THE POWER FROM WITHIN: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY ARTS-BASED STUDY OF BLACK FEMALE STUDENT- ATHLETES SOUL VALUE

Brittney Jackson

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THE POWER FROM WITHIN: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

ARTS-BASED STUDY OF BLACK FEMALE STUDENT- ATHLETES SOUL VALUE

by

Brittney April Jackson

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Concentration: Higher Education

The University of Memphis
May 2023
Dedication

To my dad who began this race with me in the physical and transitioned to inspire me to stay the course. I have made it to finish line because of you. I miss and love you forever.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge that everything I do is because of God, and I give glory to Him for gifting me the power and strength to withstand this journey.

To my family, thank you for your unconditional love and support. Mom, thank you for the purest form of love that encouraged me when I felt defeated and comforted me in my moments of doubt. Thomas, thank you for exemplifying the persistence and determination needed to achieve my goals. To my fiancé, thank you for your belief in me, accountability, and sharing your wisdom and expertise. I would not be where I am today without each of you modeling the way for me.

To my friends, thank you for being a listening ear in my moments of despair. Thank you for checking in on me to ensure I remained persistent. To my dear friend, thank you for connecting me to the text that helped to center this dissertation.

To my colleagues, thank you for your flexibility and acceptance. The willingness to adjust to meet me at this phase of my life has allowed me to reach this goal.

To my former coach, thank you for the introduction to the women who have graciously participated in this research. Thank you to each participant for sharing their story to bring forth this necessary dialogue. Without their vulnerability, this body of work would be nonexistent.

Finally, thank you to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Eric Platt, Dr. Susan Nordstrom, Dr. Wendy Griswold, and Dr. Eric Bailey. Dr. Platt, thank you for your guidance and out loud support of me. Dr. Nordstrom, you have coached me at every part of this experience, thank you for instilling confidence in my voice as a qualitative researcher. I am grateful for my committee members and their time and patience to see this work to completion.
Abstract
This dissertation shares the voices of five Black female student-athletes who have attended Division I (DI), Predominately White Institutions (PWI) in the Southern part of the United States. In the ongoing discourse of collegiate athletics and the context of southern institutions and their structures of injustice, one must hear the thoughts and feelings of Black female student-athletes. The purpose of this Black feminist narrative inquiry arts-based study was to explore the narrative of Black female student-athletes’, perception of value, soul value, in Division I PWIs in the Southern region of the United States. Through the method of participant-voiced poetic inquiry and Daughtering as an analysis, the vestiges of slavery were explored through the lens of commodification to understand the valuations that affect Black female student-athletes’ soul value. The findings revealed that the vestiges of slavery have an impact on Black female student-athletes before, during and after their collegiate experience and showed that in order to withstand the lengths of their eligibility, participants had to consider the ways in which their life was molded by the external valuations placed on them and their bodies, recount the vulnerabilities that were forced upon them, and remember the resilience it took to produce success for the NCAA institution (Berry, 2017; Evans-Winters, 2019).
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

They noticed her.
How she could run,
jump,
throw,
hurdle.

She was a star!
But why did they dim her light?

They must not know the sound of her voice.
Did they listen?
Can they hear her now?

She knows who she is.
But you,
you,
allowed her to question herself.
She is who God made her to be!

She is beautiful, / strong.
Her physique is without error. Made in His image.
You know Black women’s body types!
Sound,
perfect.
Her reflection is without blemish.

Why did you compare her?

She is fueled by her dreams.
Supported by her family.
Don’t you dare mess with their baby.
She is coached by her ancestors.
They watch over her,
protect her from
you.

But you promised her…
You told her what you could offer.
Why did you lie?

You forgot,
I guess?
Chose not to listen, see or hear her?

But she showed you. Her infinite beauty; Her intelligence; Her possibilities; Her tenacity; Her resilience.

She is her, and her, and her, and her.

Sisters…

Are you listening?

I chose to listen to them; I hope you listen to them. This dissertation shares the voices of five Black female student-athletes who attended Predominately White Institutions (PWI) in the Southern part of the United States. In the ongoing discourse of collegiate athletics and the context of southern institutions and their structures of injustice, one must hear the thoughts and feelings of Black female student-athletes.

The era of enslavement has vestiges that have historically suppressed Blacks and Black female athletes cannot be disregarded from the conversation. Berry (2017) stated:

few scholars have asked ‘what did the enslaved think?’ Much of the existing literature is about what enslaved people experienced, but if were to attempt to add their engaged understanding, this narrative changes. Enslaved people…had very particular ideas about their values, ideas that differed greatly from their enslavers. Looking at their views of commodification shifts the way we interpret slavery and adds to our understanding of
social and cultural systems that continue to (de)value black life (i.e., mass incarceration, elite athletes, and performers). (p.5)

I took Berry (2017) up on this challenge. I explored how former Black female athletes thought and felt about their participation at Division I PWIs in the Southern United States. Berry (2017) calls this their soul value. Soul value is the central theme to this study. It gave each participant ownership of their stories and centered their thoughts and feelings. Value is an emphasized term throughout this research that “is used here as a noun, a verb, and an adjective. It is active, passive, subjective, and reflexive. It is ‘rooted in modes or kinds of valuing’ and requires an assessment of feelings” (Berry, 2017, p. 6). This is demonstrated in chapter four where participants shared their thoughts and feelings about their athletic experience. Soul value is woven throughout their monologues and there are clear depictions of their self-worth that stand in opposition to the valuations ascribed to them and their bodies by the institution, coach, or sport. At times, they even state their value directly to the oppositional thought of them because they know it not to be true; yet their soul value is, and no one can take that from them.

Soul value is just one of the valuations highlighted in this research to discuss the vestiges of slavery. Soul value is sustained by the macro level theory of Black feminism (Collins, 2002) and supported by racial opportunity cost theory; both theories are further outlined in chapter two and adapted for the purpose of this study. My version of this qualitative text is inspired by Ntozake Shange’s (1980) *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf*. Much like that text, each participant is highlighted for their own internal encounter that was presented in their narrative; yet, collectively, they tell the stories and the struggles it takes to be a Black female student-athlete. Qualitative methodologies have often been utilized amongst Black women researchers, yet “rarely are Black women given space to play with or theorize
methodological moves in qualitative inquiry” (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 1). I “played” with the data byway of arts-based research. Hand crafted each word of their stories to create poetic monologues to ensure their voices were amplified. It is important to note that in chapter four, I did so without adapting their words, thoughts, or feelings or reconstructing their narratives. In chapter five, a collective of the monologues is presented in which portions of the participant’s monologues were utilized to tell the collective experience of their stories.

We must hear them. This study is written in a time when our Black mothers are experiencing the same distresses as our ancestors. Back bodies are being murdered and beaten to death and mothers are reckoning with the eternal separation from their children. This study humanizes the voices of Black women and values them for who they are and how they feel navigating their experiences. The purpose of this study is not to draw sympathy for the participants but to celebrate their uniqueness and tenacity in the face of institutions that perpetuate our nation’s troubled history.

**It's Their Problem, Not Hers**

Black women are underrepresented in sports related research (Bruening, 2005). Over time, Black women “have been marginalized or even completely excluded in the sport literature based on both gender and race” (Bruening, 2005, p. 331). Yet, there is an ongoing discussion of college athletics mirroring plantation systems, particularly of Black male athletes who participate in revenue generating sports (Hawkins, 2013), that has garnered national attention, policy change and controversy within American sports and higher education. How can these conversations continue to take place, yet not acknowledge the value that Black women and their bodies have been lifted to these systems of injustice and not amplify the resistance and resilience within their voices?
The literature around Black women athletes and plantation politics is almost nonexistent and the literature that includes them within the realm of race and sport often group Black women “on the basis of their gender (with white women) or their race (with Black males) without considering that their realities and circumstances are distinctly different from both of aforementioned groups” (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019, p. 412). For decades, scholars have been afraid to confront the intersections of race and gender for Black women in sport and the result is a lack of “critical understanding of how interlocking systems of oppression uphold and sustain each other in intercollegiate athletics” (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019, p. 411). Far too often, Black women are not considered for who they are, being Black and a woman. White (1999) contends that the two identities are intersected and must not be separated to holistically consider Black women for who they are. Yet, sports research has often denied the intersection of race and gender to reflect the white majority (Bruening, 2005 & Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019) leaving Black women to function as outsiders-within (Collins, 2002) or as other Black feminist scholars “have identified this phenomenon as literally being positioned ‘on the margin’… enjoying partial but never complete membership in either their gender or racial groups” (Bruening, 2005, p. 331). Black women and girls “deserve a diversity of representations of the theoretical, perceptual, and lived experiences of people who live, worship and play like us” (Evans-Winter, 2019, p. 69). Although scholars who produce work on race-gendered experiences in sport may not mean any harm to exclude Black female athletes, the result of not inserting Black women athletes does more harm than good. In turn, “Black male athletes [become] considered [as] the prototype for Black athletes” (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019, p. 413). Furthermore,
instead of specifying their findings as research on Black male athletes, specifically, scholars have claimed knowledge on and about Black athletes, generally. The phrases ‘Black athlete’ and ‘Black male athlete’ are not interchangeable or synonymous, and yet they have been treated as such in titles, books and articles, tables for empirical findings and theoretical discussions. (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019, p. 413)

For example, Hawkins (2013) examines the “controversial relationship between PWIs and Black athletes” (p. 13); although Hawkins (2013) notes within the text that the research positions Black male athletic experiences, the assumption from the title presumes that Black athletes would encompass Black male athletes and female athletes. Similarly, Bimper’s (2015) critical race theory study “investigates the influence of post racial narratives and colorblind racism in a case of Black intercollegiate student athlete experience” (Bimper, 2015, p. 225) in predominately white institutions, however, only includes a sample of Black male student-athletes. These are not the only examples within the literature. Simien, Arinze, & McGarry (2019) reference other scholars providing literature surrounded around specific comparisons such as Black/white or male/female.

Current research that has considered Black female athletes, have highly focused on their experiences. Scholars that have examined Black female student-athletes at predominately white institutions have explored their experiences as a student-athlete (Bernhard, 2014), their perspectives of mentoring (Carter & Hart, 2010), and the perception of power in sport and society (Carter-Francique, Dortch, & Carter-Phiri, 2017) however, limited research has examined how Black female student-athletes feel about their experiences, their perception of self-value and the resilience utilized to see their tenure through.
I have humanized the stories of these Black women because scholars must remember and recognize the extent to which we have carried this country with our bodies and paid the ultimate price with our lives to preserve our womanhood. Once the focus is altered to hearing our soul value, then the narrative can begin to change and present an alternative perspective that is needed in today’s literature.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this Black feminist narrative inquiry arts-based study is to explore the narrative of Black female student-athletes’, perception of value, *soul value*, in Division I PWIs in the Southern region of the United States. The section, “It’s Their problem, *Not Hers*,” has highlighted that there is a gap within the literature that excludes Black female athletes from the conversation around college sports at DI PWIs and their connection to colonialism and the American slave system. Moreover, Black female athletes are rendered invisible in sport literature (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019) and have yet to have their engaged understanding narrated as they navigate their way through the complexities of their academic, social and sport experiences. This research addressed this gap.

In this study, I interviewed five Black former female student-athletes who have attended DI PWIs in the Southern United States to hear their soul value and gain a glimpse into their experiences. This study acknowledges the vestiges of slavery through the lens of commodification and the valuations ascribed to the enslaved. Thus, this study recognizes the monetary value assigned to enslaved Black women to draw comparison to the commodification of Black female student-athletes. This study amplifies the intangible marker of soul value that defied monetization to humanize and resound participant voices and showcase their resilience and resistance to forces that have tried to strip their humanity (Berry, 2017). Resistance and
resiliency are remnants of our ancestors who were once “valued for their potential procreation” (Berry 2017, p. 11) yet the threat of separation loomed over their heads, and they had to cling to physical, mental, and spiritual practices to survive (Berry 2017). For example, I have written in Lady in Red’s monologue how her body was once valued for her potential to execute well in her events, yet, torn down and criticized by the same coach who recruited her. To see her successes though, she leaned on her faith. This example of resiliency is echoed throughout the monologues. For many, it was their faith in God and support from their families that kept them tenacious. Overall, each narrative shares a message of strength or success, highlights a struggle, and empowers their voices.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guide this research were:

1. How have the vestiges of slavery affected Black female student-athletes’ soul value?
2. In what ways do they display resilience?
3. How do they describe their lived experience as a Black female student-athlete before, during and after their collegiate experience?

In the following chapters, I present the innerworkings of this study. In chapter two, I present the theoretical frameworks both macro and mid-level and present the literature review for readers to gain an understanding of the existing research, present knowledge and historical context needed for this study.

Chapter two is heavily centered on Black feminism. As the underlying theory of this research, it provides a shared starting point, “which centers Black women’s epistemology, approaches to analysis, analyzing, critique, and interpretations of the social world” (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 14). Moreover, Black feminism provides an “inevitable critique of capitalism
and economic exploitation” (Evans-Winter, 2019, p. 15). Black feminism recognizes the suppression of Black women and the intersections of race, class, and gender as tenets of oppression. Black feminism also serves as an active response to the oppression and liberates Black women across the diaspora—a term which describes the collective community of African descents who “through slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and migration” (Collins, 2002, p. 29) were moved to various parts of the world — to use Black feminist thought to resist oppression (Collins, 2002). Black feminism highlights a collective standpoint for Black women, but Collins (2002) reminds us that we must recognize that U.S. Black feminism participates in a larger context of struggling for social justice that transcends U.S. borders. In particular, U.S. Black feminism should see commonalities that join women of African descent as well as differences that emerge from our diverse national histories. (p. xi)

This dissertation is focused on U.S. Black women (Collins, 2002), however, it “raises questions concerning African-American women’s positionality within a global Black feminism” (Collins, 2002, p. xi). While Black feminism supports our collective experiences, Black feminism should not be analyzed to conclude an African norm (Collins, 2002). Black feminism in the United States, however, must be considered within the context of U.S. politics even though the commonalities associated across the diaspora remain the same, placing thought behind these commonalities will acutely specify what is particular to African American women (Collins, 2002).

Chapter three presents the design of this study. This study is personal to my journey as a former student-athlete; therefore, it is hard to present a formulaic step-by-step guide for future scholars to replicate this study, thus, I walk readers through my process to present the perfect
dish for this occasion to amplify the voices of each woman. I provide the recipe for how I approached this study to let readers in on my thoughts and reasoning for the specific methods of data collection and analysis, as well as provide insight on how chapter four was approached and written.

Chapter four is where you hear the participants loud and clear and on center stage. The style of the chapter mimics the design of the monologues written in Shange’s (1980) *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*. The monologues presented are of five former Black female student-athletes who have attended DI PWIs in the American south. Each monologue stands on its own, yet collectively, they talk to one another sharing their thoughts and feelings as if they knew each other; simply each is listening to their sister.

Chapter five is the epilogue of this research that shares the ensemble of voices that depicts a rainbow of experiences yet draws a collective picture of strength and resilience. The chapter presents the summary of the monologues presented in chapter four and begins a conversation between the literature in chapter two and the participant’s soul value. Additionally, it pays homage to Black feminism for being the vessel in which participants were able to share their stories and provides the limitations and implications of this study. Finally, this occasion concludes with a message of hope to future Black female qualitative researchers who wish to do this work.

