotions, and to perform those emotions in the right way.

With this ideological framework in mind, Bush's performances responding to the racist

accusation made against him adhere to these rules. Even though he expresses anger and disgust

at the charge (and suggestively at the people who made it), for example, he does not overreact.

We now turn to the final interview description of the in-depth conversation between Bush and

Matt Lauer about *Decision Points* to illustrate these affective performances:

November 8, 2010[11]

In the middle of a dark, dull grey stage set sit Matt Lauer and George W. Bush. The only

lighting comes from two lights shining directly down from above, one over each man's head.

The resulting ambiance is reminiscent of a criminal interrogation, where the subject is

spotlighted while the periphery disappears into shadows. A polished wood table stands between

the two men who sit facing each other. A lamp, some books, and a potted plant at the far end of

the table are a feeble addition to the scenery. At the other end of the table, Lauer sits upright,

attentive and engaged, while Bush sits back in the leather desk chair with both hands on the table

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[11] See Appendix 2 for transcript.

as if he is bracing himself for something. Before them lie two glasses of water. Lauer's notes and

a pen are spread out in front of him, and he holds his reading glasses as an extension of his

gesturing hands. Both men are dressed in suits and ties, the only real distinction in their

wardrobes being Bush's American flag pin on the right lapel of his suit jacket. There is a somber

stillness in the room as the two calmly converse. Throughout the interview – which covers

everything from Bush's inauguration to 9/11 to his mother's miscarriage – still images and video

footage are used sporadically to visually enhance the story being told.

The interview does not entirely take place in the shadowy set where we first see the two

men; a portion of their conversation is held in Bush's church in Texas, the same Methodist

church he attended as a child and where he married his wife, Laura. In this setting, the two men

sit at the front of the nave in between the first pew and the communion rail. Hands folded and

ankles crossed, Bush sits with his back to the altar looking out at all the empty pew benches.

Lauer faces him, notes in hand. The close-ups of Bush position him with the altar directly behind

and the main, ornamental cross hanging over his right shoulder. The open bible is also in view.

The main topics covered in this venue are all family and personal life related. Bush's attitude is

notably brighter here; his propensity to smile frequently (even when talking about his mother's

miscarriage and his dark past with alcohol) and the ease with which he makes jokes and tells

personal stories indicates a sense of comfort that you don't see in Bush on the other set.

Back on the main interview stage, the segment specifically focusing on Hurricane Katrina

opens with footage of flooded neighborhoods, survivors standing on top of nearly submerged

houses waving for help, the crowds of stranded, Black victims at the SuperDome, and a crying

Black child sitting in the lap of his mother. A string duet playing a somber melody accompanies

the video clips. Upon Lauer introducing the topic of the hurricane, Bush visibly exhales, seemingly bracing himself for the ensuing discussion. But in the beginning of this section of the interview – when the conversation is centered around specific federal decisions and relationships with governmental officials such as former Louisiana governor, Kathleen Blanco – Bush's tone is rather agreeable. The occasional smile and head nod, even the promptness of his response, during Lauer's questions almost implies a degree of acceptance with these specific topics. His facial expressions when explaining his case reflected a performance of concern and sympathy for the topic at hand as well as affable reaction to Lauer as the interviewer. Bush's speech never wavers, and there were no hesitations in expressing his thoughts. He uses is body to drive his points home by leaning forward over the table at certain moments. Even when he explicitly admits his mistakes, such as flying over the damage instead of touching down and visiting with the storm's survivors, he seems to have accepted them within himself (enough to admit them openly and honestly at least) due to the confidence and assertion with which he talks about them.

But as soon as Lauer brought up the NBC telecast upon which Kanye West made his famous statement, the tone changed. Bush has tilted his head to the side and is now looking at Lauer with pursed lips, his jaw clenched, and his eyes narrowed. Bush begins tapping his fingers intermittently on the table. He shakes his head in defiance when asked if he watched the telecast and retorts with a blasé, "nope." Whereas before, Bush's responses were prompt and forthright in a confident way, now Bush barely lets Lauer finish his question before responding as if he's annoyed by something. The clip of Kanye declaring "George Bush doesn't care about black people" takes the screen before turning back to Bush to see him say, "He called me racist." Now Bush's irritation is more apparent. His small grins and sympathetically raised eyebrows from before have all but vanished. In their place is an unmoving facial expression, a set jaw, and pert

replies. When explaining the difference between critiquing a president and calling him a racist, Bush detaches his palms from the tabletop to bring his open hands, thumbs facing upward strongly back down. But where there are such prominent glimpses of emotion, there are also moments that seem to lack an affective response. When saying, "I resent it, it's not true, and it was one of the most disgusting moments in my presidency," there is no change in either facial expression or vocal tone. It's stated so matter-of-factly, as if he were reading a list of objects and not conveying his reaction to such a purportedly upsetting event. Again, after Lauer reads an excerpt from Bush's memoir talking about his personal response to the allegation, Bush confirms what it wrote in such a way that was almost completely devoid of inflection.

