

BY CHAMELEONIC MEANS;
“TRUST-BASED” PHILANTHROPIC RELATIONSHIPS, “THE BUSINESS OF YES,”
AS EXPERIENCED BY BLACK FUNDRAISERS

by

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of society's reinvigorated consciousness around structural and systemic racism, conversations centering justice, equity, inclusion, access, and cultural diversification are going far beyond political discourse. Contemporary fundraising practices are also challenging antiquated hegemonic ways of philanthropy and are critically examining the practice from within. Among many things, this entails diversifying the historically White-female dominated fundraising workforce. In this, fundraising literature has paid minimal attention to intercultural/cross-racial dynamics as implications of diversification of the fundraiser workforce. Although some research may center fundraisers themselves (relative to their ethical and/or professional standards), this dissertation expands this field of study by offering a first detailed and critical investigation of the social implications of the field's diversification (e.g., how fundraisers of color are navigating both professional lives and the inherent power structures and inequities that exist).

Engaging critical race theory as a paradigmatic framework, while honoring both Afrocentricity and Black storywork as methodological frameworks, this dissertation centered experiences and narratives of six Black fundraisers navigating the historically White-overrepresented social landscape of philanthropy. Through means of a two-phased multimodal reflective process (dialogic and arts-informed inquiry), captured anecdotes were assembled as a collective narrative to detail this phenomenon.

In this study are unearthed complexities of *the business of yes*—which is, as coined in the study, a descriptor of the fundraising practice that ensues perpetual means of adaptation and negotiation within the social exchange of facilitating “trust-based” relationships. In this context, it is conveyed that Black fundraisers both consciously and unconsciously adopt a *chameleonic*

practice through which they negotiate ways of *showing up* (attributed to, but not limited to, physical presentation(s), positioning on the frontline, and being (un)heard) in aid of garnering donor/grantor comfort and trust. Beyond contextualizing *chameleonism* and other adaptive considerations within the *business of yes*, this study invites readers to *show up* fully and authentically within the reimagined, socially just, and equitable philanthropic work.

Keywords: philanthropy, trust-based fundraising, social identity, diversity, equity, inclusion

DEDICATION

First and foremost I must honor and give glory to the almighty power(s) that be, my creator, source of my strength, wisdom, knowledge, faith and purpose, God. God, I will forever walk in your bliss, and in doing so, I know I can never truly falter as my steps are ordered in your divinity—amen.

I would also like to dedicate this work to the ancestors (who anchor me in the realities of our past) and future descendents (who inspire me about the possibilities of our future).

In Loving Memory of ...

Eudell Yarber, Eloise Rolle, Harcourt McKenzie, Earl Lee Yarber, Tony Yarber, LyTanga Yarber,
James Earl Yarber, Martha Ann Waters, & Melissa Burgess

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Also, shoutout to Black women. Reflective of how they continue(d) to show up for me in my life (and this study), they are the anchors of our community. Thank you for your presence.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In a flippant yet honest gesture he scanned the details of his own body, as if it were suddenly foreign to him. While cradling the right forearm in the left hand he ever-so-firmly pinched and tugged at the flesh of his arm. With the slightest sarcastic and queried expression, he then looked back at me and said, “Well, I can’t take it off.” He continues:

How I *show up* and present is probably influenced by, you know, how I want to be perceived in this world, knowing that there are many who will just look at me and make certain assumptions based off of my race and gender . . . the dirty truth is that we have to make our prospects comfortable with us, to trust us, especially when we’re talking about high-dollar asks [paraphrased].

“Ah, mmhm . . . dang, yeah . . . I feel you,” I affirmed with an almost doleful resonance.

I recall this exchange so vividly; late in 2020, a peer and I had a casual sit-down where we discussed “the usual”—personal life, career, and you know, the realities of navigating this world as Black men. Though it was spoken with candor through a guise of satirical tone, anecdotes and sentiments such as these are far from aberrant and can often characterize Black experiences in various contexts. Just as I was struck by the imagery depicted by my peer, this would probably resonate with, and be widely understood by, many other historically marginalized folk. By no means do I revel in the fact that we have to consider *how can I make them comfortable with me* as we navigate certain spaces as, for the lack of better terms, it sucks; however, as a researcher I find this quite beguiling (in a vexing manner). In reverberance, anecdotes like these propel me to further question how *this* continues to be a thing, and even more so, how *this* is such a thing that the narrative is shared and mutually understood in our

community. As an aesthete admiring the abstractionist works of Kara Walker, I continue to mull over the imagery of “I can’t take it off” and what that depicts about how we navigate this work, this world.

As I sit with that visual, I am reminded of the plasticity of the Black body; not exclusively in the somatic sense, but the manner in which it is pushed to, and so effortlessly, adjust, acclimate, or as Coates (2015) illustrated, contort itself “to address the block, and contort again to be taken seriously by colleagues, and contort again so as not to give the police a reason” (p. 90). It is what it is I guess; we really have not had a choice but to contort. I imagine that plasticity so engrained from generations (past and present) of navigating this world while in an incessant pursuit of public trust (or simple common humanity) in a social context that has never, or has not yet, been earnestly welcoming or inclusive to our whole being, *the souls of black folk* (Dubois, 1994).