Throughout this dissertation, the terms “I,” “we” and “our” will be utilized. This decision was made because this research “gives Black women a greater sense of themselves” (White, 1999, p. 5). As a Black woman, I must borrow the words of Collins (2002) which explains my standpoint amongst the collective; she states,
I now know that my experiences are far from unique. Like African-American women, many others who occupy societally denigrated categories have been similarly silenced. So the voice that I now seek is both individual and collective, personal and political, on reflecting the intersection of my unique biography within the larger meaning of my historical times. (p. vi)

Scholars may question my objectivity; however, Collins (2002) challenges us as Black women researchers to free ourselves though our writing. For example, Collins (2002) states there is a “need to reconcile subjectivity and objectivity in producing scholarship” (p. ix). Moreover, “reconciling what we have been trained to see as opposites, a reconciliation signaled by my inserting myself in the text by using “I,” “we,” and “our” instead of “they” and “one,” [is freeing]” (Collins, 2002, p. ix). Black feminist thought provides me the freedom and an outlet “to be both objective and subjective… and a responsible scholar” (Collins, 2002, p. ix) and possess consciousness supported by Africanism and feminist conceptual thought (Collins, 2002).
CHAPTER TWO: THEORY & LITERATURE REVIEW

There is depth to the stories you will read in chapter four. You can listen more intently to their words when you look back on the histories of Black women. If you were to jump straight to the last chapter of a book, you would miss the context to the ending. Similarly, if you were to jump straight to chapter four to read their narratives, you would miss out on how and why their stories came into being. This chapter explains the vestiges of slavery that have affected Black females. It describes how their mind and body remained resilient throughout generations and aids readers understanding to the chronological cycle of the student-athlete before, during and after competition.

The theories that guided this study were Black feminist theory (Collins, 2002) and racial opportunity cost theory and soul value (Berry, 2017). Particularly, Black feminism provided the blueprint for the entire dissertation and supported Black female athletes as they orated their soul value. Moreover, Black feminism continues to provide a purpose to Black women as a collective that empowers our voices to resist social injustice. I have adapted each theory for the purpose of this study. The entire chapter will provide you an introduction to the main topics of this dissertation and will equip readers with greater trust in chapter three and empathic listening in chapter four.

Theoretical Framework

Macro Level Theory: Black Feminist Theory

In the 1980s, Patricia Hill Collins theorized Black feminist thought. Black feminist thought as a critical social theory gives a voice to the collective of Black women and clarifies our collective standpoint in a white dominated society. Black feminist thought understands that suppressing the knowledge of the oppressed aids the rule of the dominate group and subjects the
subordinate group to willful victimization (Collins, 2002). Maintaining the invisibility of Black women across the diaspora is critical in upholding social inequalities (Collins, 2002). “For African-American women, the knowledge gained at intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender provides the stimulus for crafting and passing the subjugated knowledge of Black women’s critical social theory” (Collins, 2002, p. 9). The foundation of Black feminist thought lies within the Black women’s standpoint.

Black female athletes at PWIs are not the majority. Their marginalization is important to focus on in effort to understand their suppression. Collins (1989) contends that there are two prevailing approaches to understanding oppressed groups. One viewpoint indicates that the suppressed group has no knowledge of their oppression and the second viewpoint “assumes that the oppressed are less human than their rulers and, therefore are less capable of their own standpoint” (Collins, 1989, p. 747). Both viewpoints suggest a flawed consciousness leaving the oppressed to believe they lack motivation or activism (Collins, 1989). Black women, however, are far from these suggested standpoints and have not aided in their own victimization. Black feminist thought is needed in the United States to resist institutionalized racism (Collins, 2002) and Black women as a group have a distinct set of experiences that clarify our realities from those of other groups (Collins, 1989). For us, to live in this world means to experience a trilogy of oppression (Henriques, 1996) in which those who are not Black, and female will not experience (Collins, 2002). Black feminist thought acutely focuses on the intersecting of these oppressions and challenges the dominant ideology. Collins (1989) articulates the experience of oppression and states “a subordinate group not only experiences a different reality than a group that rules, but a subordinate group may interpret that reality different than a dominate group” (p. 748). This collective standpoint for Black women is what Collins (2002) describes as the outsider-within.
Outsider-within.

The outsider-within perspective derived from Black women in domestic roles. Black women who found themselves in positions to preform domestic work for white people formed contradictive viewpoints from white women and their families (Collins, 2002). This perspective provided Black women an inside look on white society and an alternative viewpoint to our oppression (Collins, 1986). On one hand, Black women were able to witness accounts of white power as an insider and could demystify the advantages of “knowing that it is not the intellect, talent, or humanity of their employers that supported their superior status, but largely just the advantages of racism” (Collins, 1986, p. s14). The outsider perspective is the realization that we could never belong to white families, cultivating the outsider-within. The outsider-within status for Black women is an experience that we have found ourselves in beyond domestic roles. We often experience being the outsider-within in everyday life experiences that include social, political, and educational endeavors (Collins, 2002). As Black female athletes find themselves within institutions that mirror the Antebellum south, their viewpoint of their experience can be affirmed by the outsider-within perspective. Black feminist thought investigates how race, class and gender influence the contradictions witnessed through this perspective. Under the power of the dominate group without Black feminist thought, Black women are left to internalize our oppression (Collins, 2002), be deemed as invaluable, unfit, poor, and extreme laborers (Collins, 2002).

Analyzing Black Women’s Work

An essential tenet of Black feminist theory is the analysis of Black women’s work. This tenet is critical to the foundation of this study because it demonstrates the exploitation of Black females. If Black women were viewed as fully human then exploitation would be less easy to
accomplish (Collins, 2002). Moreover, this tenet is pertinent to the historical time of this study as one of the themes of this analyses is “documenting Black women’s labor market status in order to see the general patterns of race and gender inequality” (Collins, 2002, p. 45) in eras such as slavery (Collins, 2002).

Historically, Black people have been economically exploited and disenfranchised by the American economy (Collins, 2002). Although 400 years removed from African enslavement, there are profound residual effects that still impact Black men and women and our ability for equity. The economic injustice used to explain how Blacks are impacted as a group is not to be confused with the fact that all Black people “have been poor, nor that most are today” (Collins, 2002, p. 48). The practice of enslavement explains the dehumanizing effects of the past and particularly for Black women, the oppressive ideology of our existence has carried over to today. Ultimately, Black women and our “forced incorporation into a capitalist political economy as slaves meant that [Black women] … became economically exploited, politically powerless units of labor” (Collins, 2002, p.50). Our labor produced gender roles under slavery, even though we preformed the same labor as men. Enslavers spent our bodies and in return the only profit earned was economic development of white families and their lineage (Collins, 2002).

Another critical factor is to recognize the value placed on Black women’s bodies. Berry (2017) provides a clear definition of value that should stay at the forefront of this study, “value is used here as a noun, verb, and adjective. It is active, passive, subjective and reflexive. It is ‘rooted in modes or kinds of valuing’ and requires an assessment of feelings” (p. 6). This factor is the backbone of this study. The intersection of race and sexism became a way to further exploit the Black female body. To no fault of our own, our ability to birth humans stood essential to upholding the capitalist functions of slavery. The analysis of our physical labor and the
commodification—"the act of being treating like a commodity” (Berry, 2017, p. 2)—of our bodies put a price tag on our physical labor and our value was subjected to scrutiny. The value of human life was appraised and marked with a monetary value from preconception (Berry, 2017). Scenes of our ancestors and their children standing on courthouse steps exposed was a common occurrence in the American south (Berry, 2017). “They went to the market as real and potential mothers” (Berry, 2017, p. 11). The words of an enslaver were crafted to praise her skillset; “she is only 18 years old, and already has a child… [who] will consequently make a valuable price of property for someone” ( Berry, 2017, p. 10). Even our children in utero were units of capital and infertility deemed us as damaged goods to enslavers and therefore we were sold, or punitive measures were employed (Collins, 2002). This concept is addressed more in depth within the review of literature as the “value ideas of [Black female student-athletes] differed greatly from [the NCAA D1 institutions]” (Berry, 2017, p. 5) is the focus of this study.

Post emancipation, Black people transitioned their labor into a marketplace that still reflects the plantation model. Collegiate sports draw parallel to the American plantation model causing Black student-athletes to question the plantation politics within its system. There is a cost to the psychological and educational wellbeing of Black athletes to learn in and compete for white dominated institutions that exploit their bodies for profit. As discussed, the intersections of identity for Black women cause for disproportionate impacts of this injustice. Black feminist thought teaches us that Black women resisted forms of oppression on the plantation and resist daily forms of oppression today. Therefore, it is imperative to hear Black women voices. Especially among the ongoing discourse that amplifies the cultures’ resistance to institutionalized racism yet overshadows Black women’s activism. The intellect and self-awareness of our ancestors were apparent “but few scholars have asked, ‘what did the enslaved
think?" (Berry, 2017, p. 4). Exploring this question leads to a shift in the way slavery is interpreted and the enslaved “thoughts, expressions, feelings and reactions to their own commodification” (Berry, 2017, p.2) are brought to the forefront. To begin to understand the feelings of the enslaved, soul value is utilized to understand how they worked against commodification (Berry, 2017). Enslaved Africans “clearly had another set of values for themselves” (Berry, 2017, p. 66) in comparison to the enslaver’s perception of themselves or what scholars suggest (Berry, 2017). Given that scholars have highlighted the parallel of the enslaved to the enslaver in the context of NCAA Division I sport environments for Black male athletes (Hawkins, 2013), it is time to explore the thoughts and feelings of Black female athletes and place her voice and feelings within the overall context.

The intention of this study is to have readers learn of Black female student-athletes and their experience within DI PWIs and draw a like comparison to the enslaved and the enslaver on the plantation in the American south by filling in the gaps of the missing perception of self-worth from the enslaved. While the intention of this study brings awareness to the legacy of our struggle, its intention is not to seek sympathy. The intention is to spotlight, through our stories, the immense resilience of Black women and the ownership over our self-value.

**Diverse Responses**

Black feminism implores the need for alternative perspectives beyond those who may be commonly viewed as intellectuals (Collins, 2002). Black women as intellectuals are not all boxed in and located within the academy. Black women reside outside of the academy—many Black women have advanced degrees, many Black women are working citizens, and many Black women are just trying to survive in spaces that objectify and suppress them. In the case of this study, we play sports. Although Black female student-athletes are located within the realm of
education, their multidimensional role is often overlooked and not commonly considered. Collins (2002) states that if not for the varied perceptions “much of the Black women’s intellectual tradition would remain ‘not known and hence not believed in’” (p.16). In each respective sector, Black women still contribute to the collective standpoint and resist daily forms of oppression.

There is an immense gap within the existing literature that fails to incorporate how our Black female-athletes feel about their athletic participation at PWIs. As scholars develop new literature, it must be emphasized that Black women are more than objects of study (Collins, 2002; Evans-Winter, 2019). Thus, I have stepped in to fill the gap. I have ensured that each participant is the main storyline. I have given their voices agency and authority instead of simply telling you how they felt or writing about how they questioned their experience. They are placed center stage for you to hear and listen to them.

**How We Clap Back**

The foundation of Black women’s collective standpoint in Black feminist thought is one to highlight, but do not mistake this common communion amongst the diaspora as us being monolithic. We cannot be easily defined by broad terminologies and nor do we respond to our legacy of struggle the same. Simply put, we clap back differently. Individually, we produce varied responses to the core themes of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2002). Collins (2002) suggests that there are factors that attribute to the varied responses among us which are social class differences and sexuality. How the facets of our identities intersect dictate the responses to common challenges. Collins (2002) states the following that is imperative for me, as well as readers of this study, to keep in mind:

Given how these factors influence diverse response to common challenges, it is important to stress that no homogeneous Black women’s standpoint exists. There is no essential or
archetypal Black woman whose experiences stand as normal, normative, and thereby authentic. An essentialist understanding of a Black women’s standpoint suppresses differences among Black woman in search of elusive group unity. Instead, it may be more accurate to say that a Black women’s collective standpoint does exist, one characterized by the tensions that aims to incorporate heterogeneity in crafting Black women’s oppositional knowledge, this Black women’s standpoint eschews essentialism in favor of democracy. Since Black feminist thought both arises within and aims to articulate a Black women’s group standpoint regarding experiences associated with intersecting oppressions, stressing this group standpoint’s heterogenous composition is significant. (p. 28)

Despite the common challenges that are articulated in the narratives within chapter four, the essence of each narrative is diverse, and their soul value is presented in diverse ways. Lady in Red’s story is different from Lady in Indigo, which is different from Lady in Yellow, which is different from Lady in Orange, which is different from Lady in Green, by design. This study should not be utilized to paint a uniformity of all Black female student-athletes that compete for DI institutions in the Southern region of the United States. However, considering each narrative will provide a collective standpoint that is a heterogeneous composition and can bring awareness to the commonalities inclusive to Black female student-athletes.

**Practicing Black Feminism**

Black feminism in a U.S. context encourages dialogue between oppression and activism (Collins, 2002). Individually, Black women are connecting their lived experiences “with oppression, developing one’s own point of view concerning these experiences and the acts of resistance that can follow” (Collins, 2002, p. 30). Amid this dialogical relationship (Collins,
Black feminism as a critical social theory relies on the passage of knowledge as Black women remain a subgroup among others who are also within systems of injustice (Collins, 2002). Critical social theory, in the case of this study, Black feminism, promotes justice not just for one group or Black women but for other groups. Collins (2002) reminds us that knowledge is not just gained just for the sake of it, but rather, “Black feminist thought must both be tied to Black women’s lived experiences and aim to better those experiences” (p. 31). The practice of Black feminist thought will aid U.S. Black women in a society that cannot detract from the white man’s power. More importantly, it reclaims the dominate narrative and empowers us to stimulate resistance.

Mid-level Theories: Racial Opportunity Cost and Soul Value

Racial opportunity cost (ROC) borrows from the economic term opportunity cost which explains the potential loss of a missed opportunity (Seals, 2016). In other words, the result of selecting one alternative leads to forgoing another. In this study, racial opportunity cost is defined as the self-actualized value sacrificed by Black female student-athletes when they are forced to choose one aspect of their identity and forfeit another to achieve success. Black female student-athletes have embarked on their journeys to pursue academic and athletic success at PWIs, but what is the ROC of their decision? ROC is grounded in Black feminism in this study. Participants in this study describe their time spent in a “white-normed school environment” (Tabron & Chambers, 2019, p. 125) which assists with the engaged understanding of their lived experiences.

ROC examines the relationship between the individual student of color and the school environment (Seals, 2016). ROC considers the value of the underrepresented student through its several key components. The assertions of the ROC framework can be summarized by Seals.
in which (a) there are conflicting expectations the dominate culture places on underrepresented groups that stand opposed to the expectations of one’s racial or ethnic community, (b) intersectionality, which describes the interconnectedness of social categorizations that impacts a person’s identity, (c) academic persistence in relation to the dominate climate as well as factors that impact the students’ educational success, and (d) the psychological and emotional distress students face when navigating the complexities of a white educational system. Each assertion gives “emphasis to oppression, racial identity, stereotypes, and the mental/emotional impact of these factors” (Seals, 2016, p. 60) which is also reinforced in Black feminism.