While before Bush was actively and thoughtfully engaged, that energy is now gone. Listening to Lauer, but with the camera still focused on Bush, you can see the corner of his mouth occasionally twitch, indicating this new dis-ease that seems to have settled over Bush. When Lauer brings up Bush's claim that this event was the lowest moment of his presidency and the debate such a statement stirred, the tone of Bush's interjection implies that he sees nothing wrong with it. It's fact, not controversy. And when Lauer tries to clarify why such a claim might be contentious, Bush interrupts with a rather curt, "Don't care," shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head, as if he were literally shrugging off such an alternative interpretation. In fact, he continues to shake his head through most of Lauer's explanation. When given a chance to respond and make his own point clear that he "was affected deeply as well," Bush's face does relax into a smirk, almost as if he was patronizing Lauer for not recognizing such an obvious fact. His final comment to this topic reflected the range of Bush's responses and how they shifted according to the subject being discussed. When talking generally about the "tough moments" in the book, Bush's facial expressions go back to how they were before, concerned yet affable. But

in the very next sentence when reiterating how "disgusting" this particular charge and the ensuing criticism was, Bush face and voice drop back to the unemotional, stolid quality he had maintained throughout this particular portion of the conversation.

As seen in both the interview above as well as in his conversation with Oprah, most of the instances where he explicitly states his disgust are done almost neutrally so. Especially in his interviews with Matt Lauer, Bush remains composed during his speech, maintaining a fairly stolid facial expression and matter-of-fact tone. Even during his interview with Oprah where he is arguably the most expressive (even if only minutely so), his gesturing and the shaking of his head is still very controlled and restrained.

In general, however, his words communicate this rather strong emotion, but his body and facial expressions remain cool, calm, and collected, thus embodying the innocence he claims. While it could be said that this discrepancy signals contradiction or a hollowness to his emotional expression, I believe this is more of an example of Bush maneuvering through the intelligible framework of white affect. In such an emotionally-charged conflict as this one, there is an expectation for some affective response. Because racism is conceived as immoral and evil, reactions to instances of racism (even if they are only allegations) should reflect the horror and awfulness of such an institution. Therefore, it would be to Bush's disadvantage if he did not display those kinds of emotions in this context. At the same time, however, expressing too much affect could be just as detrimental to Bush's case, for overreaction contrasts with the controlled, clearheaded components of white masculine affect. Being too emotional discounts an individual's ability to rationally assess and respond to the situation at hand. Thus, Bush's generally unemotional expression of emotion reflects this double bind. In the performance of his

emotions during this event, he must navigate the confines of white affect as dictated by

whiteness. The ability to do so enables Bush to retain his credibility as a sensible – but still

sensitive – individual fighting for his case in this situation of racial conflict.

Bush's racial performativity in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina follows the normative

principles that whiteness has laid out for the expression of emotions and the performance of

one's identity. His belonging to the dominant ideology of whiteness allows him to enact an

identity that does not experience resistance on a day-to-day basis. This "affective void" is a

common condition of most white-identified individuals' emotional experiences as it pertains to

their race. Thus, situations of racial conflict such as this one can overwhelm white people with

emotions they aren't used to feeling that whiteness usually governs them to suppress. As a result,

defensive emotions are not uncommon. In this way, it is highly possible that Bush's emotions are

in response to the act of the charge made against him and not its content. The accusation itself

disrupted the affective void of white-identified people created by whiteness, and the confusion

and frustration this caused often become the highlighted emotions in the conflict response.

Consequently, the subject matter of the allegation – in this case, the systemic ideologies of

whiteness and racism as perpetrators of the slow government response to Hurricane Katrina and

its victims – as well as the accountability of its participants is ignored. Similarly, as the speech of

self-defense, apologia centers itself around the recovery of one's moral character and not the

consideration of the systemic ideological implications of such a situation (Gordon & Crenshaw,

2004; Marty, 1999). Bush's affective displays of how the accusation "hurt" (Excerpt 11; Excerpt

24) and how such an act is "disgusting" (Excerpts 30-32) thus follow the self-defensive nature

of apologia in that all of his emotions are in direct response to the charge being made against him

and not the message of the allegation itself. The following passages reflect these defensive

emotive displays.

***Excerpt 23: Bush's memoir:* Decision Points**

BUSH: The more I thought about it, the angrier I felt.

Excerpt 24: Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010

BUSH: The other thing that really, *really*, irritated me was when they said my response was slow

because I was a racist.

OPRAH: Mhmm.

BUSH: And, ah--

OPRAH: Kanye West went on the Katrina Relief Program and said, "George Bush doesn't care

about black people."

BUSH: Yeah that really hurt.

OPRAH: Jesse Jackson later compared the New Orleans convention center to the hull of a slave

ship. A member of the Congressional Black Caucus claimed that if the storm victims had been

white, middle-class Americans, they would have received more help. And you say that hurt.

BUSH: Yeah it hurt.