I challenge you, the reader, to try and consider your varying spaces and/or relationships in which trust is a critical element; familial, platonic, or romantic, trust very well takes different forms in different contexts and with different people. Now, consider the manner in which you might establish trust in these different contexts; most would deduce that doing right by others might paint you, and or your association, as *trustworthy*, but is it that simple? For some, maybe! For others it proves to be a little bit more complex. The idea of establishing trust in the professional context probably muddles this a bit. As it is, there are several professions and occupational roles that center relationships, therefore trust in those relationships is an integral component to effectiveness and *success*¹.

¹ In this case *success*, and or effectiveness (used interchangeably), will be used to describe the nature of relationships between donor-solicitor (or donor-organization) and not the specific quantity or dollar amount that was garnered from this relationship. *Success* would imply that the relationship is sustainable, facilitates mutual trust and comfort, and ultimately, meets the intended and mutually consented goal(s) (e.g., meeting the organization’s mission)

In this study the *trust-based* ideology is not exclusively bound in the conversations of unrestricted multiyear funding or partnerships with grassroots community leaders as generally associated in the philanthropic lexicon; while still ultimately recognizing the wider racial, political, and economic inequities that ensue the adoption of the widely understood *trust-based partnerships*, this study expands our scope to consider *trust* as it manifest, or is negotiated, on the interpersonal levels of our work (McGrath & Wong, 2020). As it is, fundraisers are tasked to establish trust, rapport, and relationships with grantors and donors, and sometimes, at great expense. As many other critical social researchers might hypothesize, there is great nuance in both defining *trust* in these relationships and the process of establishing trust. Considering the innumerable influences in establishing these *trust-based* relationships, garnering mutual trust and comfort, this practice of fundraising is far more than a simple notion, especially considering that philanthropy and fundraising as inarguably at the *nexus of money, power, and race* (Daniel et al., 2019).

Inspired by intimate and candid conversations with fundraisers of color, this study audaciously steps into previously underexplored areas of philanthropic research while challenging the notion of *trust-based* as it necessitates far more than what current literature (or lack thereof) might explain. This research responds to queries such as:

1. What are the experiences of Black fundraisers navigating the social landscape of philanthropic work and fundraising?
 - a. What expressions of adaptation (e.g., social identity negotiation) are present in the context of facilitating *trust-based* philanthropic partnerships within this social landscape?

In the wake of timely conversations of racial justice, equity, and the field's collective cultural diversification, this exploratory study contextualizes the convergence of these Black practitioners and the historically White-occupied spaces of philanthropy and fundraising. This study we move beyond generic considerations of fundraising strategies (i.e., donor centric philosophies and practice(s), effectiveness as narrowly measured by quantitative metrics) by naming and critically examining some previously unnamed elements (e.g., negotiation and reconciliation of social identities in service of establishing trust) informing these complex *trust-based* partnerships. Honoring the research methods offered through Afrocentricity and Black storywork, this descriptive exploratory study centers experiences of Black fundraisers to unearth complexities within *the business of yes*, which is, as coined in the study, a descriptor of the fundraising practice that ensues perpetual means of adaptation and negotiation in the social exchange in service of facilitating “trust-based” relationships.

Within the narrative of the *business of yes* it is conveyed Black fundraisers can both consciously and unconsciously adopt a *chameleonic* practice through which they negotiate ways of *showing up* (attributed to physical presentation(s), positioning on the frontline, and being [un]heard) in aid of garnering donor/grantor comfort and trust. *Our Narrative* then expounds on pertinent matters of diversity, equity, inclusion, truth and authenticity of which both further characterize the *business of yes* and ultimately serve in the evolution of our contemporary, socially equitable, philanthropic work—a practice that authorizes us all to *show up* differently.

Research Context

In establishing a foundation for this study's research inquiry the following section(s) will contextualize both the historical and current premise of philanthropy and fundraising.

Collectively, this research context expresses both *where we were* historically, and *where we are* currently, furthermore, will help shape and inform our envisioned *where we want to go* as a collective culture.

Philanthropy: Past and Present

Philanthropy, a highly contested concept, has many diverse cultural iterations and interpretations and is ultimately subject to ongoing discourse of what exhorts this benevolence. Historical context of North American practices of philanthropy and fundraising, “the old philanthropy,” has been characterized as centering hegemonic and paternalistic ideals, perpetuating and exacerbating inequalities among diverse communities, and operating through a transactional/financial services model approach to practice (Hayling, 2020; Villanueva, 2018). The collective narrative surrounding philanthropy has, and often still does, exclude people who do not identify as White, male, and wealthy. A 2015 Blackbaud report stated that *philanthropy today looks like the America of 25 years ago*, implying a White overrepresentation—White men are overrepresented as donors and that the fundraising profession is majority White-female (Nagaraj, 2015). Furthermore, these narratives disregard the contributions of minority/marginalized groups to philanthropy-- suggesting that non-Hispanic White people are more prosocially engaged than any other racial group, which the field knows to be untrue (Rovner & McCarthy, 2015; Gasman & Sedgwick, 2015). For some, these narratives might not come as a shock; given the nation's historical tendency to normalize hegemony and perpetuate inequities of which uphold systems perpetuating wealth disparities among White and