ROC also asserts that when considering the values of individual students, there is likely to be a conflict between the values of the individual and the values of the institution, which may result in the individual making “a choice to which value system to ascribe to” (Seals, 2016). This concept can be adapted to meet this study. When Black female student-athletes consider their self-value, there is likely to be a conflict between their perception of value and the institutions’ perception of value of them. Black female athletes are considering various cost beliefs and determining a conclusion means that they may be abandoning a value system that they are a part of to ascribe to another one. The cost of this conclusion can result in isolation, a lack of belonging and a harm to their achievement (Seals, 2016). The Black feminist tenet of intersectionality further complicates this equation as intersectionality teaches us that Black female student-athletes are juggling more than one value group, further exasperating the decision-making process, which may lead to psychological strain (Collins, 2002, & Seals, 2016).
Soul Value

In this section, the words “her” and “herself” represent the participants of this study. Interrelated with ROC are internal and external factors that weigh on underrepresented students’ cost factors. ROC as a framework provides only a steppingstone for further understanding of the multiple values encompassed by Black female student-athletes as well as the values placed on her and her body by institutions. Therefore, it is imperative in the context of this study to insert the framework of soul value coined by Daina Ramey Berry (2017). Soul value is a redundant term utilized in this study because it represents the Black female student-athletes’ perception of value which is completely owned by her. The perception of the participant’s soul value is impacted by various factors; however, the participant is the only one who can articulate her soul value, this aspect will be illustrated in chapter four byway of lyrical monologues to provide each participant a stage to express her thoughts and feelings. The position of each word, punctuation, quotation, line break, indentation, capital letters, etc. all help to amplify her narrative, but also to force readers to feel what she is translating. Taking them to the moment(s) where she experienced a level of vulnerability, contemplation, a realization, etc.

Soul value is placed at the core of this study because it provides a lens to view the relationship of the Black female student-athlete and her relationship with the NCAA member institution and provides insight to the dichotomy of the enslaved and enslaver. Berry (2017) outlines three valuations that were considered by the enslaved and enslavers on the plantation in the American south. Each signifies different aspects of value that stand in juxtaposition with ROC and the analyzation of work tenet outlined in Black feminism. I find each value highlighted by Berry (2017) to be critical concepts to ground this study.

Berry (2017) provides the explanation of soul value and states:
The first value signifies an internal quality. I call this their spirit or soul value. It was an intangible marker that often defied monetization yet spoke to the spirit and soul of who they were as human beings. It represented the self-worth of enslaved people. For some this meant that no monetary value could allow them to comply with slavery. Others, weakened by enslavement, negotiated certain level of commodification to survive their experience. Still others were socially dead. (p. 6)

The enslaved were people and property thus, they encompassed multiple value systems (Berry, 2017). However, soul value provided the enslaved ownership over their thoughts, feelings, and self-worth “in spaces that denied it;” (Berry, 2017, p. 6) and it was “‘what the enslaved actually made of their situation’” (Berry, 2017, p. 6). By positioning their “own thoughts and feelings as opposed to ‘the flesh and blood values’ ascribed to their bodies” (Berry, 2017, p. 7) they demanded soul value (Berry, 2017). Again, soul value is the individual interpretation of the Black female student-athletes’ perception of herself and her relationship with the NCAA member institution.

Berry (2017) positions the second valuation and states “the second form of valuation signifies external assessments rooted in appraisals, which were “projected values that planters, doctors, traders, and others attributed to enslaved people based on their potential work output” (p. 7). This valuation can be mirrored to the recruitment process that she is thrust into to be considered by NCAA member institution. The recruitment process is often generated by the coaching staff in which student-athletes are assessed for their potential athletic talent provided to the institution.

The third valuation articulated by Berry (2017) is “also an external assessment, [that] represents the market value in terms of sale price for [the enslaved] human flesh, negotiated in a
competitive market. It often marked the highest price paid for them as commodities” (p. 7).

Market value in the slave trade was linked to what the enslaved could produce (Berry, 2017). Particularly for Black women, this meant that their bodies and ability to conceive drove their market value up and made bidding enslavers value their “projections based on [her] ‘future increase’” (Berry, 2017, p. 11). Past child-bearing years, enslaved women were called “breeders” (Berry, 2017, p. 12) and their labor was combined with their age and skills to be analyzed for a price tag on their value. Berry (2017) describes the terminology utilized by the auctioneer to emphasize the exposed physique of the Black body on the market and states:

At auction, they were ‘exposed’ to highlight ‘their good qualities’ and ‘described as jockeys show off the good points of their horses. For example, ‘their strength, activity, skill, power and endurance’ were ‘lauded… and those who bid upon them examine[d] their persons, just as purchasers inspect horses and oxen’. (p. 12)

Berry (2017) further states: “enslaved women entered the market as objects and producers of goods; yet they appeared as assets and liabilities depending on the perspective of the seller or the needs of the potential buyer” (p. 13). Black enslaved women had high monetary value based on their abilities to procreate. Her ability to birth children was capitalized to drive up their market value which was solely dependent on the enslaver’s needs and inventory.

The valuation of market value is a critical determination when considering Black female athletes and their soul value at DI PWIs because it demonstrates the institutions’ position of value of the student-athlete. This valuation can stand in direct opposition of the student-athlete’s soul value which can cause conflict for the student-athlete between their perception of value and the institutions’ perception of value. During the recruitment process student-athletes’ talents are appraised, and their market value is dependent on the needs of the NCAA member institution.
The fundamental tenet of *market value* is the actual *price* that the enslaved were sold for. Considering the *assessed potential* of the enslaved and the *value* of their body, a price was determined and sold to the highest bidding enslaver. In this study, this would be comparable to the athletic scholarship student-athletes are offered. The price that the enslaved were sold for was directly related to their value and the stock and inventory of the enslaved. Similarly, student-athletes can receive multiple athletic scholarships from institutions based on the coach’s assessment of their potential talent and the needs of the athletic program. Each scholarship offer is individually crafted, and the factors discussed above influence the amount of scholarship offered to the student-athlete.

To illustrate the three valuations, I want to share my experience as a student-athlete. As a former track and field runner, I became college recruiting potential by the end of my junior year. This meant that coaches from institutions around the country could contact me—according to NCAA guidelines—with potential athletic scholarship offers based on my athletic performance competed at various track meets around the country. Track and field encompasses various events to be completed by athletes; I competed in four, the 800-meter race, the high jump, the 400-meter hurdles, and team relays which included other running events such as the 400-meter race. Competing in each event, I became nationally ranked which alerted collegiate coaches of my *appraisal value*. My *potential* talent to each program was assessed and a conscious decision was made by the coach to contact me. My *appraisal value* became the vessel for my *market value* which fluctuated for each respective program based largely on their current roster of student-athletes and needs for their program. For instance, I was contacted by one D1 NCAA institution to *only* compete on their roster for the high jump even though I considered my strongest event to be the 800-meter race. Another institution solely wanted me to compete for the 800-meter race
and restricted my ability to compete in other events routinely. My market value was bid on by coaches assessing and flaunting my athletic potential which provided me with multiple athletic scholarships and college options to consider.

“Exploring all three forms of valuation at once—soul, appraisal, and market—allows us to consider [Black female student-athletes] as human beings and tradable goods, without divorcing one from the other” (Berry, 2017, p. 7). As I sought the narratives of each participant, I had to consider each valuation as interdependent factors that have grave implications on her decision-making process and potentially her soul value.

The fourth valuation coined by Berry (2017) is ghost value. Ghost value is the assessment and price tag placed on deceased enslaved bodies to be sold to medical institutions in the U.S. or for legal purposes such as insurance policies (Berry, 2017). While the definition of ghost value is not directly addressed within this study, it can be adapted as Black female student-athletes do have a termination date of competition dictated by the NCAA’s terms of eligibility. Additionally, her ability to compete is not guaranteed upon acceptance and commitment of the athletic scholarship offered. Coaches can deny student-athletes participation in competition. For example, when I competed, not every athlete traveled to track meets each week. Your ability to travel and compete at certain track meets was dependent on your ability to produce a high athletic performance that would ultimately produce points for a high team performance and an overall win for the program. These sudden and often unexpected breaks in competition meant that your value was appraised low for the purposes of the competition and lead to your ghost value.

Ghost value can also be adapted further in this study to explore when student-athletes graduate from the institution. How does ghost value effect the student-athlete’s soul value? This
question is explored through the third research question of this study; “describe your lived experience, before, during and after your collegiate experience”. The narrative of life post collegiately is something to consider. Berry (2017) states:

> since enslaved people’s values were calculated regularly, it was easy to determine the value of their bodies at death—ghost values. An individual enslaver could look at his or her most recent estate inventory, insurance policy, or bill of sale to find out how much his or her enslaved laborers was worth. (p. 7)

For further expansion beyond the scope of this study, ghost value can be explored through the comparison in which coaches look at their most recent graduating class and past scholarship offers to student-athletes to make assessments of potential value for their incoming recruiting class.

To further expand on and to develop a thorough framework for soul value in the context of this study, the following components are shown in Table 1: the relationship between Black female student-athletes and NCAA member institution; and how appraisal, market, and ghost value function to impact the soul value of the Black female student-athlete.
### TABLE 1

**Valuations considered by the enslaved and the enslaver**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Research Question Applied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soul Value</td>
<td>Is completely owned and interpreted by Black female athletes. It represents the self-worth of enslaved people. Considered an internal assessment.</td>
<td>How have the vestiges of slavery affected Black female student-athletes’ soul value; In what ways do they display resilience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal Value</td>
<td>Considered to be an external assessment that is rooted in the projected value NCAA member institutions attribute to Black female athletes and their potential work output.</td>
<td>How do they describe their lived experience as a Black female student-athlete before, during and after their collegiate experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>An external assessment that represents the athletic scholarship (price) offered for Black female athletes and their bodies to produce their potential work output, negotiated in a competitive market of other NCAA member institutions.</td>
<td>How do they describe their lived experience as a Black female student-athlete before, during and after their collegiate experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost Value</td>
<td>The value of the Black female athlete when competition has ceased. This is an external assessment that can be generated abruptly during the course of participation or through the termination of athletic eligibility.</td>
<td>How do they describe their lived experience as a Black female student-athlete before, during and after their collegiate experience?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature review in the following section depicts the historical realities of enslaved Black women on the plantation. Positioning this study in the foundation of painful truths experienced by enslaved Black women will heighten the stories of the participants and perhaps leave readers to ponder why their feelings or experiences are not highlighted more broadly in scholarly...
discourse and national discussion. I depict the value placed on enslaved Black women on the plantation in the American south and then conclude this chapter with linking each section of this chapter back to the purpose of this study.

**The Value of Enslaved Women in the American South**

There are vast “differences between black men and women, and black women and white people” (White, 1999, p. 4). It is imperative to begin with this understanding to examine the literature of the American slave system in the Southern United States. The legacy of Black women’s enslavement allows us, today, to determine their postbellum experiences (White, 1999). Black people collectively were unjustly dehumanized during their enslavement; thus, the literature must consider what it means “for black women to share some identity and disability of both black men and white women and yet be very different from both” (White, 1999, p. 5). To begin, “we now understand that race, class, gender, sexuality, and other identity variables do not exist interdependently. Nor do they compete for supremacy, but reinforce, overlap, and intersect each other” (White, 1999, p.5). Racism and sexism are compounded and intersected for Black women, and they cannot be separated (White, 1999). “We cannot consider who black women are as black people without considering their sex, nor can we consider who they are as women without considering their race” (White, 1999, p. 6). Concurrently, the pervasive connection of Black women’s bodies cannot be considered without this knowledge and their labor on the American plantation cannot be considered without the attention of their value to the enslaver’s system.

This is underscored by Daina Ramey Berry’s (2017) work *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation*. This important body of literature confirms Black women’s bodies were evaluated for a “monetary
value based on their age, skill, and reproductive status” (Berry, 2017, p. 13). Black women’s reproductive status separated them from Black enslaved men, and they were offered a price based on their potential procreation and pound of flesh (Berry, 2017).

Hawkins’ (2013) insightful work draws a comparison to the structure of PWIs as it relates to the Back student-athlete experience and the connection to the plantation model of the American south to further depict the exploitation of enslaved persons. His work illustrates how internal colonialism—the theory that supports uneven effects of economic development and examines how society produces forms of racial discrimination—oppresses and exploits the enslaved economically, politically, socially, and culturally which are all connected to further dehumanize the colonized. However, as noted, there lies a gap in the literature when considering the enslaved and colonized under this context. To analyze the conditions and experiences of Blacks in the United States, White (1999) contends that one cannot ignore Black women’s contributions to “America’s social, economic, or political development” (p. 3). I support this contention and further add, in the context of exploitation of Black athletes at PWIs, inserted within the larger conversation must be Black female student-athletes themselves. To effectively discuss the exploitation of Black student-athletes, we must acknowledge female athletes and the analyzation of their bodies and valuations ascribed to them during slavery.

According to Hawkins (1995) the colonized and the colonizer’s mutual dependence are “bound together through the inter colonial situation” (Hawkins, 1995, p. 31). I would further insert that the colonizer’s privileges must also be connected to the exploitation of the Black female body. In other words, Black women and the value placed on their bodies played an essential role to how society views capitalism and colonization today. “The rape of black women… the inattention to their pregnancy, the sale of their children were simultaneous
manifestations of racism and sexism” (White, 1999, p. 5-6) and provided a foundation for the systemic racist systems of today.

The institution of slavery was structured around the enslaved women’s body but had no boundaries as it extended its reach into her womb (Berry, 2017). The cost of the unborn child was linked to the mother’s uterus (Berry, 2017) and “the enslaved woman entered the market as objects and producers of goods; yet they appeared as assets and liabilities depending on the perspective of the seller or the needs of the potential buyer” (Berry, 2017, p. 13). White (1999) further describes the indecency during sales and how enslaved women would even have forced cesarean sections performed on them. Enslavers capitalized on the reproductive value of Black enslaved women. On each occasion,

the women’s reproductive values were crucial to the expansion of the institution, particularly when African supply source via transatlantic slave trading was abolished in 1808. This shifted the source to the natural, coerced, encouraged, and forced reproduction of enslaved women in America and other New World slave societies. (Berry, 2017, p. 13) Thus, across the south, slavery began to increase rapidly (Berry, 2017). Most scholars examine the monetary value of enslaved men, however, ignoring the price patterns of enslaved women’s does not present a holistic story. Enslaved women and their projected procreation are the quintessential foundation to capitalism and colonialism as we know it today and the fundamental force of the American slave trade. In the context of collegiate American sports, one cannot have the conversation of commodification without the keen acknowledgement of Black women and the roles their bodies have provided. To engage in the conversation of exploitation and the inequities that are perpetuated by the vestiges of slavery within the athletic-industrial
complex of the NCAA, Black female student-athlete’s perception of value within their experience must be a factor from recruitment to beyond.