The expression of emotion without resistance is a privilege granted by the normative

standards of whiteness and white masculine affect. While the lack of resistance may seem

insignificant on the surface, it arguably holds a great deal of importance in signaling that Bush performed his emotions in an acceptable and desirable way. This point is made more clear when one considers how things would be different had Bush responded in an excessively, overdramatic way. Or what if he didn't respond at all? These considerations are important when drawing the boundaries that the norms of white masculine affect lay out for Bush and the rest of society.

As seen in the two passages above, the anger, irritation, and hurt he claims and performs are all negative in nature. This rhetorical articulation of a negative emotional response is significant in two ways. To begin with, the introduction of emotion into the scene solidifies the work Bush's rhetoric has done to individualize and privatize the conflict at hand. This grounds the consequent conversation in a framework that serves Bush's best interests (to render his privilege invisible thus allowing his rhetorical strategies to resecure that place of privilege). Additionally, the relative consistency of these emotions and those to be featured below as negative underlines the unquestionable offensiveness of the accuser's wrath in contrast to Bush's innocence, a subject that will be assessed further in this section. In other words, to create such a strong, negative feeling in Bush rhetorically suggests that what the accuser did was wrong.

Bush's expressions of his emotions in his discourse also reflect a dismissive attitude:

Excerpt 25: Interview with Brian Williams – December 12, 2005

BUSH: That is *absolutely* wrong. And I reject that.

Excerpt 26: Interview with Matt Lauer about* Decision Points *– November 8, 2010

LAUER: You say you told Laura at the time it was the worst moment of your Presidency?

BUSH: Yes.

LAUER: I wonder if some people are gonna read that, now that you've written it, and they might give you some heat for that. And the reason is this--

BUSH: Don't care.

The dismissiveness of his responses represents Bush's privilege as a white male to resist any accusations made against him. Because he enjoys the benefits of whiteness (as well as other identity markers such as gender, class, etc.) and an individualized framework of racism, he can scornfully refute others' commentary of him and get away with it. By framing the reality of the accusation in this way – as something that is untruthful and contestable – Bush's rhetoric fractures the foundation upon which the accuser's argument is based. As such, he calls into question the validity and integrity of the accusation itself as well as the accuser. This rhetorical act of shifting the blame will be discussed next, but first a look at how emotions can work to discursively convince others of the rhetor's morality is in order.

For Bush, the rhetorical expression of his emotions in reaction to the racist charge made against him due to the inadequate governmental response to Hurricane Katrina is a means to present himself as a "moral" individual. To reiterate, "accusations of racism in general carry with them a moral judgement [sic] about the accused, which must be defended against" (Riggs & Due, 2010, p. 258). Thus it must not come as a surprise when "such charges and accusations are

invariably met with not only strong denials, but also moral outrage and are often treated as more extreme than racism itself" (Augoustinos & Every, 2010, p. 251). As such, Bush's discursive efforts to express his emotions reflect both the genuine reaction to racist allegations as well as the need to rhetorically defend his reputation. A rhetorical move by the accuser to slander Bush's name would unquestionably bring about some felt, emotional response on his behalf. At the same time, such a circumstance would then require Bush to discursively answer to and defend his moral character that has been called into question by the racist accusation. This falls in line with the argument from fallacy's effort to positively self-represent. In order to redefine the role of immoral racist that has been assigned to him as a result of the charge of racism, the rhetorical expression of emotion – and strong, dismissive emotions at that – allow Bush's rhetoric to make a case for his ethicality.

The support for emotions as proof of morality lies in the individualized conception of racism. "Because we frequently don't see ourselves as part of a larger entity – a societal group – everything becomes personal. […] On the other hand, we often seem able to separate ourselves from white we judge as 'bad' people" (Kendall, 2006, p. 83). Since racism is seen as the aberrant behavior of immoral, unfeeling individuals, the strong dismissive emotions of Bush's rhetoric establish his character in contrast to that racist image. Assumedly, a racist would not get upset by accusations of racism because that is who they are and what they consciously do, so the rhetorical implication goes. In other words, by holding such strong opinions against and reactions to both the accusation and racism in general, Bush can rhetorically assert his separation from the individualized notion of what/who a racist is.

Excerpt 27: Bush's memoir: **Decision Points**

BUSH: Five years later, I can barely write those words without feeling disgusted. I am deeply

insulted by the suggestion that we allowed American citizens to suffer because they were black.

Excerpt 28: Bush's memoir: **Decision Points**

BUSH: But the suggestion that I was a racist because of the response to Katrina represented an

all-time low. I told Laura at the time that it was the worst moment of my presidency. I feel the

same way today.

Excerpt 29: Interview with Matt Lauer about **Decision Points** *– November 8, 2010*

BUSH: I still feel that way as-- as you read those words. I felt 'em when I heard 'em, felt 'em

when I wrote 'em and I felt 'em when I'm listening to 'em."