communities of color, it of no surprise that the field of philanthropy provides an abundance of examples of such influence(s). A critical examination of this *philanthropy* is not just a contemporary measure; *Strength to Love* written by one of our most prolific civil rights leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1963), taught us that, “Philanthropy is commendable but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary” (p. 25). Absolutely, Dr. King, absolutely. As I have arrived at my own understanding, the anecdote of *dangerous altruism* that King depicts here seemingly scrutinizes the idea of *conformity* (whether social, spiritual, or otherwise) and its unequivocal relationship to human injustice—being *willfully blind* and in accordance with what *has been* is both paralyzing on the individual level and stifles collective justice. In furthering such criticality, I postulate that practitioners in the philanthropy space should also be charged to evade conformity to normative ways of being for the sake of others’ “comfort.” As a whole, it should not overlook the inherited antiquated discriminatory and exclusive practices, policies, procedures and norms and assume that they, within their own means, would adapt and respond to societal needs and our current social contexts. Considering the manner in which society continues to progress, becoming more inclusive of people of diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences, this *old philanthropy* has proven itself ineffective in the grand scheme of transformative change for collective social good (hence the adoption of “trust-based” and other equity-centered conceptual means to practice). Over the past two decades practitioners and researchers have worked to respond to the evolution of this work—continuing to shift our consciousness in the paradigm of *philanthropy*, its functions, practices, and ideological principles.

Contemporary philanthropy, and what MacQuillin (2020) would dub *critical fundraising*, centers more critical and transformative approaches like prioritizing voices of grantees (as

opposed to the donors) and of those historically marginalized; this theoretical approach ultimately attempts to both deconstruct and evade imbedded White-saviorism in philanthropic practices. This ideological approach facilitates social change through co-generative partnership-based constituents of diverse backgrounds in a co-generative nature and sharing the responsibility of creating ethically trust-based relationships with donors; that is, not subjecting fundraisers to being solely responsible for relationship dynamics and outcomes. Lastly, tenets of *contemporary philanthropy* fundraising practices center empathy as a source of power, and encourages all stakeholders to bring their *whole selves, minds, spirits, and hearts* to the practice (Hayling, 2020; MacQuillin, 2020). Rallying such a progressive approach to philanthropy and critical fundraising would ensue consideration and critical examination of all those involved in this work.

Whereas mainstream perspectives commonly associate *donor, charity, or grantee* to the idea of *philanthropy*, the ecosystem of philanthropy entails far more stakeholders that play integral roles in this act of meeting human needs (that is, philanthropy). This study considers other roles such as the *solicitor* (or fundraiser)² and the *organization/institution* which represents the cause/charity. Though the donor irrefutably holds a vital role, true impact of such benevolence would not be foreseeable without both the solicitor and the organization/institution—the fundraiser playing the role of conduit between donor and organization of which refashions donations into action that responds to local and global issues (Sargeant & Shang, 2017).

The Professional Fundraiser: Present and Future

² *Solicitor, fundraiser, and frontline fundraiser* (used interchangeably here) in this context refers to those frontline practitioners tasked with engaging interpersonally with donors/prospective donors, thus facilitating *relationships* that procure donations or other means of philanthropic support.

Today, the role of the fundraiser is gaining more attention in occupational interest. With the vision of equitable philanthropic culture in mind it is inevitable that the field considers the demographic shift occurring among those occupying solicitor roles. Though limited research continues to excavate, the Council of Advancement in Support of Education (CASE) called attention to the demographic makeup of the profession. For example, starting in 1982, people of color (including, but not limited to Black, Latinx, and Asian backgrounds) made up roughly 4.5% of the higher education fundraising workforce, 5.8% in 2002, and 9% in 2013. These percentages are proportionate to that of what is represented among Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) fundraisers of all fields, recording an estimated 10% in 2015 (CASE, 2014). To note, these percentages represent an aggregate of all non-White BIPOCs, to further fraction this group we could assume a minuscule representation for each of those demographic groups. DataUSA, an aggregate of Deloitte and Datawheel that provides census information to the public, details more recent demographic information on the fundraising population; as of 2019, women made up 71.1% of the profession while men made up 21.9% (further delineation beyond the sex binary is not provided). Moreover, DataUSA names that 83.4% of the fundraising workforce is White (non-Hispanic), 5.25% Black (non-Hispanic), 2.69% Asian, and 1.45% Other—highlighting a majority White-female overrepresentation in the fundraising consortium (DataUSA, 2019).

While contextualizing the collective philanthropy and fundraising population, I am further intrigued by how fundraisers of color are navigating this historically White-occupied space and practice. Cause Effective, a year-long field-learning project exploring implications of racial equity and anti-racism work in fundraising, asserts that, among other findings, to enter the fundraising sector inevitably means entering into White-dominated spaces (Daniel et al., 2019).