**Bridging The Gap**

Black feminism is utilized in this study to support each story. By conducting this study, I have bridged the gap within the existing literature and enhanced the Black women’s collective standpoint. Like most Black feminist research, this study generated from my own experience as a Black female student-athlete. My decision to pursue education at a Southern institution challenged my worldview and influenced my positionality. The effects of my experience forever shaped who I am today and worries me for future generations of Black female student-athletes.

This study does not shy away from the realities that Black women have faced and continue to. Even though this study celebrates the resiliency and resistance to the oppression experienced by Black women it is to be understood that this study is not to present Black women as being “heroic figures who easily engage in resisting oppression on all fronts [as that] minimizes the very real costs of oppression and can foster the perception that Black women need no help because we can ‘take it’” (Collins, 2002, p. 287). Instead, this study centers Black women by raising important issues of the Black female and student-athlete experience in a chronological context that involves highlighting the dichotomy of oppression and activism, which Colins (2002) suggests is a complicated feat.

It is needed for me to showcase my participants’ voices— upheld by the tenets of Black feminism and the mid-level theories— and invite others to hear their truth and feelings of value. Each valuation represented in Table I reinforces the concepts of Black feminism. The valuations ascribed during slavery to Black women and their bodies had a direct impact on Black women and their experiences during slavery (Berry, 2017). Today, we know there are vestiges of slavery
that have systematically influenced the lives of Black people and for the focus of this study, the various valuations ascribed to the enslaved have shown indications of perpetuation in the NCAA systematic structure which in turn have implications on the soul value of Black female student-athletes who compete at DI institutions in the south.

As Black female student-athletes progress through their tenure it is important to explore how interventions can be placed to support them. Bridging the gap with this study is a motion to push back against the racial and sexist ideology located within the dominate culture and widens the scope of knowledge. It is intended to demonstrate support for Black women as a collective and seeks to amplify the voices that have continuously been resistant to social injustice.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS & DATA COLLECTION

Every story has a process. I believe in the quote “the magic of storytelling is found within the stories themselves”. Much like eating your favorite homecooked meal prepared by your favorite loved one. It is one thing to have the ingredients to cook the dish yourself, but it is another to experience the dish when you know the story behind the love and soul utilized to create it just for you. Consider this analogy for the process of this dissertation and this chapter being the kitchen. In this chapter, I guide readers through my acts of tender, love, and care and discuss the key elements that helped to bring forth the narratives presented in chapter four.

Unlike a standard recipe, this process was not formulaic. Instead, it began many years ago as I walked the halls of Rocky Top as a freshman student-athlete. Eight years have passed since then and I have had valuable experiences that have helped me to craft this study. I like to consider each experience as my personal way of thinking about the flavors and texture of this text, making small changes along the way to present the perfect recipe for this dissertation.

The beginning of this chapter will present the research methodology and then the text will transition to present the elements for the research approach and will conclude with the method of data collection and analysis.

Methodology

The sense of appeal and comfort for educators to pursue narrative inquiry as a methodology (Clandinin & Caine, 2013) is not the reason why I have selected it as a methodology for this study. Instead, I have chosen to focus on a fundamental way Black women have historically displayed their activism.

For generations, Black women have utilized their voices as a form of activism to bring awareness to the injustices they face as well as to attempt to dismantle systems that uphold white
normative oppressive conditions (Collins, 2002). The construction of Western knowledge is no stranger to these conditions, yet the consequence of this reality leaves Black women and other women of the diaspora to have their experiences as Collins (2002) describes as distorted, erased, or excluded from “what counts as knowledge” (Collins, 2002, p. 251). Thankfully, scholars such as Collins (2002) among many others, have stepped in to reshape and state what we as Black women have always known, which is we have been carriers of knowledge and have been teaching our daughters and sharing our ideas with the world thorough the “use [of] music, literature, daily conversation, and everyday behavior” (Collins, 2002, p. 251). Our voices have sung us to freedom, have prayed protection over our souls, and for generations, our voices have preserved truth and hope within our culture byway of storytelling. Storytelling for us has decolonized the history books and bestowed wisdom. From the beauty shop to the kitchen and even sitting on our grandmother’s lap to get our hair braided, we have heard and listened to our mother’s voices (Evans-Winters, 2019). Stories have given Black women insight on what it means to be a daughter providing us with intimate knowledge as we transition to teach our daughters (Evans-Winters, 2019).

I have intently chosen narrative inquiry for this study. Narrative inquiry was first introduced to educational research by Connelly and Clandinin. It is “first and foremost a way of understanding experience” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p 542) and provides a vessel to have a “relational engagement between researcher and research participants” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 542). For the purposes of this study, it goes beyond just wanting to gather the accounts of what it is like to be a Black female Division I student-athlete at a PWI. Narrative inquiry allowed the participants of this study to center their thoughts and feelings so that readers can clearly listen to their soul value. Evans-Winters (2019) called the narrative approach more than a research
technique, but rather a research strategy. I agree with this statement but want to also include that for the purpose of this research, I did not only select narrative inquiry as a research methodology to strategize against the academic norms, but rather to center and humanize the voices of Black women and remove the emphasis of power from those who dominate the conversation and provide agency to the women who have graciously chosen to participate in this study.

Considering this study is connected to higher education, it serves as a critical space to audit the standards and methods used to conduct qualitative inquiry (Collins, 2002). Pairing narrative inquiry with Black feminism provided the ideal combination to serve an intellectual delicacy that positioned Black women to orate their truth while simultaneously asking the rest to quiet down so they can hear them speak.

Arts-Based Research

Some chefs may present the argument that you never produce a perfect meal from a recipe. However, as a new chef, you must start somewhere. Similarly, as a new qualitative researcher, I wanted to know how narrative qualitative research should be written. Thus, I spent hours reading and researching dissertations and journal articles that included elements of my research. This led me to “test” their formulas out and I began to craft this chapter mirroring what I had learned through their versions. However, internally, I knew that something was off. The way I was writing was not complementing the voices of the women who shared their narratives with me. Since the onset of this dissertation, it has always been my goal to ensure that their voices were given justice and I would just merely be an advocate for them.

One night, I had a conversation with a friend and described the feeling of guilt I would have if I did not write their stories the “right” way. At the time, the “right” way included the standard of what is appropriate for narrative qualitative inquiry in the eyes of academia. She
reassured me and we began to discuss ways that stories are told. We landed on Ntozake Shange’s (1980) text *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*. The next day, I had a meeting with my dissertation committee methodologist, Dr. Nordstrom. In our conversation, I expressed how something was not working with my writing and she too mentioned the text *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*. After our meeting, I went straight to the library, checked out the book and began to browse YouTube listening to the monologues of the text. Immediately, something clicked! From then, I went on to craft the monologues of each woman and suddenly, the feeling of guilt I was holding on to of not getting it “right” left, and I was at peace with how her words began to come alive on paper.

Unbeknownst to myself, I did not realize that I was stepping into the realm of arts-based qualitative research. Arts-based research (ABR) has garnered increasingly more attention from qualitative scholars (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2014). This approach derived from an educational event in the early ‘90s yet later became popularized by “the work of McNiff (1998; 2008)” (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2014, p. 288) who noticed that his students were connecting their creative expressions with the research process in their thesis and dissertations (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2014).

There are many types of ABR. One of the most well-known forms of ABR is arts-informed inquiry which this research is categorized under. Arts-informed inquiry often overlaps with narrative approaches illustrating data through “narratives, poetry, and photographs” (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2014, p. 295). I have decided to represent each narrative byway of poetic inquiry employing techniques of theatre to produce poetic monologues. Cahnmann-Taylor & Zhang (2020) state that poetic inquiry is the use of poetry for the purposes of research. It
allows for researchers to collect, analyze, and constitute data (Cahnmann-Taylor & Zhang, 2020).

I have chosen to write each narrative from the participant-voiced poem category of poetic inquiry. Thus, this style of poetic inquiry afforded me the opportunity to write the monologues from my interview transcripts and keep the voice of each participant as the main character. It is to mention that the classifications of inquiry both are useful, yet controversial (Cahnmann-Taylor & Zhang, 2020). Cahnmann-Taylor & Zhang (2020) contend that although the participant voice is at the center, ultimately, it is the researcher who is shaping the words of the participants, selecting each word and in what order to imply that the researcher’s voice is always present. However, I want to be clear in stating that each monologue written in chapter four was not crafted by piecing words together to make their thoughts resemble what was reflected in their transcript. Instead, I have taken the portions of our conversation where I saw soul value reflected most in their story and I have written each monologue to keep the words and thoughts of each participant authentic to how it was presented in our conversation. My voice was only mentioned where I felt there needed to be a transition to the next word or if I knew readers needed the context to understand the thought. I have only inserted one-word additions and not my own thoughts. The use of brackets was important so that readers knew that my voice was used and not the participants. For example, in Lady in Indigo’s monologue, it is written I got COVID and that just sealed the deal that [track] was over. In our conversation, Lady in Indigo did not specify track specifically, but I felt that it was important context for the purpose of her story. In Lady in Yellow’s monologue, it is written [So] I built community. There needed to be a transition to this thought, thus I added the transition without misrepresenting her words. The reader will see elements of this decision reflected throughout the monologues in chapter four.
In chapter five, however, I felt there was a need to take excerpts of each monologue to create a collective monologue to present the voices of the rainbow which depicts the collective thoughts and feelings of the participants. The monologue is an ensemble of soul value to further articulate the collective experience of Black female student-athletes. Again, for the purposes of the data collection in chapter four, and the collective standpoint demonstrated in chapter five, participant voice remains at the center, and I did not alter the words, thoughts or feelings expressed in the narratives.

The point of intersection where ABR met narrative inquiry, paired with poetic inquiry, made for the best participant representation of voice and storytelling I could ask for. Combining these elements helped to preserve authentic moments of conversation and conveyed each word in the manner it was meant to be. The next section highlights the garnishing of this fusion that ultimately presented the perfect dish in chapter four.

**For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf**

*For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* (1980) is a choreopoem first written by Ntozake Shange in the ‘70s. Shange states that inspiration for this choreopoem came from dance, and women poems and women readings that were not common text available at the time. Further inspiration derived from the Women’s Studies Program at Sonoma State College where she “designed to make women’s lives & dynamics familiar to us all” (Shange, 1997, p. x). In the summer of 1974, Shange stated she began a series of seven poems modeled on Judy Grahn’s *The Common Woman*, which were to explore the realities of seven different kinds of women. They were numbered pieces: the women were to be nameless & assume hegemony as dictated by the fullness of their lives. The first of the series is the poem ‘one’ [orange butterflies & aqua sequins], which
prompted the title & this is for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rain
bow is enuf... All the readings & choreopoetry that Paula Moss & I developed after that summer was for colored girls. (Shange, 1997, p. xii)

After I checked out the book from the library and watched monologues from the choreopoem via YouTube, I began to reflect on Shange’s inspiration and thought process for creating space for each woman she amplified in her work. What resonated with me was the individuality of each story and the struggle or celebration that was told through her story. However, most notable to me was the collective strength of each monologue that made the text that move invigorating to process.

Shange uses poetic techniques such as rhythm, line breaks, punctuation, block stanzas, capital letters, etc. to create an art that so beautifully illustrated the words of the women represented. My favorite monologue was Lady in Brown. It was after reading her story, I knew that this was the method that I had to use to approach chapter four. Readers will notice that I too have used poetic techniques to tell the stories of these women. The reader will find that rhythm and pace of the text helps to articulate the internal conversations within participants, or how they chose to express their emotion. Line breaks are intentional, at times to illustrate a change in thought or to replicate actual time that passed during her journey. Punctuation, particularly the use of question marks indicates moments of them questioning their soul value from an experience that was in direct opposition of the institution, coach, or sport.

The reader will also notice that I have chosen to provide each participant with a color like Shange’s representation of each woman in her text. I explain the decision in further detail in the following section; however, I want to note here that it was a decision derived from inspiration and to keep the individuality of each participant. Thus, the colors used for participants are not a
direct indicator of the women’s alma matter but motivated by the colors used in Shange’s text and nor are they correlated to the stories told by the respective colors in Shange’s work.

**Trustworthiness & Ethics**

Trustworthiness, credibility, and legitimacy were carefully considered during each phase of the research process. Firstly, I have been in situations where I have recounted my experience and have had my credibility questioned. I understand the emotional affects this has, so it was critical for me to demonstrate trustworthiness and ethics by firstly believing what each participant says. Providing ownership over one’s story is central to Black feminism in qualitative inquiry (Evans-Winters, 2019) and should be demonstrated through narrative inquiry. To further demonstrate trustworthiness and ethics, as previously discussed, I have given each participant an alias though the use of colors to mirror Shange’s (1980) choreopoem *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*. This decision was not an attempt to remove ownership of voice, but rather to maintain a level of privacy and confidentiality and as a method to characterize the women to the audience. The decision to list narratives by color name is a practice of my work that will remain consistent even when this study is published and expands beyond the scope of this dissertation [See Appendix C]; individual identifiers will never be published. Considering the colors together as presented in chapter five, created a rainbow to showcase their collective experiences that share a beautiful message in the end that Black female student-athletes have strong bonds of connection and share a collective struggle; yet, together, their voices exude strength and tenacity.
Tender Love and Care an Ethical Practice

Ethical practices were earned and demonstrated through the ethics of care framework (Collins, 2002) by simply talking from my heart. I wanted each conversation to be genuine and personal so that each participant felt comfortable to be vulnerable without concern of judgement from me. On each occasion, at the beginning of our conversation, we exchanged large smiles that served as hugs, and a warm hello followed that informed us that even if we were uncertain at how our conversation would unfold, it was the unspoken affirmation that we are glad to speak to each other and we were ready to have it. Each conversation fast tracked us to a level of intimacy of knowing one another thus I had to rely on the three interrelated components of the ethics of care framework; uniqueness, concerns of appropriateness of emotions, and empathy, to help foster a healthy and positive atmosphere for dialogue. The following is an overview of each component.

The first component of the ethics of care is uniqueness (Collins, 2002). This is rooted in the traditions of African humanism, in which “each individual is thought to be a unique expression of a common spirit, power, or energy inherit in all life” (Collins, 2002, p. 263). The second component is concerns of appropriateness of emotions in dialogues (Collins, 2002). This component is concerned with the emotions the speaker indicates to ensure validity of the argument (Collins, 2002). The last component is the development of the capacity for empathy (Collins, 2002). This component is to ensure that empathy is encompassed through every step of the conversation to safeguard a brave space for those sharing their experience. Each component provided a level of protection to women of this study.

Given that I identify with the criteria for this study—Black female, former DI student-athlete who went to a PWI in the south—I had to set my assumptions to the side and not expect
for their experiences to be like mine. Each participant knew that I had these identifiers as they were disclosed in my introductory email. Having this level of openness upfront aided a level of vulnerability from participants that I may not have received otherwise. Conversation was fluid and comfortable and I was able to listen intently to the words she was sharing with me. Naturally, at times when I would wholeheartedly feel where she was coming from, I would interject phrases such as “Girl, I understand,” or “Yes, I know what you mean.” Academically, this is called “witnessing” (Evans-Winters, 2019). As Black women, we share a dialect to let each other know I understand you; I feel you, do you feel me? Essentially, I am ensuring that when she alluded to “do you feel me?” I was able to respond with my honest reactions to let her know that I did. This was not utilized as an academic strategy, but rather simply an innate response that derived from cultural knowledge which we have learned from our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, homegirls, etc. This form of call and response created a synergy within our discussion and the conversation, at least for me, turned from an interview into a conversation with one of my homegirls. In turn, I received positive feedback from the women, who stated their excitement and comfort to have been able to engage with me.