Additionally, Bush's strong dismissive emotions allow him to present his views and his

argument in a positive light. "The commonsense notion of prejudice—to prejudge—has become

associated with irrationality, poor reasoning, and unexamined views. […] To appear not

prejudiced, it is important to present one's views as reasonable, rational, and thoughtfully arrived

at" (Augoustinos & Every, 2007, p. 127). At first glance, it may seem counterintuitive that

Bush's rhetoric would use emotions – what's often deemed to be an irrational means of

understanding and communicating – to assert his reasonableness. But in the particular rhetorical

utterances from five years after the initial event, the use of time (as seen in Excerpts 28 and 29)

in his discursive moves serves to establish the thoughtfulness of his opinions. Accordingly, the

performance of his emotions is significant in that he rhetorically implies a great deal of reflection

has occurred over that period. That he feels just as strongly five years later as he did after the

initial accusation was made asserts that he takes this seriously and was genuinely affected by it.

As a result, Bush's rhetoric allows for a re-presentation of his moral, rational character through

the discursive expression of enduring, dismissive emotions.

Bush frequently used the emotionally-charged descriptive word "disgusting" to position

himself and his accusers in locations that modeled colonialist frameworks.

Excerpt 30: Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010

BUSH: But to accuse me of being a racist is, uh, *it's disgusting*. I mean I feel strongly about it

today just like I felt strongly about it then. [emphasis added]

Excerpt 31: Interview with Matt Lauer about **Decision Points** *– November 8, 2010*

BUSH: And it was a *disgusting* moment, pure and simple. [emphasis added]

Excerpt 32: Interview with Matt Lauer about **Decision Points** *– November 8, 2010*

BUSH: I resent it. It's not true, and it was one of the most *disgusting* moments in my Presidency.

[emphasis added]

Bush's expression of emotion unavoidably calls into question Kanye's affective display

as a result of binary othering. Since white racial performativity if the norm, Black racial

performativity is judged in contrast to that ideal. Thus, if white affect is defined as orderliness

and control, Black emotions are seen as irrational, violent, and unsound. As a result, Black affect

can be dismissed. It's important to note that this performance was a clear violation of proper

decorum; Kanye wasn't supposed to say what he did in the way that he did about the President of the United States. Even though Kanye wasn't particularly emotive during his specific turn during "A Concert for Relief," the fact that he broke from the script to make such a charged statement suggested that there was a lot of emotion behind the act. Kanye's "affective difference" (Muñoz, 2006) as it pertained to the hurricane could be written off because it is placed in contrast to white racial performativity. Kanye's performance arguably challenged the systemically oppressive and discriminatory nature of whiteness, but with Bush framing his own emotions as rational and sensible, Kanye's emotions are indicatively contrived as the opposite. The implication of Kanye's emotions as aberrant and erratic ultimately allow for his argument to be discredited in the public sphere.

Simultaneously, in utilizing his position of white masculine power to define meaning and reality, Bush is also defining what constitutes as "proper" behavior when it comes to race conversations. By emotionally asserting the accusations of racism to be "disgusting" – the kind of description with an emotional undertone – this claim has considerable implications on the moral character of the accuser. Just as his patriarchal, disciplinary rhetoric infantilized Kanye and Bush's critics, the expression of strong, dismissive emotions allows Bush's rhetoric to redefine the character of the accuser in a way that benefits his case. For anyone to make a claim against another's behavior with such emotionally-charged terms implies that such a critique is warranted. Thus, the moral fiber of the accuser is called into question in a way that repositions Bush in a more favorable location. In addition to evaluating the character of the accuser, Bush's rhetoric also conveys how the proper performance of critique is to be done. If accusing a man of racism is so disgusting and hurtful, then future conversations about racial issues should not

employ such rhetorical tactics. In this way, Bush is able to rhetorically redefine and dictate the norms of proper behavior by utilizing the discursive presentation of strong, dismissive emotions.

Additionally, the particular use of the word "disgusting" suggests an animalized and primitivized image of Kanye. Here, the systemic ideology of whiteness serves as a sign of civilization. By labeling Kanye's actions as "disgusting," Bush's rhetorical strategy works to imply that Kanye is uncivilized in comparison to Bush's claimed decorum. According to Shome (1996), a colonialist rhetoric "emphasizes the chaos and primitivity of the natives, and that through a dichotomous contrast associates whiteness with progress and civilization" (p. 506). And when dealing with an uncivilized individual, there is no room for debate; the dehumanizing animalization of Kanye subsequently discredits his argument against Bush. Thus, Bush is able to defend his superior status by positioning Kanye in this primitive light, ultimately recentering the systemic ideology of whites as the dominant framework by which others are judged.