Given the previously mentioned data that are undoubtedly true, but what might this mean in the context of successful fundraising practices? Also illuminated in the *Cause Effective* report, an approach to *success* in cross-racial dynamics would ultimately require assimilation and/or code switching on behalf of Black fundraisers. Is that the extent in which we have considered the implications of social identities, such as race, on our practices? Might there persist a body of literature that further illustrates critical, though not yet widely acknowledged, complexities of this practice. Social phenomena centering money and finance (e.g., philanthropy and fundraising) inevitably infer a complex interrelatedness to that of social constructed ideas of race and class; to ignore this phenomenon as having implications on the various bio-ecological/systemic levels, in my opinion, would be a detriment to this profession's evolution (Brown, 2018). The previously mentioned queries are further muddled while considering the micro-level perspective—how those phenomena at the *nexus of money, power, and race*, manifest themselves in the work of philanthropy and fundraising. Exploring these phenomena might not just influence the manner in which the fundraising workforce diversifies, but can ultimately inform how we arrive at the envisioned philanthropic systems and practices that center justice and equity (Daniel et al., 2019). In similar vein, Darren Walker (2020) of the Ford Foundation stated:

We might recognize that philanthropy is not one thing, but rather a continuum that spans from charity on one side to justice on the other—and that we must bend economic, social and political systems, the systems that made us, toward the latter. (p. 1)

Though I would not necessarily recognize charity and justice as mutually exclusive intentions of contemporary philanthropy, I would concur that at its core the system and practices of philanthropy might reflect what Walker depicts. These systems do in fact inform the way in

which we have approached this work; at the core of these systems, and inevitably its changes, are the people. This vision of contemporary philanthropy might begin by challenging the people, you and I, to *bend the systems*, beginning with our own practices.

CHAPTER TWO

MINDING THE GAP WITHIN THE NARRATIVE:

The Fundraiser as Explained Through Standing Literature

From Donor-Centric to Solicitor-Centric

To date, nonprofit practitioners and scholars have exhaustively examined motivations of donors' giving, learning, centering, and appealing to the likes, dislikes, interests, and values of donors, resulting in a *donor-centric* philosophy of fundraising (e.g., Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Sargeant & Jay, 2004; Sargeant & Shang, 2017; Weinstein, 2002). Though these prior perspectives have proven themselves serviceable in both understanding donors and cultivating philanthropic relationships, in this new age of philanthropy, *effective fundraising* is far more than understanding the donor and their capacity to give, it is about understanding people, relationships, and the complex nuances that inform the social exchange that is fundraising (Carbone, 1989). This practice is about understanding all stakeholders' roles in the ecosystem, not exclusively that of the donors. As more recent studies have expounded, fundraising practices that are exclusively, or overly, *donor-centric* are not actually best-practice and can furthermore exacerbate a power disequilibrium between donor and solicitor/institution/cause or mission (Jones, 2007; Stuart, 2011; Vu, 2017). The literature has pronounced the practice of fundraising as a bi-directional series of social exchanges which stress the importance of trust and relationships; thus, it is imperative that literature not incessantly prioritize donors but instead expand the parochial scope of literature to further consider complexities of the role/perspective of the fundraisers (Hung 2005; Kelly, 1998; Ki et al., 2015;).

Principal Themes

Through review of relevant literature it is deduced that studies centering fundraising/fundraisers have historically emphasized four principal themes: fundraising operations (e.g., Sargeant & Shang, 2017; Tempel et al., 2016; Waters et al., 2005), “effective” fundraising practices (including, but not limited to, public relations/fundraising literature on relationship management and cultivation/stewardship approaches (e.g., Carbone, 1989; Cook & Lasher, 1994; Kelly, 1998; Sargeant, 2001; Sargeant & Jay, 2004; Tindall, 2009; Weinstein & Barden, 2017) of which also entails the emergence of new technologies/media and their implications on fundraising practices (e.g., Olsen et al., 2001; Waters, 2007), understanding fundraising as a profession (i.e., demographics, necessary skills, earnings, turnover rates; e.g., Flandez, 2012; Lindsay, 2015; Nagaraj, 2015; Shaker & Nathan, 2017), and the acknowledgment of the field’s homogeneous/exclusionary qualities and the emerging argument for diversity (mostly regarding race, age, and gender; Burton, 2020; Goudge, 2003; Nagaraj, 2015; Nelms, 2019; Newman, 2002; Perry, 2012; Picco, 2019).

The Fundraiser Identity

Furthering the examination of the subsequent literature exploring diversity and the fundraising practice, I found that when considering the concepts of *social identity* (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, religion), the literature tended to focus on the practice of appealing to donors and their social identities—detailing approaches to identity-informed fundraising practices. As well, the literature centered on how fundraisers leverage what they know about donors’ identities (Cagney & Ross, 2013; Conley, 2000; Drezner, 2018; Drezner & Garvey, 2016; Sargeant & Shang, 2017). In deepening this review, there is also no shortage of literature that centers strategies assisting fundraisers’ responsiveness to donor identities; thus, encouraging

a donor's proclivity to give—ultimately implying a correlative relationship between technical fundraising measures and donor response. As this review unearths, scholarship has overlooked *critical* elements informing the social exchange between donor and solicitor that ultimately could inform the success of the relationship (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Aaker & Akutsu, 2009).