**Reflection**

I have chosen to write about experiences that are reflective of my own personal experiences. The birth of this dissertation came from the understanding that my experience as a Black female student-athlete was initially challenging, and I knew the experiences of those around me were too. Having been removed from collegiate athletes for some time has motivated me to explore what the journey was like for recently removed Black females in these spaces. Were they experiencing similar experiences? How were they feeling as they navigated challenges, and did they receive support? These are some of the many questions that have
motivated this text and has helped to develop the purpose for this study. I share my reflection because traditional research encourages the researcher to have a level of objectivity in their writing. It is often frowned upon when the researcher does not have a level of distance between themselves and the subject. Black feminist thought supported me to insert myself within the text and frankly, it would be very difficult to try to fully remove myself. As I mentioned in chapter one, I have utilized “I”, “we,” and “our” because Black feminism teaches us that Black women have shared experiences of oppression and there are notable experiences that help to shape who we are. The experiences I have encountered “shape[ed] how [I as the researcher] consume[d] and produce[d] knowledge as well as how [I chose] to disseminate knowledge (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 3). Therefore, I am not ashamed to share a level of commonality with the women in this study, because I too am her.

**But What About Reflexivity?**

Reflexivity as a methodological tool has been used by qualitative researchers (particularly by scholars using critical feminist or race-based theories) “to better represent, legitimize, or call into question their data” (Pillow, 2003, p. 176). Pillow (2003) states that a common trend derived from the use of reflexivity is “increased attention to researcher subjectivity in the research process” (p. 176). How do I remove my own influences from being an insider to not impact the narratives of my participants? Whose story, is it? Mine or the participants? How does who I am and feel about who I am affect the research and analysis process? These are questions that I have reflected on leading up to conducting my research and questions that I pondered intensely and reacted to with great care. In this process, there was an ongoing match between being reflective and reflexive. Being reflexive has roots within reflection, however, “to be reflective does not demand an ‘other,’ while to be reflexive demands
both another and some self-conscious awareness of the process of self-scrutiny” (Pillow, 2003, p. 177). Scholars value reflexivity in qualitative work but “does all this self-reflexivity produce better research?” (Pillow, 2003, p. 176). Pillow (2002) addresses this question by asking the following:

How has reflexivity been figured as important and necessary to qualitative research? How is reflexivity used and what roles and purposes does reflexivity play in qualitative research? How have uses of reflexivity shifted within modernism and postmodernism and how can we continue to use reflexivity while acknowledging its limits? (p.177)

To answer the initial question, Pillow (2003) suggests that the solution is to not stop talking about our positions, but at the same time we do not have to harp on them either. In this research, I chose to address one of Pillow’s (2003) four strategies to provide a clear method of how I demonstrate reflexivity, through reflexivity as recognition of self.

**Reflexivity as recognition of self**

The use of this method of reflexivity requires the researcher to know thyself (Pillow, 2003). Additionally, it “imbues the researcher with the ability to be self-reflexive, to recognize an otherness of self and the self of others” (Pillow, 2003). I had to seek out my own subjectivity during this research and the research process. This started with the reflection process acknowledging the qualities I share with this research, and it emerged during the research process where I engaged in “witnessing”. Pillow’s (2003) text reminds us that:

if researchers are informed about the qualities that have emerged during their research, they can at least disclose to their readers where self and subject became joined. They can at best be enabled to write unshackled from orientations that they did not realize were intervening in the research process’. (p. 182)
Knowing this, the ability to disclose my own subjectivity depended on noting “where [myself] ends and another begins through the use of self-reflexivity” (Pillow, 2003, p. 182). I chose to be honest about myself in relation to the women of this study. Offering this information upfront to the readers of this text was a way that I selected to provide and collide my academic self and cultural knowledge to help describe my “place or positionality within a community and the social world” (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 3). For me, it was important to begin with this foundation to recognize how I consume and chose to produce this knowledge. Furthermore, Evans-Winters (2019) mentions that Black women are “in conscience engagement in the interpretation of data, we draw upon formal academic training in research methods, but we also consciously and subconsciously rely on cultural intuition and prior childhood and adult socialization within our primary cultures(s)” (p. 3). Now, I know critics may question how this method of self-reflexivity may result in aligning myself too closely to the subject by seeking similarities. I want to acknowledge that my decision to be transparent was not a decision to be “closer” to the women who participated in this research, but rather to start with a level of commonality that would support the trustworthiness and ethics of the research process. Pillow (2003) provides a few examples that showcase how researchers demonstrated a point of view to draw a common starting point to help with the understanding of perspective:

For example, Laura Ellingson (1998) uses the format of the ‘confessional tale’ to reflect on how her own experiences with cancer created empathy and understanding with the patients in the oncology clinic where she was doing fieldwork. She states that she does not write the confessional tale to offer reassurance to the reader of a more valid tale, but rather ‘to reassure the reader that my findings are thoroughly contaminated. This contamination with my own lived experiences results in a rich, complex understanding of
the staff and patients of the clinic in which I am observing (and of my own cancer experiences)” (p. 183).

The same text shares another example of a scholar noting her personal experiences with bulimia to help deepen the understanding of her own experiences as well as further comprehension of the participants. What each example showcases “is an acceptance that coming to know oneself will aid in knowing, understanding, ‘witnessing,’ the other” (Pillow, 2003, p.183). Now, Pillow also takes a deep dive into whether “the reader needed the author’s confessional tale to read the data? [and] Did the use of ‘witnessing’ as a metaphor for the researcher aid in my understanding of the research or close off my reading” (Pillow, 2003, p.183). As mentioned, although she is not calling for researchers to move away from being self-reflexive of thyself in the research process, she still states:

I suggest that self-reflexivity that is predicated upon the ability of the researcher to know her/his own subjectivity and to make this subjectivity known to the reader through disclosure is limited and limiting because such usages are necessarily dependent on knowable subject and often collapse into linear tellings that render the researcher and the research subject as more familiar to each other (and thus the reader). Such usages have also equated the knowing researcher as somehow having ‘better,’ more ‘valid’ data perpetuating a use of self-reflexivity as a methodological tool to get better data.” (p. 184)

I contend that I am not of the position that I automatically know the women who have chosen to participate in this study just because we share things in common. In chapter two, Black feminism showed us that we share varied experiences even as a group who has similar oppressors. I also know that my position to be honest and upfront about my positionality is not a tactic to “get better data” or to somehow have readers of this study enhance its validity. This decision to be
self-reflexive of myself is a way that I chose to engage with the women of this study in the nontraditional form of qualitative methodology to present in the most intimate form of gathering their personal stories, that I too feel where she is coming from because I am her, and I have been in similar situations.

Get To Know Her

I have intently decided to interview five former student-athletes who attended a Division I PWI in the Southern region of the U.S. so that access to participants would be easily attained and not interfere with any NCAA rules and regulations. The recruitment process for this study followed purposeful sampling. I self-identified a starting point of the recruitment process by contacting my former high school track and field coach via phone. At the time, she served as a NCAA Division I track and field coach at a Southern institution and her institution classified as predominately white. I expressed the purpose of my research and the qualifications needed for participation; (1) self-identify as Black or African American; (2) have participated as a student-athlete at a NCAA Division I institution in the Southern region of the United States; (3) identify as a recent graduate from a predominately white institution—which for the purpose of this study is considered a graduate of the respective institution and no more than 5 years removed from athletic competition; (4) able to engage in one, one hour interview session with the potential of a follow-up interview. With this knowledge, my former coach was able to help recruit potential individuals for this study. She connected us via email and then I was able to provide an overview of the purpose for this research and state the objective of their participation. These informed decisions were made with hopes to generate a sampling that would improve the quality of the research synthesis.
**Why The South?**

As discussed, this research derived from my own personal experiences navigating a PWI DI institution in the Southern part of the United States. I have chosen this regional location for a few reasons. Firstly, of its the historical ties to the location of the enslavement of Black people. Chapter two presented the historical context to the horrors Black women faced on southern plantations and how her struggles continue until today in white dominated spaces. Exploring the narratives of Black female student-athletes at PWIs helped to capture the parallel systematic structures of the NCAA institution (and its members), to the plantation system during slavery. Secondly, the south provided a backdrop for the narratives shared. Each participant is a former collegiate athlete, thus today, they are living across the country, but all share the Southern Division I experience. Today, the Southern part of the U.S. is still a place where racism and sexism are prevalent for Black women. Unfortunately, Black female student-athletes still experience a level of this oppression in their sport environments.

**“But Your Sample Size…”**

Small sample sizes are usually a critique by many critics who believe that validity cannot be obtained, or perhaps they believe the research is unethical unless it yields valid information or maybe they simply think the research will produce inconclusive results. However, it is not uncommon for qualitative studies, particularly of Black female student-athletes to have a “small number of participants” (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019, p. 413). Kim (2015) suggests that with narrative inquiry, the sample size may usually be smaller and the interview longer in length.

I have interviewed five former student-athletes and had in depth conversation with each that lasted an hour or more in length. This was plenty of time and provided an intimacy with each woman and I believe aided to the relationship that formed during our conversations. Critics
who believe there is no validity to a small sample size in this study, must consider that stories
heavily rely on the women’s narratives meaning there are personal stories which makes them
subjective and there will be no single truth. Again, Black feminism teaches us that Black women
have diverse responses even though “we may produce certain commonalities of outlook, the
diversity of class, region, age, and sexual orientation shaping individual [our] lives [results] in
different expressions” (Collin, 1986, p. 16). The result of the relevant research is not to
legitimize validity for we know that these stories are the truth of these women, but instead, the
obligation for me, as a Black woman researcher, is to position these realities to produce facts and
theories that clarify the collective Black women’s standpoint (Collins, 1986). Furthermore,
scrutinizing the credibility of our voices through the critique of sample size further perpetuates
the narrative that our stories are invalid or should be silenced.

**Method of Data Collection**

I conducted semi-structure interviews for this study. I debated back and forth between
this method of data collection because I was fearful of the conversation being restricted and
transactional. Yet, the semi-structure interview was a delightful addition to my art-based
narrative inquiry approach. Each interview was guided by predetermined questions that focused
on the overarching research question, how have the vestiges of slavery affected Black female
student-athletes’ soul value? [See Appendix A] for the guide. This interview style was chosen
because it is supported by Black feminism. I was able to allow each conversation to structure
itself even though I had a set of standard questions. I often would ask follow-up questions in our
conversation because either I wanted deeper understanding, or to be sure I understood her
experience correctly. This style of interview provided a chance for participants to be their
authentic self during our conversation and I was able to affirm their verbal and non-verbal
sentiments. Conducting each interview virtually aided this as participants were able to be in an environment that was safe and comfortable to them. All interviews were audio-taped on Zoom, transcribed, and stored securely in a locked environment that contained password-protected hardware and was only accessible by me [See Appendix B].

The non-verbal sentiments were important to convey their expressions as I wrote their monologues. I attempted to illustrate this in chapter four with the pace of the monologue or positioning words strategically. A notable example of this is in Lady in Orange’s monologue where she slightly shook her head. She stated:

I wasn’t feelin’ it anymore.
I just wanted to go.

This formatting was intently done to mirror her body language during our conversation. Also, I thought of this line as if someone was shaking their finger “no”. As if she was saying, “no, I had enough”. Non-verbal communications have significant meaning to many Black women. (Evans-Winters, 2003, p. 70). The nonverbal expression of feeling is just as important as the verbal telling during the narration. In the story-telling process, there is a need to convey the entire story to tell Black women’s stories in affirming ways. The use of semi-structured interviews to tell stories with empathy, respect, and compassion is further respective of supporting their multiple realities (Evans-Winters, 2019).

**Daughtering**

This method of data analysis is hard to fully convey on paper because Daughtering formulates a way of life where “life becomes data; data becomes praxis; praxis becomes awareness; and awareness becomes critical consciousness” (Evans-Winters, 2019, p. 8) and in
that critical consciousness, one begins to live differently and in turn, life becomes data again (Evans-Winters, 2019). Essentially, this form of analysis comes with no formal manual (Evans-Winters, 2019), only our knowledge though careful and often keen observation as Black daughters. Daughtering is an intimate multilayered way of knowing and learning and Daughtering implores vulnerability, centers resilience, and invokes power as we rely on our mothers, grandmothers, and ancestral lineage to pull from their strength (Evans-Winters, 2019).

After concluding the conversations with the women, I had to step away from the data for months. This was because I had to process the information shared and decode the feelings that were entrusted to me. As a “new caretaker” (Evans-Winters, 2019, p.138) of the participants pain, in some instances, I had to sit with that and take note of how it made me feel. Often, I would replay portions of the narratives in my head and feel the emotions of their words. Processing my reactions to the portions that were most emotional for me helped me to further understand their perspectives. However, at times, it was overwhelming for me, and I had to sleep or distract myself with an alternate task to not absorb the emotions throughout the day. I waited until the moment I knew it was time to return to this work. I knew the moment had arrived because I felt a strong urge to hear their narratives again. When I felt led to return to the data, I listened to each story again. In some instances, I went on a walk at Shelby Farms Park around the lake to receive the information in an environment that was calming so that I could hear the words clearly and understand how she was conveying her thoughts. Daughtering knows “that one piece of data could have multiple interpretations and meanings and we give meaning to that data based on our positionality in the social world” (Evans-Winters, p. 140). Thus, I was able to consistently rewind, pause and play the narrative to become familiar with her vulnerability.
As I transcribed the narratives, I noted where she stated her resilience. I considered the following questions:

how has the person’s life been molded by social circumstances beyond her control? In what ways has vulnerability been forced upon her, and she been implored to show tenacity? [and] How has her strength developed her into a resource for her community and society?” (p. 140)

This helped me to reflect the participant’s soul value in their monologues and gave me an additional level of empathy and care with her story. At moments I prayed and asked God to give me the words to say, or to help me to write the story in the way she told it. I did not want to hinder the words of her journey because God had already written it for her. I found myself praying for her and other Black female athletes who may have experienced like situations of the narratives. Daughtering reminded me that we are not alone (Evans-Winters, 2019), thus I approached the analysis process with my love as if I was kin with her.

For further understanding, I have constructed Table 2 to demonstrate how daughtering presented itself though the process of analysis:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Guide Questions</th>
<th>What Daughtering looks like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How have the vestiges of slavery affected Black female student-athletes’ soul value?</td>
<td>- Tell me where you are from and describe your childhood.</td>
<td>The process of analysis: how has the person’s life been molded by social circumstances beyond her control?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What was it like to be Black and attend college in the South?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What was it like to attend a predominately white institution?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do you see yourself in your sport?</td>
<td>The process of analysis: how has vulnerability been forced upon her, and she been implored to show tenacity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How did you choose to preserve through tough situations?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tell me about the dynamic between you and your coach.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tell me about the dynamic between you and other members on staff related to your sport.</td>
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<td>- Tell me about the dynamics between you and your teammates.</td>
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<td>- What was your recruitment process like?</td>
<td>The process of analysis: how has her strength developed her into a resource for her community and society?</td>
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<td>- Tell me about your involvement on campus.</td>
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<td>- Tell me how your perceptions became visible in your sport.</td>
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<td>- What does post collegiate life look like since you have graduated?</td>
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<td>- Do you still engage in physical activity or are you active with the sport you played in college?</td>
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In what way do they display resilience?