The rhetorical strategy of assertive, scornful emotions is undeniably interconnected to the discursive acts of patriarchal scolding and argument from fallacy. The positioning of the accuser in a way that benefits the accused is also employed in the disciplinary nature of patriarchal scolding. Cited in Augoustinos & Every (2010), Van Dijk (1992) discusses the implications of this rhetorical act of shifting the blame:

> "The person who accuses the other as racist is in turn accused of inverted racism against whites, as oversensitive and exaggerating, as intolerant and generally as 'seeing racism where there is none' … Moreover, such accusations are seen to impose taboos, prevent free speech and a 'true' or 'honest' assessment of the

ethnic situation. In other words, denials of racism often turn into counter-

accusations of intolerant and intolerable anti-racism." (p. 252)

Thus, attention is diverted from the accused to the accuser in a way that allows Bush to avoid

answering to his accountability in the systemic maintenance of racism in society. Additionally,

this effort to defame the accuser simultaneously works to present Bush in a positive light, a

feature of the argument from fallacy's positive self-presentation motive. In our society of binary

understanding, by rhetorically positioning the other as "bad" and "immoral," Bush is able to

imply that he represents the opposite.

The final similarity between strong, dismissive emotions and the other two rhetorical

strategies employed by Bush in response to charges of racism in the aftermath of Katrina is the

ability to resecure his white privilege and innocence. In regards to the rhetorical expression of

emotions specifically, Solomon et al. (2005) asserts:

The maintenance of this focus on the self, their feelings of discomfort, guilt,

anger, frustration, etc., serves to ensure that there is limited space and energy to

address the needs of other groups whose very existence is mired in oppression and

inequality. (p. 155)

Thus, the ability to (re)define meaning and reality is a privilege that comes with the system of

whiteness, and the reclassification of the context at hand has profound effects on the ensuing

conversation, the subsequent conflict management, as well as the reification of the dominant,

oppressive ideologies of whiteness and individualized racism. Therefore, it must be remembered

that Bush's rhetoric does more than just bolster his own position in this situation of racial

conflict; his discursive moves also affect his challengers in ways that reinstate their

marginalized, subjugated status.

5. Discussion & Implications

As we take stock of the three different rhetorical and affective strategies that emerged in this analysis, it's important to identify and synthesize the key takeaways from this study. Doing so will enable us as critical scholars to pinpoint where and how ideology – specifically whiteness and racism – and rhetoric intersect, overlap, and even pull apart. Such an evaluation can then lead toward the generation and implementation of better, more humanitarian alternatives for knowing, doing, and being.

First, it's important to recognize the work Bush's rhetoric did to rearrange the conflict and the way it was viewed in his favor. The seemingly simple act of reframing the accusation to an explicitly racist charge had a profound impact on the way the situation was subsequently perceived and handled. In doing so, Bush's rhetorical strategy was able to employ the dominant ideology of individualized racism to facilitate his argument from fallacy. Thus, the shift to a racist charge – although outwardly insignificant – is an incredibly powerful strategy that can influence the outcome of such a conversation in favor of one party and to the detriment of another. Knowing what this discursive move is able to accomplish can help us as critical scholars and as rhetors ourselves to identify and attempt to challenge such rhetorical maneuvers in order to avoid the potential manipulation and exploitation that can result.

Secondly, the dominant ideological systems that are pervasive in our society today establish a hierarchy that disproportionately positions individuals in places of power or disadvantage that affects the way interracial conversations are held and the corresponding consequences that result. For example the ideologies of whiteness and masculinity worked together to legitimate Bush's superior status, a position of privilege from which he could enact a

patriarchal and disciplinary discourse against Kanye and his accusers without resistance. This

demonstrates that the participants in this dialogue were not on an equal playing field from the

start. Even though Bush was initially targeted as the antagonist in this story, the dominant

ideologies of whiteness, masculinity, and individualized racism bolstered his position enough so

that he could overcome such a charge through his discursive strategies. As such, we must

recognize that in circumstances of racial conflict, the hierarchical, systemic ideologies that guide

our racial understandings unequally benefits some individuals over others.

    Furthermore, the performance of affect is one example that reveals how colonial

frameworks are still at work in our society today. In his racial performativity that reacted to the

accusation made against him in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Bush was able to present

himself as a rational, civilized individual responding appropriately to the situation at hand in

direct contrast to his irrational, dehumanized accusers. Just as dominant ideological systems

create a hierarchical, unequal playing field that tips the scales in favor of white-identified

individuals, so too do colonial frameworks. The distinction lies in colonialism's more explicit

efforts to primitivize and animalize the non-white "other." While dominant ideologies arguably

deny those who fall outside of the dominant group access to opportunity and resources as well,

for example, they follow a more individualized conception of oppression (à la colorblindness)

that isolates discrimination to aberrant, immoral individuals. Colonialism, on the other hand, is

much more overt in its dominance of subordinate others, making it just as harmful to non-

dominant individuals but in a different way. The importance of acknowledging this explicitly

discriminatory framework is twofold: 1) it highlights the need to confront and dismantle such

outlooks that still plague our society today and 2) it emphasizes the need to recognize and respect

the humanity of all those involved in racial conversations. Taking these two crucial points into

consideration is the first step toward more inclusive and sensitive worldviews and dialogues.