The Gap

What was gathered from this review highlighted a void that might explain the intersections of donor and solicitor social identity considerations in practice. Literature speaking to that of fundraisers' social identities and implications to practice has depicted a seemingly narrow perspective—acknowledging some implications of *gender* or *beauty* as variables informing the “likeability” of a solicitor, but even so, there presents very little consistency within these theoretical assertions (Belfield & Beney, 2000; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Though it was possible to thematically associate across distal theoretical concepts (e.g., identity-based philanthropic mirroring [Drezner, 2018] and *similarity-attraction-liking* hypotheses [Bekkers, 2010; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011]), there still persists a deficiency of empirical research explicitly naming social identity similarity or dissimilarity between solicitor and donor and its impact on the social exchange. As a whole there are further opportunities for philanthropic research to move beyond the demographic reports as it pertains to fundraisers' identities, and increase its prowess to engage research of this context through a critical lens, beyond that of the *stories most often told* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach to inquiry and examination becomes increasingly important as the landscape of fundraising becomes more diverse and inclusive of all people.

Conceptual Framing

The layered conceptual and theoretical framework informing this study is interdisciplinary and seeks to offer an emergent understanding/approach to *knowing* that challenges the audience and researcher to consider, or *hold*, complexities of constructivism, critical race theory and critical perspective, identity and social identity theories, and identity negotiation. The challenge here is not to simply understand each layer as individual disparate entities, but to engage them collectively as one holistic tool-- each layer informing the latter. These framing elements are both held together and colored by an Afrocentric philosophical thread, edifying these concepts through a critical study of “thought and practice of African people in their current and historical unfolding” (Karenga, 2002, p. 3).

Constructivism

Through a constructivist/interpretivist and Afrocentric paradigm, this study explores the “observable” reality(ies) of the social phenomena of which is mediated by our (study agents, researcher, and the audiences’) subjective perceptions, beliefs, and actions (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The constructivist paradigm acknowledges the subjectivity and fundamental interpretive nature of our individual contributions to this study; we continuously observe this in the shared narratives in this study, common themes emerge across the collective narrative while individual narratives possess variance across interpretations— hence the subjectivity of individual valence and lens. Although the constructivist paradigm honors relative difference within shared experience(s), critical race theory (CRT), an extension of critical legal theory, nestles these experiences in a larger container that connects collective and individual experience to that of the larger social systems (Torre et al., 2015). Ultimately, this adds layers to the idea that our perceptions of this social phenomena are exclusively distal to that of another.

Critical Race Theory

CRT will provide the theoretical foundation, language, and understanding of the larger social phenomenon that is inevitably rooted in, subject to, and corroborated by many unobservable structures, cultural assumptions/biases, and systems of oppression and privilege informing lived experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Challenging the neoliberal assertion that historically marginalized people, specifically Black people, are wholly afforded civil rights and liberties, this theoretical framework argues that hegemony and other variations of racism are experienced as normative in the ethos of “western” culture(s) and heritage(s). In concert with this lens, the word *critical* in this study will communicate a commitment to queer, feminist, critical race, and neo-Marxist approaches to knowledge and knowing—that is, to interrogate relationships between lived experiences, social structures, power, privilege, oppression, history, and injustice (Torre et al., 2015).

Inherently so, this too would assume that our “traditional” ways of approaching philanthropy would also be situated within such toil—a postulation supported by the accounted lived experiences of those resonant to this context. Engaging the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm and CRT, this study will center *testimonios* and Black storywork of which serve as *counternarratives to the stories most often told* in this particular context (Cole, 2020; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For an Afrocentric frame of reference, the inquiry to follow will be, “centered in the life experiences and life chances and understandings of African people” (Kershaw, 2003, p. 32); this is achieved through an inquiry grounded in: *how Black people describe their own lives, how Black people describe what their lives ought to be, and what Black people see as obstacles in the pursuit of life the way it ought to be* (Kershaw, 2003). As this nested framework supports, engaging these two frameworks provide

relevant empirical data that goes beyond analytically objective findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Approaches to engaging, interpreting, and synthesizing said narratives is further detailed in this study's Methodology & Design.

Identity and Social Identity Theory

As a great deal of this study centers and refers to *identity* and the subjective interpretation(s) surrounding said concept (specifically the Black racial identity), this study will reference identity as interpreted through identity theory (Burke, 1980; Jones & Abes, 2013) and social identity theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Together these two conceptual frameworks elucidate microsociological (self/personal identity as it pertains to roles and behaviors) and social-psychological perspectives (socially constructed categorization and intragroup similarities with implications to intergroup relations) that collectively inform the identity of a collective peoples and an individual person (Jetten et al., 1998). In interpreting *identity* it is imperative to acknowledge that as this study centers a singular identity, such as Black racial identity, it does not devoid the consideration of the many social and cultural identities that coincide, or are *intersectional*, with one another. Grounded in critical race theory and Black feminist thought, this *intersectionality* as Crenshaw (1989, 1991) offers us, extends itself here as means to recognize the interconnected relationship(s) between psychosocial and multiple marginalized and privileged identities (Carbado et al., 2013). As Smith and Watson (1992) asserted, “identifications and experiences are multiple, because locations in gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality complicate one another, and not merely additively” (as cited in Stewart, 2008, p. 184). As supported by Crenshaw's, prior stated assertions, within the intersectional nature of multiple identities one may speak to resonant experiences associated with a *singular* Black identity but that does not imply that this experience is simply batten by the single identity—privileged and

marginalized identities (and associated experiences) are more or less salient depending on the social context(s).