How do they describe their lived experience as a Black female student-athlete before, during and after their collegiate experience?
Ultimately, daughtering is soul work. It provided me with the tools to approach this research with the ability to understand and share feelings with the women with instinct and perception. It gave me a level of sensitivity that exceeded my personal knowledge by entrusting me with the emotions of others. When their emotion felt like too much to carry, I called on my spiritual guidance for assistance and He was able to guide me to the next step. In turn, I feel blessed to have been the vessel for each of the women who I believe we have been spiritually guided to each other for the purposes of this study.

The next chapter presents the monologues of the five women who participated in this study. Each monologue takes you on a brief but in-depth view of their journey during their tenure. Collectively, they present aspects of who Black women are and what the Black female student-athlete experience entails by showcasing the strength, determination, and the internal motivation it takes to progress through years of athletic eligibility.

**Summary**

My intention for this chapter was to take readers on my personal journey with how this dissertation came to fruition and the processes I had to experience to serve the completed narratives in the next chapter. It is my hope that readers are now well prepared with context of the history and background of this research and can stand firm on the foundation in which I have approached this study; to ensure readers can employ a level of empathetic listening to appreciate the selection of stories that represent the women.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

I recognize that this is not your average qualitative text. What I mean is that the traditional ways of following a formulaic script to engage in the research and analysis process varied in this dissertation and the following monologues do not reflect your traditional narrative style. These monologues, inspired by Shange’s choreopoetry, *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Not Enuf* (1980), represent women who have found themselves, at times, in moments of despair, however, their vulnerability is not to be mistaken for weakness in their journeys. Instead, it rings of triumph, strength, power, and resilience. Each monologue metaphorically standing on one another to stand with their sister as they support each other though collective dialogue.

**Lady in Red**

The thought was, how do I deal with this?
Freshman year it wasn’t like this. It got worse.

Then worse,
then worse.

But he helped me to accomplish so many of my goals and dreams.
He’s helping me to accomplish everything I want to but at the same time,
I don’t like him.

How do these exist?
How do I decide?
Do I stay?
or
Do I leave?

Maybe not accomplish the things I want, but Be happier?
How do I decide?
He recruited me.
[Jersey girl], originally from Hoboken.
My parents and I didn’t know anything about this.
We had no idea what we were doing. So, my mom made a list.
How am I going to decide?

20 home visits.
When I left, the transition was easy.

It’s fall season, training is going well.
[Conference] was the first time I saw him get really emotional and angry.
“Why would you come here if you weren’t going to compete!”
“Do you even know how to jump?”
His character change confused me.
If that’s who he is, then that’s who he is.
For him to recruit me and work with him for five months, and
never see this part of his personality, it was a shock.
Who is this?

I won.
He’s congratulating me. Gave me a hug.
This does not make any sense.
I cried before the interview.
The range of his emotions messed with me.

What is going on?
It was really weird.

That was the first time I seen it, and
it continued throughout our entire relationship.

As I got older, I would sit down with him.
I know you think this is effective,
but it’s not.
It doesn't work on me.
I don’t like when you scream at me.
I don’t like when you insult me.
Stop doing this.

He would take the feedback as if he was going to change,
but there was no change.
It was really confusing.

This might have something to do with mostly being in White spaces.
I always struggled with wondering,
am I a disrespectful person?
Like my dad, I am a confrontational person.
I’m straight forward.
I am not afraid to stand up.
And it doesn’t matter how old you are.
My parents taught me regardless of age, respect should be there.
If you disrespect me, I am going to stand up for myself.
Am I disrespectful person?
Because I find myself very respectful.

The second thing he said to me that I may have internalized is, weight.
You know Black women’s body types!
We can be curvier.
We can have boobs.
We can have a butt.
And still be in shape.
I don’t have a European body and I can’t change that.

Then my sophomore year.
“Oh, you might be eating fried chicken too much.”
“You seem to be getting a little bit too big.”
“If you want to accomplish these things you need to be a little bit smaller.”

Absolutely not.
This does not make any sense at all.
I am not out of shape; I just don’t look like those other European jumpers.
But should I lose weight?
Is my body right for my event?
Is my body right for me to be successful in this event?

My sophomore year, I made my first Olympic team.
I finished fourth and broke the American record.

I was having so much success.
I never thought about it but,
[transferring] would cross my mind, sometimes
but then I would move on.

I loved my team.
I was growing spiritually.
I was involved with the church.
I discipled women.
The thought was
how do I deal with this?
I want to keep all these things.
How can I deal with this person
so, I can be happy and successful.  
The thought was,  
how can I deal with this person?  

Lady in Indigo

I didn’t know if I wanted to be in track.  
I didn’t know if I could balance  
everything. So, I got in my head.  
A lot.  
I got it together in the end. But it is what it is.  
But um,  
it was hard; I’m not going to lie to you.  
It was really hard.  

The first couple of years  
I just focused on being an athlete because I was on partial [scholarship].  
My head coach was like:  
“If you score in conference, or if your PR [personal record] increases three feet…”  
you would eventually move up to a full.  

But it was a lie.  

He used to say,  
“One you hit that 45, we can talk about that full scholarship!”  
and in fine print,  
you also score at conference.  
That was the extra thing that he would just hold over my head.  
I’m guessing he wanted to put that money into other people.  

There was a lot of favoritism.  
The first year, I mean it was good.  
But once he saw that I wasn’t increasing in the way he wanted me to  
he would completely dismiss me.  
He thought that my other teammates could score easily.  

He was just lazy.  

I felt like I couldn’t reach my full potential because  
he wasn’t pushing us.  
He wouldn’t give me feedback.  
I would always ask. / What can I improve on?  

I eventually got up there…  

But it was towards the end of my career, so I didn’t have any room to go anywhere.
But if I would have reached those marks faster,  
I think he would have been like  
oh shit, / she is actually improving! / I’m going to put energy into her.

I had multiple conversations with him.  
“I don’t know if this is something I want to do.”  
“I don’t want to let you down because you took a chance on me.”  
But he wasn’t really the coach that you could do that with.  
He would say,  
“Let’s get out there tomorrow and see what happens.”  
It was like that constantly for two years straight.

I was so depressed.  
I gained like 20 pounds.  
I felt heavy in the ring.  
Like I couldn’t move.  
I was super discouraged, and I would always tell my mom  
but I get gear  
and  
priority registration.  
That’s what kept me going,  
I guess?

Is this something I want to do?  

Practices were great.  
It was high 46s and high 47s.  
I think once competition rolled around,  
I just got in my head.  
Once I saw that he lost confidence in me,  
I lost confidence in myself.  
From then on,  
I didn’t really think I should be there.

Once my confidence dwindled down to like nothing,  
I put way more emphasis into school.

Will my GPA get me into the grad school that I want?  

The whole experience just made it mentally exhausting.  
I just didn’t want to do it anymore.  
I had to shift my mindset. / This really kick started everything.

Being Black attending a PWI was hard.  
I don’t think I had any Black professors.  
More than a handful of classes,  
I was the
only Black person.

But education wise,
I wouldn’t trade it. / I did get a great education.

I got COVID and that just sealed the deal that [track] was over.

I don’t know if I regret being done.
It just seems like I quit.
But I was going to graduate the next semester.
That’s something I hold on to.

Once I focused on just being a student
It felt so good.
   So good.

I think he could have definitely gone to a full [scholarship].
Nice guy,
   but
I think he was just being stingy.
He was just so stingy.

And I know that now.

Lady in Yellow

I grew up in Alabama.

My childhood was full of athletics.
I have four siblings and all of them were athletes.
I grew up going to all of their sporting events.
Sports really built a foundation on my outlook on life.
It teaches you resilience.
Working hard and everything you may need without sports,
so, it really set a foundation and helped me out.
Especially my post-athletic career.

The transition was pretty smooth,
but the training was extremely hard for me at first.

I had gained weight
and now adding stress from school,
and the weight room,
and not being able to do the stuff. Getting bigger and not being able to run as fast… The main thing was the stress that was affecting me.

I didn’t realize until later when one of my Snapchat memories showed up. I said:

I understand why people quit.

But then he came to talk to me. It was very… like a comforting conversation.

“Don’t settle.” “Don’t give up on the things you are doing. These are big adjustments.”

That really helped to hear from him. Because I felt like he was probably so disappointed in me. Like he wasted his money on me. So that was good.

But you know we had [track] meets every weekend, and every week, I was disappointed.

I made nationals my first year. Oh my gosh, you made nationals! But I’d say, “My only good race was that race to qualify for nationals!” I mean I was running faster times in high school.

Was it a good year?

When I missed home it would just be like my family. The only time I felt homesick is when I would see all of my family and I wouldn’t be there.

[So] I built community. I guess with how I was raised. / Like how my family is, we don’t know any strangers. We are welcoming.

And with college you’re not with your family. And so, to create that space was important, [although] that wasn’t even my goal. But people would be like,

“Oh, she’s going to invite everybody!”
And I was like,
I am!
I never wanted anyone to feel left out.

At first me being younger, I didn’t have a lot of influence, but my junior year,
I had influence.
I would make sure I met everyone.
People started calling me grandma.
But if it’s me, everyone
is going to be included.

Freshman year, summer school, I started working at a coffee shop.

I worked there the rest of my years.
Working there was like the biggest game changer ever.
It introduced me to a whole new world
that I would have never known existed.
Being around so many nonathletes.
I didn’t even like coffee or tea before working there!
The shop was like a melting pot.
Everyone would go there.
I actually have a lot of my close friends from working there.

In the fall,
I started training on the pro circuit
but another opportunity came my way
and it made me realize that [track] isn’t something I want to do.

I started working at my church in ministry.
That is when I realized that
that is what I want to do.
For the rest of my life.

Even with a Spanish major, I asked,
What do I want to do with this?

That boiled down to me wanting to be a translator.
Then it got
deep to me.
To be a translator on mission trips.
Because I have a heart for people.

I have since gone to Mexico and I’m about to go to the Philippines.
I just started a business to raise money for missions.
Because the church I went to in Mexico,
I really want to help support them.

Being on the pro circuit, I wasn’t really willing to sacrifice
missing out on my brothers’ events…
And with track
you know,
it’s a sacrifice.
But I really wasn’t willing to sacrifice family things anymore.

I knew it was in me to be an athlete. / To be a great performer.
I just knew God wouldn’t allow me to be average.
Even if I wanted to give up,
I never have.
All the pieces were like out there
but now…
they’re coming together.
I know He wouldn’t do me like that.

People ask me:
“What do I miss the most?”
and
I lowkey miss the coffee shop.

[ACT I
SCENE I]

I was still always one of the best
I just wasn’t doing my best.

Hurricane Katrina moved us to Texas.
We were really into sports so
my mom moved us further down south
where they were really big and competitive and stuff.
I’ve been running track since I was nine.
I did gymnastics before track [but]
my older sister, she’s the reason I started running.
I knew I wanted to go to college, for sure.  
I knew I wanted to run to get a scholarship.  
I just didn’t know anything about college track.  

At first, they started sending letters to my school.  
Then they started coming to my house. The actual letters.  

Then *he* popped up at my house.  
It was randomly.  

I never agreed to a home visit. Just talking to him on the phone.  
I fell asleep  
right in the midst of him talking.  
At my house, on the couch.  
He was really just talking about himself.  
It was just really self-centered [but]  
that’s not interesting to me.  

But when she came, [coach at school 1]  
it was more fun.  
She told me she wasn’t going to reinvent the wheel.  
Just improve off what I was already doing.  
That was big for me,  
I guess?  

When [another school] came to my house,  
It was really like I *needed* him.  
He was like,  
“You need me.”  
“This what you *need* to do.”  
It felt like it would have been really strict.  
Eat. Sleep. breathe  
track.  
But you know, you need a life outside of sport or,  
you’re going to get burnt out.  
That’s not something I wanted.  

I was at [school 1] before I transferred to [school 2].  

[SCENE II]  
I was just so miserable at [school 1].  

Life as an athlete was great.  
They really care about you,  
I guess?
[However] the team chemistry was terrible.
It was so divided.
White kids didn’t talk to the Black kids for real.

The head coach,
he was an alcoholic.

They had a lot of scandals on the team.
The coaches were just really messy.
Gossiping about other athletes.
I just didn’t like that.

When I first got there it was fine.
She was like another mother, auntie, whatever.
But I didn’t like how she would talk to me; / or about other athletes in a bad aspect.

She used to call me
fat.
Say I needed to lose
weight.
She was real adamant about me losing weight.
I never had problems with my weight until I got to college.
I was never really worried about it.
I could have lost the weight if she approached it different,
I guess?
I didn’t think they were supposed to bring it up
But they still did.
It was weird.

Why is everyone fast?

I had the spotlight on me.
Then I realized,
I wasn’t doing well.
[So] it started to dim or whatever.
I started to lose my confidence.
What am I doing wrong?
What is the difference?
I thought it was the workouts personally.

I remember being in my room like,
I don’t want to be here anymore.
This school is not for me.
I thought it was.  It just wasn’t.
I was losing my passion for the sport.
Get me
out of here.

[SCENE III]

The transfer process was like terrible.

I didn’t talk to the coach.
I went straight to the AD [Athletic Director].
I guess I was supposed to go to the coach
but I didn’t want to deal with it
but then
the AD went straight to the coach and
it was nasty.

She was not happy that I wanted to leave.
I told her why I wanted to leave.
I
  wasn’t
feelin’
it
  anymore.
I just wanted to go.

She kicked me out all of the facilities; I couldn’t get in; I was a regular student.
She turned me into a regular student.
Yeah, instantly.
The next day.
Or the same day?
“Make sure you turn in everything, your gear.”
So, I went to turn it in.
I was the only one there.
“You need to hurry up and get out.”
“Like you need to leave.”
I guess I was taking my time to her.

But we are good now.
Years later…
We had a talk.

[Act II
SCENE 1]

At [school number 2]
Everything was so different.

The people were different.
They were really a family.  
It felt like a family.  
That’s what I was looking for in a program!  
For it to feel like home. / Like a family.

I just felt way more confident because I trusted my coach.  
I trusted everything he said to do.  
I ended up running fast that year!  
It came easy I will say that.  
Because he reminded me of my back home coach a lot,  
so, it just came easy.  
Everything just fell into place.

But then he transferred.

I was close to the coach at the time.  
I was  
heartbroken.  
Stuck with a new coach that I didn’t even know of.

That’s another thing…  
This happened when the coach had left:

_I had this coach when I first started running track._

_We were really close._  
_Every summer_  
_and every day_  
_I was training with_  
_him._  
_When I was a sophomore,_

He passed away.