Finally, what is significant about all of these strategies is that they create distinct images

for the collective consciousness whereby the hierarchical relationship and interaction set forth by

dominant ideologies is portrayed rather clearly. The rhetorical strategy of patriarchal scolding,

for example, paints a lucid picture from which we can visualize Bush as the white, father-like

disciplinarian and Kanye as the Black, guilty, wayward child. It is with these images that future

conversations and behaviors are guided. Seeing what comes of accusing the President of the

United States of racism discourages prospective critique even if it is warranted. Thus, the effect

such rhetorical strategies have on the public imaginary cannot be denied.

More generally, this analysis has also highlighted the need for an intersectional and

reflexive approach to ideological rhetorical criticism. While it is certainly important to assess and

critique the benefactors and perpetrators of individualized racism and silenced whiteness, it is

also critical that a consideration of its targets and victims is also taken into account. Kennedy et

al. (2005) present the need to "'[shift] the gaze,' so that talking about race means talking about

both the racializing subject and the racialized object simultaneously" (p. 366). Intersectionality

proves to be multifunctional in this respect, for not only can intersectionality enable critical

rhetoric scholars to unveil and interrogate the structures of dominance and oppression in U.S.

society today in regards to individualized racism and silenced whiteness, but it can also reveal

how minority group members are affected by such systems (Moon & Flores, 2000). The material

– and emotional – manifestations of whiteness and racism on non-white individuals can point

towards alternatives for racial ideologies, identities, and performativities. Frankenberg (1993)

asserts that "it was at the places of intersection and interconnection between materiality and discourse that contradiction, struggle, and the potential for change were in evidence" (p. 240). In this way, specific repressive practices and outlooks can be identified and targeted for reform.

Intersectionality also joins forces with reflexivity in their call for a consideration of both presence and absence in ideological criticism (Moon & Flores, 2000). McKerrow (1999) rightfully asserts that "absence is as important as presence in understanding and evaluating symbolic action" (p. 457). As we have seen with the discussion of whiteness as an ideology that is rendered invisible and silent within the social system, its absence from the collective conversation is what makes it so powerful and pervasive and allows it to continue unchallenged. Thus, "reflexivity encourages consideration of that which has been silenced or invisible" (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, p. 303) in such a way that the invisible ideology of whiteness *can* be examined, contested, and changed. Since whiteness is such an influential force in reality- and meaning-making, the normative performance of racial identity and affect, and intra/intercultural communication, the redefinition of our society's guiding racial ideology can significantly impact the ways in which race is understood, felt, and enacted by all individuals. Thus, by reflexively interrogating both the presences and absences in and across dominant ideologies, we as critical scholars can attempt to confront and dismantle such hierarchical, oppressive systems.

A thorough interrogation of the system of whiteness served as one of the main means of critique for this project of ideological criticism and also acts as one of the main appeals for future studies. Whiteness is a dominant ideological system in U.S. culture that continuously renders itself invisible through silence. By silencing the ways in which the principles of whiteness create and maintain a racial hierarchy, how white-identified individuals enjoy distinct privileges as a

result of their race while their non-white counterparts are actively (but surreptitiously) excluded from such benefits, how whiteness and being and acting white have become the normative standard by which all others are judged, and by supporting an individualized conception of racism that perpetuates the cycle of racist discrimination in our society today, whiteness as an institutionalized and guiding force in all racial relations escapes scrutiny and thus carries on unchanged. The active engagement of whiteness studies can attempt to challenge and dismantle such a destiny.

The invisibility of whiteness is precisely where it finds its lifeblood and its privilege. As critical scholars, we must bring this hidden system to the forefront, make visible the invisible. "Whiteness studies helps us understand how whiteness is reproduced as a neutral category—in other words, universal, invisible, normal, and unmarked. Clearly, this kind of inquiry is not personal but structural, historical, and participatory" (Kennedy, et al., 2005, p. 367). The mere act of naming whiteness is enough to set the gears in motion for such an unveiling, for in doing so "we displace its centrality and reveal its invisible position" (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, p. 292) as well as "begin to dismantle its power-securing mechanisms" (Muñoz, 1998, p. 137). If "seeing implies action" (Segrest, 2002, p. 166), then naming whiteness, calling attention to its hidden presence, will bring into clear view all the principles and practices that need to be thoroughly examined and transformed.

Hence, the justification for whiteness studies as an influential framework upon which future ideological rhetorical criticisms can be based lies in both its pervasiveness and power as an ideological system in the culture of the United States as well as its complex connection to racism.

> Racism is an endemic part of American society. However, the problem with
> Whiteness is the refusal to consider the everyday realities of race and racism. To
> recognize racism's pervasiveness requires Whites to face their own racist
> behavior and to name the contours of racism. (Hayes & Juárez, 2009, p. 739)

Consequently, a proper analysis of whiteness cannot be done without considering its intersecting relationship to ideologies of racism as well. How the two come together to inform one another and map out the collective understanding of race is undeniably necessary and valuable in opening up the space for critique and change.