Collectively, constructivism, critical race theory and critical perspective, and identity/social identity theories contextualize the lens in which a person sees, interprets, and ultimately navigates the world around them—emphasizing interactions among/between individuals and their environmental context(s) “which fundamentally shape meaning making about identities and social worlds” (Stewart, 2008, p. 187) and how one interprets and orients the Black identity and all its complexities. Together these three paradigmatic lenses contend that race, a socially constructed concept, was/is a tool used in service of exploitation; initially developed to create social hierarchies, it is continually used to justify and normalize harmful and oppressive actions (that is centuries of contempt, discrimination, bondage, slavery, and well, murder), of which ultimately asserts and upholds white economic, political, and cultural power (Coates, 2015; Reviere, 2001). In advancing our understanding of race and implications to *knowing* (discerning truth) and *being* (living said truth) through Afrocentric means, Reviere (2001) might also encourage research of this regard, of socially textured issues, to consider the central role that race plays in modern society-- that is, ensuring that this research inquiry is conscientious of the historical and emotional, and might I add physical and spiritual, baggage amassed from the centuries of anti-Blackness (Reviere, 2001). Brazenly named, anti-Blackness in its many sociopolitical and cultural forms, has been, and dare I say continues to be, at the core of how race is understood, engaged with, and negotiated. A fundamental understanding of which is needed to engage with, validate, and critique this research.

Identity Negotiation Theory

At the core of this conceptual framework rests the final component, identity negotiation theory (INT; Swann, 1987). As a very nuanced concept, INT describes a process by which roles and behaviors are reconciled in social interactions; the *consensus* is made as one person, the *perceiver*, posits their expectations of the other, the *target*, to guide behaviors and furthermore encourage the target to conform to said expectations—that is, eliciting *behavioral confirmation* (Swann, 1987; Swann et al., 2009). As it is negotiated, or mutually agreed upon, it is said that the *target* draws the *perceiver* to engage him/her/them in a manner that is congruent to the target's idea of themselves (e.g., possessing credibility; Swann et al., 2009). In a study centering Black students and their experiences navigating multiple identities, Stewart (2008) was able to capture *identity negotiation* as an obligation to “pick and choose certain aspects of their identities to showcase to others” (Stewart, 2008, p. 199) in service of pleasing others while navigating university/predominantly White spaces. In establishing mutuality between *asymmetric* identities where role/power differentiations are present (e.g., manager and employee, or, parent and child) or between *symmetric* identities where there may be no explicit hierarchy of power (e.g., marriage partners, peers/friends, or teammates), Swann (et al. 2009) postulated that this negotiation process transforms, “disconnected individuals into collaborators who have mutual obligations, common goals, and often, some degree of commitment to one another” (p. 82). In furthering understanding of the complexities this presents, we could consider both Swann's conceptual theory and that of the empirical findings of Stewart's (2008) *Being All of Me*, a qualitative study unearthing multidimensionality of social identity negotiation of Black students navigating a predominantly White institution. Swann's symmetric/asymmetric identities might also extend to consider the critical differentiations among role(s) and power as understood

through CRT (e.g., Black students negotiating identity while navigating the landscape of a PWI, or this study's premise, Black professionals navigating the social landscape of philanthropy).

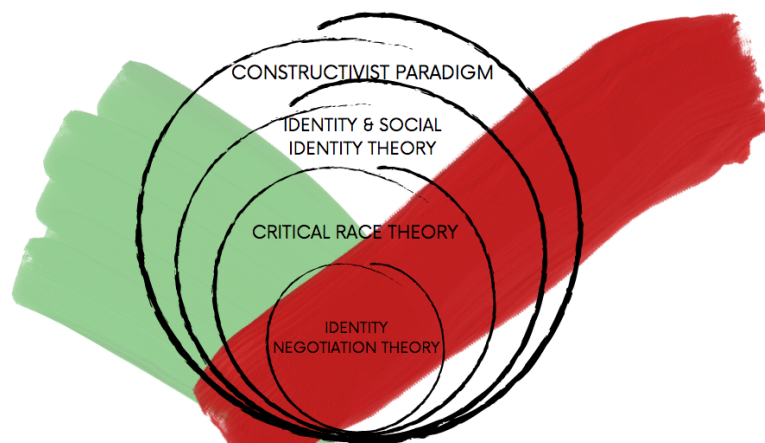
So, in considering the context and subjects of this inquiry, all of which are situated at the *nexus of money, power, and race*, this framework will serve as an integral tool in engaging the inquiry offered by this study (Daniel et al., 2019). As Figure 1 illustrates, *identity negotiation* here will be observed as an assemblage of all prior framework elements; it is to be considered a product of oppressive systems on the interpretation and expression of one's identity(ies). In this research context, this framework hypothesizes that: 1) there are various *degrees*, or expressions, of identity negotiation depending on contextual influence(s) and an individual's own identity development, 2) negotiation of (racial) identity is multidimensional and is almost *always* required of Black people while navigating White-dominant culture and social contexts, 3) the process of (racial) identity negotiation is markedly as a response to/result of multilayered systemic racism and pervasive anti-Blackness, and 4) the negotiation of (racial) identity *could be* warranted by/an expression of internalized systemic racism and oppression, a process in which one grapples with one's own power and self-perception. Activist and author W.E.B. DuBois (1994) depicted this best as he describes the Black (wo)man's strife as a continuous longing to attain self-consciousness [person-hood], implying an insistent negotiation of multiple dimensions of identities in an environmental context that has never, or has not yet, been welcoming or inclusive to their whole being (McEwen et al., 1990; Sedlacek, 1987; as cited in Stewart, 2008).