_I was_  
_heart- _  
_broken._

Devastated.

I’m tired of all these different coaches now.  
I was already having trust issues.
It was not working.
I was feeling really lost.
Confidence level was so low.

I was depressed for a long time after my coach died and the other coach transferred. I was so depressed.
I was depressed for years. Like two years after that. And to be away from my family for two more years after that. / I was still not doing good.

But the team, we were family.
We had barbeques.
Team bonding.
Games.
We were just always together.
So, I guess that helped being away from home. Especially on the holidays.

I wanted to join Greek life, but our head coach didn’t want us to join a sorority. We would get in trouble if we tried to join. She said it was a distraction. “But what if we wanted this to be a part of our college experience?” She never told us a reason why. Just that it was a distraction.

The new coach was completely different. He just switched up everything. We didn’t do hurdle drills. But I’m not programmed that way. I’m programmed to do drills before I hurdle. So, we butt heads all the time.

And it just... never really changed.

Depressed ready to leave.

[SCENE II]

That’s why I chose not to spend my fifth year there.
I wanted to be closer to home.
I got to self-select going there.

I was trying to get closer to God.
[School 3] was a Christian school. So, it just made sense.
I wasn’t taking anything less than a full, so, he had a full scholarship.

When I transferred to my last school, the coaches had favoritism. I didn’t like that. I felt like he didn’t care about me.

Why am I actually running?

I just love track. I just really wanted to redeem myself.

I saw a therapist. He said one thing that made me realize:
   I wasn’t winning.
   I was comfortable losing.

“Close your eyes and imagine yourself winning a race.”

For some reason, I couldn’t imagine it at all.

“That’s the problem!”
“You can’t even see yourself winning, so how are you going to actually win?”

[SCENE III]

It works. I guess?

I tried to keep a positive mindset but that really didn’t work either because I still didn’t really feel confident. I couldn’t compete if that makes sense.

After nationals, I was like crying in the corner. I was really depressed after that because that was my last year. It was just terrible.

I questioned God.

You have to see yourself winning in order to win. Ever since, I’ve been trying to do that.
Even though I don’t see me winning a big race, 
I’ve been doing better.
I don’t focus on the big picture anymore.
I focus on the small things,
which gets you to the bigger picture.

[ACT III]
[SCENE I]

I’ve been trying to bring myself back.
I kind of lost a lot of faith for a while.
Because everything happens for a reason.
I must have did something I wasn’t supposed to or
I was meant to be with this coach.

I just didn’t want to go out like that.
Something is the reason why this all happened.

Right now, I train with a pro group
that I love.
He talked to my coach that passed away and they do the same things.
I just feel more comfortable building up my confidence, you know?

This year, I feel like it’s going to be my year.
I’m tryin’ to pop out this year!

A lot of bumps and bruises in the road
but
we’re still pushin’.

Lady in Green

You know...
track is all mental.

I didn’t know much about college.
I didn’t know any of that stuff coming from a different country.
I didn’t realize how much comes with it,
How special it was to be recruited by all of these schools.
So, me personally, I’m like,
I want to go to the schools with the best colors,
best uniforms.
My mom is like a full-blown Caribbean mom. She doesn’t know anything about any of this stuff. She was just happy that I was going to go to school for free, and continuing running.

When we went on the visits, she would listen to what they were offering. She was mainly paying attention to the area the school was in. Is it safe? That kind of stuff. Because she didn’t know much about the actual school. We were both like, I’m sure they have good academics [but] we both just didn’t know to dig a little deeper on that subject.

Right after I signed, I was like, Shoot, what is happening? The head coach[es] that recruited me, pretty much all of them except for like two, got fired. Or they resigned? / Whatever. I trusted [the school] to find someone who was a good replacement.

I went [to school] early for summer classes. The transition was great! My mom said she cried all the way home. And I was like, I’m so sorry, I did not cry, I was happy to be alone.

From an athlete and a student standpoint it was rough. For one, we had 6AM morning practice. Then we had to go to practice, and we had to go to study hall. I’m like falling asleep in some of my classes! I was a veterinary science major.

What did I get myself into? I eventually figured it out.

[Athletically] the goal my entire freshman year was to beat my teammates.
Every rep
at
every practice
I’d be trying to beat them out.
My focus was really to go in and
score as much points as possible.

The next year, we ended up winning the conference.
I won the triple jump that year.
What took me over the edge is realizing that
everyone was
good.

You cannot do
what everyone else is doing,
you gotta do
extra.
So, I started to do extra on my own.
Getting up working out on my own,
in the morning, I started eating a lot better.

My now husband, boyfriend at the time,
was always in contention to win.
I can’t be the sore thumb in this relationship!
I want to be better than him,
no offense.

We went to eating mostly vegetables.
A little bit of
meat.
Everything possible to put us in a winning position.

My senior year, I got hurt.

Right before conference championships. I was like,
This is a perfect time to get hurt.
I was so upset.
I had worked so hard.
I was in the best physical, [and] mental shape,
so that I could help our team win the championship.

I worked super hard to get back by the conference championship.
“You can only do one event.”
“You can only take one jump.”
What? One jump in the trials and finals?
“No, just one jump.”
Bruh, this is crazy.

But I had mentally grown so much by that time.  
If anyone was tryin’ beat me,  
they’re going to have to jump a personal best.  
I was like,  
I’m not going to let y’all beat me!

Even though I was hurting, I put the best game face on.  
I warmed up  
like I wasn’t  
hurt.  
Kept my face  
like I wasn’t  
hurt.

My last jump,  
I jumped a personal best *and*  
qualified for nationals.  
I ended up winning.  
The whole thing!

Like track really is a lot of  
mental.

It’s crazy how mental athletics really is.
The Voices of The Rainbow

The following poem is a collection of excerpts from the monologues in chapter four written to evoke that readers listen to the collective, yet diverse voices of Black female student-athletes.

Eat. Sleep. breathe track.

The thought was, how do I deal with this?
[For me,] I didn’t know if I wanted to be in track.
I asked, What do I want to do with this?
I asked,
Why am I actually running?
What did I get myself into?

Freshman year it wasn’t like this.
When I first got there it was fine.
The transition was pretty smooth,
but the training was extremely hard for me at first.
The transition was great!
From an athlete to student standpoint, it was, rough.
I’m not going to lie to you;
It was really hard.

[Then] It got, worse.
I was just so miserable at [school 1].
I got it together in the end. But it is what it is.
I eventually figured it out.
I didn’t realize until later when one of my Snapchat memories showed up.
I said:
“I understand why people quit.”

He’s helping me to accomplish everything I want to but at the same time,
I don’t like him.
He was just so stingy.
...he came to talk to me.
The head coach,
he was an alcoholic.
The head coach[es] that recruited me,
pretty much all of them except for like two,
got fired.

But
he helped me to accomplish so many of my goals and dreams.
...I made my first Olympic team.
I made nationals my first year.
I felt like I couldn’t reach my full potential because
he wasn’t pushing us.
My last jump. I jumped a personal best and
qualified for nationals.
I finished fourth and broke the American record.
I ended up running fast that year!
He wouldn’t give me feedback.
I would always ask.

How do these exist?
Is this something I want to do?
Was it a good year?
Why is everyone fast?
Shoot, what is happening?

I got in my head a lot.
You know...
Track is all
mental.
The main thing was the stress that was affecting me.
Get me out of here.
Do I stay?

The whole experience just made it mentally exhausting.
“Don’t give up on the things you are doing. These are big adjustments.”
I started to lose my confidence.
What am I doing wrong?
What is the difference?
I just got in my head.
Like track really is a lot of
mental.
“Don’t settle.”
Once I saw that he lost confidence in me,
I lost confidence in myself.
Do I leave?
I wasn’t doing well.
I was so upset.
I was losing my passion for the sport.
The range of his emotions messed with me.
I was so depressed.
I. was. so. depressed.

I gained like 20 pounds.
I had gained weight.
She used to call me fat.
Say I needed to lose weight.
Getting bigger and
not being able to run as fast…
I felt heavy in the ring.
Like I couldn’t move.

“Oh, you might be eating fried chicken too much.”
“You seem to be getting a little bit too big.”
“If you want to accomplish these things you need to be a little bit smaller.”

You know Black women’s body types!
  We can be curvier.
  We can have boobs.
  We can have a butt.
  And still be in shape.
I don’t have a European body and I can’t change that.
In the morning, I started eating better.
I could have lost the weight if she approached it different,
I guess?
  Absolutely not.
This does not make any sense at all.

I worked so hard.
I don’t want to let you down because you took a chance on me.
… I felt like he was probably so disappointed in me.
Like he wasted his money on me.
Am I a disrespectful person?
How can I deal with this person?
I’m tired of all these different coaches now.

I loved my team.
I never wanted anyone to feel left out.
They were really a family.
I started working at a coffee shop.
It felt like a family.
My goal my entire freshman year was to beat my teammates.
Once I focused on just being a student
It felt so good.
So good.

I was growing spiritually.
I was involved with the church.
I started working at my church in ministry.
I discipled women.
That is when I realized that,
that is what I want to do.
For the rest of my life.

But education wise,
I wouldn’t trade it. / I did get a great education.
Something is the reason why this all happened.
This year, I feel like it’s going to be my year.
I want to keep all these things.
so, I can be happy and successful.
All the pieces were like out there
but now…
they’re coming together.
It’s really crazy how mental athletics really is.

A lot of bumps and bruises in the road
but
we’re still pushin’.

*Lady in Red*
i’m outside infinite beauty

*Lady in Indigo*
i’m outside intelligence

*Lady in Yellow*
i’m outside possibilities

*Lady in Orange*
i’m outside tenacity

*Lady in Green*
i’m outside resilience
This research could not have been possible without the underlining theory of Black feminism. Black feminism provided a shared starting point to center the participant’s epistemologies and provided a firm foundation to approach the analysis and analyzation of this study, as well as served as a lens to provide a critique of the NCAA recruitment structure. Moreover, Black feminism stands in agreement that Black women experience levels of suppression (Collins, 2002) and affirmed the lived experiences of the Black women participants who live at and reckon with the intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender. Black feminism recognized the historical suppression of Black women dating back to the period of enslavement through exploitation and the analyzation of our labor and understood that our bodies were units of capital during slavery (Collins, 2002). Yet, Black feminism served as an amplifier for participant voices as they narrated their response to the oppressive vestiges of commodification and now begins a continued discussion of liberation for Back women who participate in sports across the diaspora. Black feminism supported the collective experiences of the participants, however, pushed back on an African norm to rather celebrate the diverse responses of African women. Black feminism provided a creative outlet for the design of this research and allowed an outlet for freedom within my writing. Finally, Black feminism passed me the torch to light the way for future Black female qualitative researchers because we know that traditional scholarship restricts our abilities to bring truth to knowledge, so we must rely on Black feminism and theories alike to provide the passing of knowledge from one Black woman to another to renovate the standard of academic theory that in turn, continues to oppose prevailing social, political, economic, and other realms of injustice (Collins, 2002). Here’s to Black feminism.
A Rainbow of Experience

The voices of the rainbow display a beautiful picture of the individuality and solidarity of Black women. Much like a rainbow, our magic is split into various individual wavelengths to present a mosaic of our differences and experiences. Not every Black female student-athlete is the same. Their combined voices demonstrated that despite an array of common challenges faced by Black female student-athletes, this neither meant that their individual experiences or expression of soul value were the same. The spectrum of colors represented their uniqueness yet involved a message of who they are and what they represent to Black women across the diaspora. Using one hue and adding elements of another color produced a complementary color scheme celebrating unity and sisterhood.

Distinguishing features emerged from their monologues. Lady in Red embodied the infinite beauty of Black women athletes. Lady in Indigo embodied the intelligence of Black women and represented the multiple identities balanced being a black, female, student, athlete. Lady in Yellow embodied the endless possibilities for Black women and the support we receive from our communities; she demonstrated that Black female student-athletes are more than an athlete. Lady in Orange embodied the tenacity of Black women, and the drive and determination Black female student-athletes must develop to see their tenure through. Lastly, Lady in Green embodied the resilience of Black women, and the internal fortitude and sacrifice Black female student-athletes must employ to be the best at their game.

The contrast of the oppressive perspectives exposed their “vulnerabilities to assaults in [their environments]” (Collins, 2002, p. 26) and confirmed Black women’s ongoing legacy of struggle and demonstrated the historical ways in which Black women have amplified their voices
to display their activism. We now recognize this as her soul value (Berry, 2017). Are you listening?

**Soul Value: Do You Feel What I’m Feelin’?**

Soul value traveled throughout the stanzas of the monologues to paint a portrait of the intangible valuation their coach, sport or institution could not commodify (Berry, 2017). Yet, external factors brushed a layer of suppression over their experiences through the valuations of appraisal, market, and ghost value (Berry, 2017). Just like fine art, one must look behind the work to uncover its history. In the same regard, to emerge a discussion of the participant’s soul value, one must compare the valuations ascribed to enslaved women and their bodies to reveal the moments of resilience, self-love and soul value found within the monologues installed in chapter four. The findings revealed that the vestiges of slavery have an impact on Black female student-athletes’ soul value throughout their athletic journey before, during and after their collegiate experience. The gallery of their expression gives room for the following discussion and exposes their voices to the public for an in-depth review of Black women’s commodification and challenges the NCAA institution to take care of their beautiful Black female student-athletes so that their mind, body, and soul can be cared for with love and intention.

Here her now.

**Appraisal Value**

Lady in Indigo’s monologue identified a strong example of the impact appraisal value has on soul value. This valuation considered the projected value NCAA member institutions attributed to the participant’s projected work output. Lady in Indigo stands apart from the other women because her recruitment journey consisted of her bargaining her own self-worth to her institution. Lady in Indigo stated that she had to “figure out” how the institution could take a
chance on her. At the time, the institution’s assessment of her worth to their current athletic program, only called for a partial scholarship for her talent. In her transcripts, she described the institution reviewing her shotput marks in competition and appraising her level of coachability. “My potential pretty much” she stated, as the overarching factor for the assessment of her value.

Even beyond the market price offered (scholarship) she was left to negotiate her self-value to the institution. Her coach had a standard of value placed on her potential output of talent that consistently fluctuated. “If you score in conference, or if your PR [personal record] increase three feet…” Ultimately, she was never met with an assessment of value that met her standards of self-worth.

This assessment raises high levels of concern because it highlighted the feelings of fear, disappointment, and pressure that the appraisal valuation interjects into the soul-value of the student-athlete. For example, Lady in Yellow stated, “…I felt like he was probably so disappointed in me. / Like he wasted his money on me.” And Lady in Indigo stated, “I don’t want to let you down because you took a chance on me.” The projected values that were attributed to the participant’s potential output of success holds Black female student-athletes to an unspoken agreement that essentially requires their bodies to be high preforming producers of talent that cannot risk the ability to fall from the standard of the NCAA institution’s athletic reputation, or the coach’s perception of how they view their talent. Although, not explicitly mentioned in the narratives within this study, yet inferred to through Lady in Indigo’s comment, “I’m guessing he wanted to put that money into other people,” this valuation can expand to consider the reasoning behind the projected values given to participants for we know the appraisal prices of the enslaved fluctuated based on the conditions of the planter’s stock and market conditions (Berry, 2017). Similarly, the NCAA Division I athletic pool of recruits, and
projected program outcome (championship predictions) can serve as additional factors for an assessment of value for Black female student-athlete talent which in turn, could have a further impact on her soul value.