The value of this kind of intersectional, ideological critique lies in its opportunities for both correcting current inequities and discovering better alternatives. Exposing whiteness and all its flaws is the first – and critical – step so that its inconsistencies and its oppressive habits can be unveiled, challenged, and altered accordingly. "Once the space of whiteness is exposed, culturally positioned, delimited, rendered visible, and deterritorialized, then, whiteness will lose its power to dominate" (Moon & Flores, 2000, p. 99). By working towards the decentering and destabilizing of whiteness as a pervasive ideological system, room is made for more inclusive, sensitive, and equitable worldviews to begin shaping society's views of race and racial identity instead.

However, there is more to ideological criticism that just unveiling and questioning its oppressive tendencies; the ultimate goal needs to encompass the active attempt to implement the proposed alternatives and transform the current social structure. "Social change requires action, even when that action comes with risks" (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006, p. 194). One of the most significant risks in challenging whiteness is opening up the floodgates of emotion that have

long been barred shut. White-identified people must take the opportunity to "feel" their race in a productive way. That is, they can't become consumed by these emotions and recenter whiteness and its privilege; rather they must use their emotions as clues in order to identify what oppressive, unequal elements of society's racial ideology needs to be addressed. "Seeing implies action, unless the paths of perception are blocked. Action expands perceptions because it shifts and enlarges our point of view and our capacity and motivation to process bigger chunks of reality" (Segrest, 2002, p. 166). By "unblocking" those paths to perception, by filling in the affective void of whiteness, change is possible.

Moving forward, we as critical race and rhetoric scholars must not lose sight of the hope for a better future. In analyzing the ideological systems of whiteness and racism, we have identified one example of how they remain such omnipresent, prevailing, and oppressive forces in our collective racial consciousnesses. But this does not mean that we have to surrender to whiteness' and racism's reign; ideologies of any kind – dominant or minoritarian – are not a given. "Regardless of the seeming impenetrability of hegemony, its hold is never absolute. Instead, the cultural commonsense is always in process, and that evolution, however minor and/or temporary, indicates that the struggle over meaning persists" (Flores, Moon, & Nakayama, 2006, p. 194). With this in mind, we must proceed with the notion that dominant, hegemonic ideologies can and should be challenged. We must engage in this "struggle over meaning" (Ibid) with the goal of dismantling the exclusive, hierarchical tenets of such ideological systems in exchange for a more comprehensive and just reality. We must also make room for more ways of seeing and knowing the world; there can exist the "legitimacy of multiple realities" (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995, p. 291) whereby numerous and diverse worldviews can be

embraced and work together to support the diversity of our culture. It is with this hope and with

an open mind that race in our society can face and move toward the potential for progress.

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Appendix 1. Interview with Brian Williams – December 12, 2005

BRIAN WILLIAMS: After the tragedy, I heard someone ask rhetorically, "What if this had been Nantucket, Massachusetts, or Inner Harbor, Baltimore or Chicago or Houston?" Are you convinced the response would have been the same? Was there any social or class or race aspect to the response?

GEORGE W. BUSH: Somebody I heard — you know, a couple of people said — you know, said, "Bush didn't respond because of race, because he's a racist." That is absolutely wrong. And I reject that. Frankly, that's the kind of thing that — you can call me anything you want — but do not call me a racist. Secondly, this storm hit all up and down. It hit New Orleans. It hit down in Mississippi too. And people should not forget the damage done in Mississippi.

WILLIAMS: Biloxi was hit terribly hard.

BUSH: Absolutely, and Pascagoula and Waveland. You know it. You saw it firsthand what it's like. We had people from all walks of life affected by that storm.

I remember saying that, when I thanked those chopper drivers from the Coast Guard who performed brilliantly, they didn't lower those booms to pick up people saying, "What color skin do you have?" They said, "A fellow American's in jeopardy. And I'm going to do my best to rescue that person."

Appendix 2. Interview with Matt Lauer about *Decision Points* – November 8, 2010

MATT LAUER: About a week after the storm hit NBC aired a telethon asking for help for the victims of Katrina. We had celebrities coming in to ask for money. And I remember it vividly because I hosted it. And at one part of the evening I introduced Kanye West. Were you watching?

GEORGE W. BUSH: Nope.

LAUER: You remember what he said?

BUSH: Yes, I do. He called me a racist.

LAUER: Well, what he said, "George Bush doesn't care about black people."

BUSH: That's — "he's a racist." And I didn't appreciate it then. I don't appreciate it now. It's one thing to say, "I don't appreciate the way he's handled his business." It's another thing to say, "This man's a racist." I resent it, it's not true, and it was one of the most disgusting moments in my Presidency.

LAUER: This from the book. "Five years later I can barely write those words without feeling disgust." You go on. "I faced a lot of criticism as President. I didn't like hearing people claim that I lied about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction or cut taxes to benefit the rich. But the suggestion that I was racist because of the response to Katrina represented an all time low."

BUSH: Yeah. I still feel that way as you read those words. I felt 'em when I heard 'em, felt 'em when I wrote 'em and I felt 'em when I'm listening to 'em.