Given the habitual and instinctual nature in which this mechanism is performed, identity negotiation can often go uninvestigated, uninterrogated, unexamined (Swann, 1987). This exploratory inquiry is based on the assumption that negotiation of identity is inherent in day-to-day encounters and is how people in society establish "who is who" (Swann et al., 2009,

p. 82). This further complicates the notion of critically examining how people of color (of which are/have been historically marginalized) navigate a normative imperialist White-majority culture. So, this study will not negate whether or not identity negotiation takes place, but instead, it will contextualize the expressions of such identity manifests themselves in this study's context.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This exploratory design aims to provide sufficient framing needed to both capture and investigate complexities of fundraising through a critical lens. This qualitative study is considered *exploratory* as it does not explicitly test existing theory, frameworks, or models that explicitly elucidate particulars of this study's focus. Instead, this study will both examine and synthesize data into thematic findings, organizing narrative(s) into emergent hypotheses that then postulate grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The qualitative elements of this study both reports and analyzes data in narrative form, *Black Storywork* to be precise (Coles, 2020). Corresponding to both critical race theory and the Afrocentric philosophy supporting the methodological framework in this study, the Black storytelling tradition honors theoretical observations about life through concrete and culturally specific narratives. To ensure that this study upholds a congruence between means (the way in which the research is conducted and how knowledge is created and validated) and intent (the purpose of this study) it is imperative that this design and methodology reflect that of the community of which it intends to honor and serve. In this case, engaging various tenets of *Afrocentrism* is not only attractive in this case, but is necessary.

Revolutionary philosopher and author Asante's (1987, 1988, 1990) *Afrocentric* paradigm invites us to an emergent consideration of data and knowledge that both honors, and is legitimized by, the perspective of Black people. This revolutionary approach studies the essence of *reality*, or lived experience(s), by centering Black people as *subjects and not as objects* within the inquiry; that is, basing knowledge, and the validity of such, on the interrogation of cultural

and physiological location(s) of Black people (Asante, 2009). Considering that traditional race-based research inherently compares Black and White behavior in attempts to explain perceived *deviance of Black behaviors*, in contrast, Afrocentrism places Black ideals at the center of analyses and seeks to engage people of African diaspora in all elements of the research—comparing self to selves (Asante, 1987; Gasman & Sedgwick, 2005; Graham, 1992).

Afrocentric researchers like Reviere (2001) championed this philosophy by advocating the adoption of the principles Ma’at and Nommo within inquiry—honoring an intrinsic “quest for justice, truth, and harmony,” and using “the productive word” (Reviere, 2001, p. 3) to create knowledge with the intent to create a fair and just society. As it pertains to this research, this refers to the methodological approaches and practices themselves, in concert with the researcher’s *place*, being used as tools in the pursuit of *truth, equity, liberation* and collective *growth* and *transformation*. In paraphrasing this practice, Reviere (2001) also asserted that at its most basic iteration the Afrocentric epistemology requires researchers to:

1. Hold themselves responsible for uncovering hidden, subtle, racist theories that may be embedded in current methodologies
2. Work to legitimize the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data
3. Maintain inquiry rooted in a strict interpretation of *place*

Considering such provisions warrants this research’s methodology to challenge a traditional Western approach to research methodology of which implicitly prioritizes and legitimizes White authority, experiences, knowledge, and ways of researching (Graham, 1992). As offered by Reviere’s (2001) Afrocentric orientation to research methodology criteria, the

following subsections regarded as *Ujamaa*, *Uhaki*, *Ukweli*, *Utulivu*, and *Kujitoa* will illustrate the Afrocentric subject-centered approach to this study's data collection and analysis.

Research Criteria & Application

While this study honors Afrocentric means and approaches to research, I will acknowledge that most readers might not be accustomed to the approaches, language, or *place*, from which the study is expressed. In service of those readers, the following subsections shall both conceptualize the Afrocentric means of the study and speak to how they are applied throughout.

Ujamaa (Research Agents/Co-narrators)

Concept. Analogous to *community*, this principle prioritizes the recognition and maintenance of the community engaged in the research. As Afrocentrists reject the researcher/participant dichotomy, this tenet reinforces communalism rather than individual stakeholders or research “participants” (Milam, 1992; Nobles, 1986). It is emphasized that the researcher shall not remove themselves from the research, presume a hierarchical role, or to be “the well from which springs theory and practice” (Reviere, 2001, p. 713) that professes to the community; instead, *Ujamaa* requires that the I, as researcher, reject such separation but rather allow theory and practice to be informed by the “actual and aspired interests of the community” (Reviere, 2001, p. 714). For this reason, those community members engaged in this research will oftentimes be referred to as research *agents* or *coauthors* as they too possess agency in the cogeneration of knowledge throughout this research process.