**Market Value**

This valuation is one that brings the most repulsion when one recounts the scenes of the enslaved at markets and the negotiations that took place during their appraisal to ultimately sell them at market price to the highest bidder. The ages of eleven to twenty-two served as pivotal and significant years for enslaved girls (Berry, 2017); their bodies were changing—at the onset of menstruation, they became women—and as their external value increased, they were taken from their parents (Berry, 2017). Enslaved women were taken to auction markets with a price valued for her procreation (Berry, 2017). Market valuation was an external assessment of the price offered for the participant’s talent and body to produce the assessed potential discussed during the appraisal valuation (Berry, 2017). This assessment of market value began before collegiate participation and extended into the experience of the participant’s collegiate engagement.

Each participant received a monetary valuation that followed with the direct action from the institution to pay for her education; in exchange, she would participate in the respective collegiate sport. “I just focused on being an athlete because I was on partial [scholarship]; “I wasn’t taking anything less than a full scholarship”. These statements describe the action of payment for play. While some participants described the benefit to get an education, the issue, as alluded to in the appraisal evaluation brings forth the high-level expectation of production from the Black female student-athlete. This expectation compounded with market valuation displayed most notably in the articulation of their soul value when members of the participant’s institution
correlated the market price paid for their talent to the ownership over their bodies. A strong example of this resides in Lady in Red’s narrative. “Why would you come here if you weren’t going to compete? / “Do you even know how to jump?” / “Oh, so you might be eating fried chicken too much.” / “You seem to be getting a little bit too big.”/ “If you want to accomplish these things, you need to be a little bit smaller”. These questions posed by her coach indicated *his* level of expectation for her to produce what he essentially “paid for”, or projected her to produce, for *his* program and suggests that her body image and body type equated to *his* image of success for her. Furthermore, his assessment of her body size, valued her body in comparison to other athletes *he* considered to be fit for success and brings attention to the racist stereotypes positioned on Black female athlete’s bodies.

Many times, participants resisted the internalization of the suppressive byproducts of market valuation by stating their soul value with direct statements to push back to the offensive or racist perceptions of them. “Absolutely not. / This does not make sense at all. / I am not out of shape; / I just don’t look like those other European jumpers”; “She was adamant about me losing weight [but] / I was never really worried about it” or like narrated in Lady in Indigo’s transcript, she mentioned how she did not agree with the way her coach “bulked” her up, yet his perception of what a thrower should look like caused her to gain weight, feel heavy in the ring and not be able to move to perform competitively. Four out the five participants described their coaches making degrading statements about their bodies and followed up with experiencing levels of depression, weight gain, a drop in performance, or a loss in confidence.

Market valuation had a direct impact on the soul value of the participants. It is unknown if participant’s market value fluctuated in the competitive market of other NCAA institutions, except for Lady in Indigo as she started in her transcripts that she received full scholarship offers
from other DI programs. However, considering the negotiations of their appraisal value and the market price offered to them, there leaves room to further explore market valuation by examining the demand of the female student-athlete (based on her accolades) prior to the negotiations of her market price.

**Ghost Value**

According to (Berry, 2017), the valuation of ghost value, was the assessment of deceased enslaved bodies to be sold to medical institutions for legal purposes such as insurance policies. In this study, ghost value was attributed to the value of the Black female student-athlete when competition had concluded, either through injury, or though the termination of their eligibility. Lady in Green is the only participant that mentioned a significant injury that impacted her ability to train for competition. In her transcript, she describes the coaches being supportive of her rehabilitation and as noted in her monologue, she was still dependent on attributing points for her program’s championship, though, this was more of a personal decision than that of the institution’s. However, all participants described their soul value post collegiately. For example, Lady in Yellow’s monologue presented a notable example of the identity found in life after sport. She attempted to continue with sport, but learned quickly that athletics was not her overall purpose in life, but rather ministry and she is currently making strides in her newfound purpose.

In summary, echoed throughout each monologue regarding their life after sport was greater belief in their soul value. “I just feel more comfortable building up my confidence/ you know?” Stated Lady in Orange. Further expansion of this study can examine the comparison in which coaches look at their most recent graduating class to make inferences on the appraisal and market valuations offered to incoming Black female student-athletes. While this study did not explore the formal definition of ghost value coined by (Berry, 2017), it did present how their
“soul[s] began singing” (Berry, 2017, p.61) to facilitate inner freedom during their eligibility (Berry, 2017).

**Implications**

I would like to begin with a personal message to current Black female student-athletes. Should this study find you, I want you to know that you are supported by the lineage of former Black female athletes. Although our stories have highlighted our struggles, be inspired because we always overcome. Although moments in your journey may feel overwhelming, be empowered that you hold the strength of your ancestors to make it through. Although you may experience moments of isolation, rest assured that you have an army of sisters that are here to support you. Find your Black sisters and share your experiences amongst one another. Share your wisdom and build a tribe of homegirls that will serve as a sister circle for your freedom of expression, community, accountability, and love. You deserve an experience that affirms your purpose, and you deserve to be seen and understood at every intersection of your identity. We value you.

Now, I would like to turn attention to the NCAA and the members of the athletic coaching staff. The purpose of this Black feminist narrative inquiry arts-based study was to explore the narrative of Black female student-athletes’, perception of value, soul value, in Division I PWIs in the Southern region of the United States. The findings revealed that the vestiges of slavery have an impact on Black female student-athletes’ soul value and in order to withstand the lengths of her eligibility, participants had to consider the ways in which their life was molded by the external valuations placed on her and her body, recount the vulnerabilities that were forced upon her, and remember the resilience it took to produce success for the NCAA institution (Berry, 2017; Evans-Winters, 2019). The literature review has produced knowledge
that Black female student-athletes find themselves as the outsider-within (Collins, 2002), and that there is a cost to their consideration of value which results in Black female student-athletes making a choice to which value system to ascribe to (Seals, 2016).

I implore the implication of a space for participating Black female student-athletes where they have the freedom to connect and converse with other participating Black female student-athletes across the divisions. This can take shape of a summit or conference where student-athletes are hearing and learning from their peers, other Black women—perhaps current and former coaches and student-athletes—allies and community members to showcase the collective support they have from the NCAA and its current and former participating members. Additionally, I implore the implication to analyze the practices of the current recruitment structure and implore consistent anti-racism and anti-bias training for athletic coaches and supportive staff.

Black female student-athletes deserve an environment that is conducive to affirming their multidimensional role, not one that perpetuates the vestiges of our nation’s ties to enslavement. Are you listening?

**Future Recommendations for Research**

Black women are underrepresented in literature and Black female student-athletes are consistently left out of the sport related discussions or “…completely excluded in the sport literature based on both gender and race” (Bruening, 2005, p. 331). Thus, advancement into this topic can consider its blind spots to provide a wider dialogue of the Black female student-athlete experience.

I recommend widening the representation of participants. Black feminist theory demonstrated the need for diverse perspectives in the literature to resist structures of injustice.
(Collins, 2002), thus we must comply as researchers to ensure that we, especially as Black qualitative researchers do not leave our sisters hangin’. Consider the accounts of transgendered women as there needs to be greater attention to their experiences and perceptions of value. Consider Black female student-athletes who participate internationally and across the nation to expand beyond the regional dynamics of this study and bring forth our sister’s voices throughout the diaspora. Consider a range of athletic participation, for we know Black women athletes dominate in sports beyond track and field. Finally, consider participating Black female student-athletes. This research begins to close the gap within the literature and focusing on former Black female athlete’s soul value is insightful however, the ultimate purpose for this study seeks to improve the experiences of Black female student-athletes during their time of eligibility to provide environments that uplift, support and value their intersecting identities.

As scholars consider these ideas for future research, never forget to ask how they feel during their experience. The more scholars foster dialogue with our Black sisters, the more scholars can write about our power and the more scholars can learn about our engaged understanding (Berry, 2017).

**Closing Remarks**

Consider this chapter the end of our special occasion. The monologues presented in chapter four reminded me of serving a meal during a celebration. Let us raise a glass to say thank you to the women who have graciously participated in this research. No longer are the feelings of Black female student-athletes left out of the discussion or the literature. Much like the ending to a significant event, one is left with the memories. Suddenly, we are reminded of the encounter we experienced and immediately, we become thrust back to the moment that reminds us of who we were with and most importantly, how that moment made us feel. Memories allow us to not
only recall the past, but to think about the possibilities of the future. In some instances, to recreate the moments or reimagine them by expanding on or considering ways to improve the occasion by adding a subtle twist.

To my future Black female qualitative researchers, I pass you the torch to continue the discussion to bring awareness to the legacies of our struggles yet leave a lasting impression on our voices that have been utilized to resist the dimensions of objectification, racism, sexism, commodification, and any other suppressive condition that sought to hold us back from who we are (Collins, 2002). Let this research bring you hope. For hope is what will keep us motivated to continue this soul work to interject the voices of our athletic sisters in the literature, so that the history books will record how she feels navigating spaces that work to silence her experience.
References


Shange, N. (1980). *For colored girls who have considered suicide, when the rainbow is enuf: a ch* *oreopoem*. Bantam Books.


Appendix A

Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Guide Questions</th>
</tr>
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| How have the vestiges of slavery affected Black female student-athletes’ soul value? | - Tell me where you are from.  
- What was it like to be Black and attend college in the south?  
- What was it like to attend a predominately white institution? |
| In what ways do they display resilience?                                           | - How do you see yourself in your sport?  
- How did you choose to preserve through tough situations?  
- Tell me about the dynamic between you and your coach.  
- Tell me about the dynamic between you and other members on staff related to your sport.  
- Tell me about the dynamics between you and your teammates. |
| How do they describe their lived experience as a Black female student-athlete before, during and after their collegiate experience? | - What was your recruitment process like?  
- Tell me about your involvement on campus.  
- Tell me how your perceptions became visible in your sport.  
- What does post collegiate life look like since you have graduated?  
- Do you still engage in physical activity or are you active with the sport you played in college? |
Appendix B

Consent Form
Consent for Research Participation

Title: To Be Determined
Researcher(s): Britney Jackson, The University of Memphis
Contact Info: (732) 500-5378 bjcksn20@memphis.edu

WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
You are being asked to participate in a research study about the lived experiences of Black female student-athletes. You are being invited to take part in this research because of your experience as a Black student-athlete at a predominately white institution in the Southern region of the United States. If you volunteer to participate, you will be one of about six people to do so.

The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher any questions about the study before you make your decision.

Key Information for You to Consider

- **Voluntary Consent.** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

- **Purpose.** The purpose of this Black feminist narrative inquiry study is to explore the narrative of Black female student-athletes’ perception of value, soul value, in Division I predominately white institutions in the Southern region of the United States.
  - By conducting this study, we hope to know more about the ways in which exploitation affects the perception of value of Black female student-athletes who compete for Division I predominately white institutions in the Southern region of the United States.

- **What will be asked of you and the duration of the study.** Each participant will be asked to sit for one interview. It is expected that your participation will last 1 hour, with the potential of a follow-up interview. Each participant will be asked questions regarding their personal experiences as a Black woman and former student-athlete. Each interview will be recorded on Zoom.

- **Procedures and Activities.** Each participant will be asked questions regarding their personal experiences as a Black woman and former student-athlete. Each interview will be recorded. Each participant will be provided a pseudonym that
will be used throughout the interview process and only the researcher will know the legal names of participants to protect the privacy of participants even if the participant consents or suggests the use of their legal name.

- **Risks.** There are no known risks to the participants in this study.
- **Benefits.** There is no grantee that participants will benefit from this study. However, some of the benefits that may be expected include producing knowledge regarding exploitation, student-athlete experience, and Black women experiences to add to the existing body of literature.
- **Alternatives.** Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not participate.

### Who is conducting this research?

Brittney Jackson of the University of Memphis Department of Higher and Adult Education (HIAD) oversees this study. Her faculty advisor is Eric Platt. There will not be additional research team members assisting during the study.

The research will be conducted on Zoom.

I will conduct at least six semi-structured interviews for this study. The interview will take place virtually in the setting of the participants’ choosing, most likely a place of comfort identified by the participant.

**What happens if I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participation, you agree to sharing your lived experience as a Black female student-athlete.

Participants have the right to withdraw their participation at any time and forfeit their right to continue. This decision should have no bearing on differential treatment. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Memphis.

**What happens to the information collected for this research?**

Information collected for this research will be used to further expand the literature on the exploitation of college athletes and the experience of Black female student-athletes. Your name will not be used in any [e.g., published reports, conference presentations, etc.] about this study. If this study is published or presented, your name and other identifying information will remain confidential.

**How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?**

Your privacy and security are of most importance. Measures to ensure this will include:
• Direct identifiers will be removed at the time data is collected. During analysis and write-up of the study, the researcher will use pseudonyms. All participant data involved in this study will remain secure either through locked environments or password-protected hardware and accessible only to the investigator.
• The collected stories will be kept confidential. Information provided will remain confidential and unless as required by law. Individually identifying information will not be published in connection with the study.
• All results and all recordings from this study will be disguised using pseudonyms and the same will be used on all research records.

Individuals and organizations that monitor this research may be permitted access to and inspect the research records. This monitoring may include access to your private information. These individuals and organizations include:
• The Institutional Review Board

What if I want to stop participating in this research?

It is up to each participant to volunteer their participation in this study. Participants have the right to withdraw their participation at any time and forfeit their right to continue. This decision should have no bearing on differential treatment. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide to not be involved. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Memphis.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

• There are no costs associated with your participation in this research study.

The University of Memphis does not have funds set aside to pay for the cost of any care or treatment that might be necessary because you got hurt or sick while taking part in this study. Also, the University of Memphis will not pay for any wages you may lose if you are harmed by this study.

Medical costs that result from research related harm cannot be included as regular medical costs. Therefore, the medical costs related to your care and treatment because of research related harm will be the participant’s responsibility.
• You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

Will I receive any compensation or reward for participating in this research?

There will be no compensation awarded for the participation of this study.
Who can answer my questions, concerns, or complaints about this research?

Before you decide whether to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. If questions should arise later, or if you have suggestions, concerns or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Brittniey Jackson at bjcksn20@memphis.edu or Eric Platt at replatt@memphis.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this form. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions throughout the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this form. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation.

_____________________________________________   ____________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part in this study          Date

_____________________________________________   ____________________
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in this study       Date

Reseacher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all questions. I believe that she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

_____________________________________________   ____________________
Signature of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent      Date

_____________________________________________   ____________________
Printed name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent   Date
Appendix C

IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

August 30, 2022

PI Name: Brittney Jackson
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Ronald Platt
Submission Type: Initial
Title: Black female student-athletes’, perception of value, soul value, in Division I predominantly white institutions (PWI) in the Southern region of the United States
IRB ID: #PRO-FY2022-438

Expeditied Approval: August 30, 2022

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
3. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
4. Human subjects training is required every 2 years and is to be kept current at citiprogram.org.

For additional questions or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.6783.2705

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.