LAUER: You say you told Laura at the time it was the worst moment of your Presidency?

BUSH: Yes. My record was strong I felt when it came to race relations and giving people a chance. And– it was a disgusting moment.

LAUER: I wonder if some people are going to read that, now that you've written it, and they might give you some heat for that. And the reason is this–

BUSH: [interrupting] Don't care.

LAUER: Well, here's the reason. You're not saying that the worst moment in your Presidency was watching the misery in Louisiana. You're saying it was when someone insulted you because of that.

BUSH: No — that– and I also make it clear that the misery in Louisiana affected me deeply as well. There's a lot of tough moments in the book. And it was a disgusting moment, pure and simple.

Appendix 3. Interview with Oprah – November 9, 2010

GEORGE W. BUSH: The other thing that really, really, irritated me was when they said my response was slow because I was a racist.

OPRAH: Mhmm.

BUSH: And, ah--

OPRAH: Kanye West went on the Katrina Relief Program and said, "George Bush doesn't care about black people."

BUSH: Yeah that really hurt.

OPRAH: Jesse Jackson later compared the New Orleans convention center to the hull of a slave ship. A member of the Congressional Black Caucus claimed that if the storm victims had been white, middle-class Americans, they would have received more help. And you say that hurt.

BUSH: Yeah it hurt. I mean I, ah ah, you know. You can disagree with my politics, but don't ever accuse me of being a racist. And ah, I ah, ah-ah-ah-ah, I put policy in place that I really felt helped [OPRAH: (interrupting) But do you underst--] people from all races in America. And ah, I don't understand why somebody would accuse me of being a racist. There's no justification for that whatsoever, and frankly it speaks to the ugliness of the American political scene.

OPRAH: Ok, do you not understand how you flying over and that picture of us—of you looking out of the helicopter and all of these being black – mostly black – disenfranchised, poor people and the reaction not being sooner, can you see how the perception would be that you were racist?

BUSH: No, I can see- No. I cannot see that. I could see how the perception would be maybe "Bush didn't care." But to accuse me of being a racist is, uh, it's disgusting. I mean I feel strongly about it today just like I felt strongly about it then. It's one thing to say you thought he could have done a better job, he maybe should have put troops in. You don't call a man a racist. Ah, when it's-- I'm confident my heart is right on that issue.

Appendix 4. Interview with Matt Lauer on the *Today* show – November 10, 2010

MATT LAUER: Now to a *Today* exclusive, a live conversation with George W. Bush. The former president's new memoir, *Decision Points*, is now out. President Bush, good to see you again. Good morning.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Good morning, Matt.

LAUER: You spend a year and a half writing this book, and I'm sure during the process you stopped and thought about what you were putting in there and what would the media react to. What would people really find that resonates with them. So now that you've had a chance to hear a little bit of the reaction over the last couple of days, any surprises to you?

BUSH: Well, first let me debunk your premise. I really didn't spend time thinking about what the media would say about my book. I took the key issues, the key decisions I made, and tried to explain to the reader why I made them. And I was aware some of the decisions I made were very controversial. And I knew that putting them in the book would create controversy. But ah, I really wasn't concerned with what the media would think. What I'm more concerned about is how history would judge the decisions I made.

LAUER: I was interested in the New York Times this morning, there was an article that says that – perhaps inadvertently – by sharing the story you shared about your mother's miscarriage, that you made have started a national conversation about what a complex, psychological fallout of miscarriage. That must be rewarding to you.

BUSH: Ah, yeah it is. I had no intention of creating a national dialogue. My intention was to describe a relationship between a mom and her son. And a interesting anecdote that helps the reader understand why my mother and I are so close.

LAUER: Perhaps surprisingly, maybe not surprisingly, one of the subjects that's gotten the most attention the last couple days is what you write about Kanye West and what he said about you after Hurricane Katrina. [BUSH: Yeah] "George Bush doesn't care about black people." He clearly has heard the furor over that and he has read the headlines. He stopped by to see me yesterday.

BUSH: Oh, really?

LAUER: And I want to play you a small portion of what he said because he seems to have changed his tone rather dramatically.

[Video clip]

KANYE: I would tell George Bush, in my moment of frustration, I didn't have the grounds to call him a racist. But I believe that in a situation of high emotion like that, we as human beings don't always choose the right words.

LAUER: He seems to have regret. What's your reaction?

BUSH: I appreciate that. Uh, I um- It wasn't just Kanwe- Kanye West who was talking like that during Katrina. I cited him as an example. I cited others as an example as well. And um, you know, I appreciate that.

LAUER: But you called his comment a "low point" and one of the things you and I have spoken about a lot over our conversations over these past couple of weeks is you faith. Does your faith allow you to forgive Kanye West?

BUSH: Oh absolutely. Of course it does. And ah, I-I-I-I I'm not a hater. I didn't hate Kanye West, but I was talking about an environment in which people were willing to say things that hurt. And ah, nobody wants to be called a racist if in your heart you believe in equality of race.