Application. At its core, this methodology has an intention that *knowledge* and *understanding of the general* is respective to the *depth of authentic understanding of the particulars* (Stewart, 2008); in that, this study prioritizes depth over breadth, engaging six

purposefully sampled community member to grant plentiful opportunity to capture robust, descriptive, and distinct accounts characterizing our collective narrative. It was intended for the sampled community members to represent diversity across other social identity variants beyond that of race (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, age), the final group of agents consisted of: five women and one man; one person openly identifying as gay; two first-gen citizens and four U.S.-born citizens; one Gen X (born between 1965–1976), and five Millennials/Gen Y (born between 1977–1995). Though there was opportunity for greater diversity, the represented identities and experiences provided robust narratives to work with—implications of the intersectionality on the negotiation of social identities is captured in the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). In addition to the previously mentioned identifiers, the research agents also met the criteria of: (a) self-identifying as Black, (b) occupying a low-high positioned frontline or akin role in fundraising/philanthropy work, (c) located in San Diego, California, and (d) consent to research methodological procedures (through the consent forms).

Uhaki (Data Collection)

Concept. Analogous to “harmony,” this principle necessitates research application and procedure that is fair and mindful of the collective welfare of the research agents. As it is intended that this research probes and engages critical thought that might elicit an array of feelings and/or emotions, it is my responsibility to facilitate harmonious relationships not only between myself, the agents, and the greater ecosystem of which we navigate, but to create harmonious resonance between the research and those involved.

Application. While continuing to challenge myself as a researcher, thus ensuring my practices reflect that of *harmony*, I will explain this following section not only as “data collection methods,” but rather contextualize an *intentional* and *emergent* process in which we (agents and

myself) facilitated a co-generative space of knowledge and wisdom. The following two-phase multimodal approach is considered *intentional* in the sense that the approach actively attempted to avoid inflicting harm in the process of encouraging deep reflective thinking, attunement to feeling, and critical inquiry. These approaches are *emergent* in the sense that though they are managed through a set of technical devices (e.g., Zoom conferencing platform, discussion prompts, arts informed reflective practice), they are not rigidly bound by them; this is a manner in which this research can be responsive to, and be reflective of, all those involved and their *place(s)*, or physical, psychological, physiological, and spiritual location (Asante, 2009). As Asante expressed, this is a manner in which I discerned the agents' location(s), or, *where my brotha/sistah is coming from*. These *places*, or the collective *place*, provided the space for us to both reflect and locate our stories of the past, and to locate and construct the emergent narrative. While honoring the *places* of the agents, elements such as physical meeting locations and duration of interviews, were also negotiated; half of the agents engaged in casual, extensive, in-person meetings over coffee, the other half required our meetings to take form in a series of online Zoom video conferencing sessions to accommodate for varying capacities and work schedules.

Integral to this study's relevance and impact is its ability to center and honor the agent's experience(s); for this reason, the *container* was used to facilitate a sense of mutual (between the agents and myself) security and safety in the multimodal inquiry, collective learning, and knowledge creation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). As this process intentionally sought to elicit critical thought, candor, and vulnerability it was imperative that I not solely prioritize the agents' comfort, but also consider how bringing their whole and authentic selves to the experience required the same of me; as such, I approached the *container* with intention and remained

mindful of how I brought myself to the space—a sense of being responsive to *our place(s)* (Asante, 2009; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014).

In service responsiveness to the *places(s)*, presence and engagement was inevitably required in the container—this was approached in a few ways. In regard to technical measures, I used Zoom’s recording feature to capture our meeting transcriptions; doing so I was not inclined to record extensive field notes but was instead able to sit with, and be present to, what emerged. As themes emerged in conversation they were noted using quick-hand identifiers respective to that which was shared; terse phrases like *show up, it is not about me, business of yes, etc.*, were all used as bookmarks and reminders to revisit particular element(s) during the data analysis process.

In a more adaptive and interpersonal consideration of presence and engagement, agents were also encouraged to engage me in discourse as they felt called to; in the invitation agents seldomly prompted their own questions about my story and experiences, and took the authority to both offer and challenge interpretations of our narrative. With this intention agents made it known that the container felt *supportive, inviting, and freeing*, which in turn encouraged authenticity within our sharing— a noncoincidental resonance to this study’s findings further detailed in Chapter 4.

Phase I. As opposed to a transactional interview approach where I as the researcher simply excavate information from the research participant, the process of *Phase I* (and subsequently *Phase II*) reflected more of casual exchange where candor and authenticity was both encouraged and modeled— this ultimately encouraged openly sharing about what was being processed and reflected on in real time; “This is the first time I have spoken to this out loud, but it is cool that it is happening now so I know how to speak to it later,” as one of the agents shared.

As noted by another agent, the reflective conversational element of Phase I also served as a space of sensemaking and self-accountability as they were able to sit with reflections and began to move toward ways in which they can integrate the new knowledge into their ongoing professional practices.

In a systematic approach to the critical dialogue process, Phase I, I arbitrarily referenced a semistructured guide to ensure the flow of the dialogue appropriately responded to this study's overall research questions. This guide entails a set of reflective prompts aimed to illuminate the phenomena of this research's context. The reflective prompts developed in a sequential manner beginning by establishing rapport/familiarity and identifying *the place*, then advanced to a more critical dialogue centering topics such as identity, race, culture, power and trust in fundraising (See Appendix A). Though the guide provided some guidance, oftentimes the conversations and narratives that emerged were organic and did not require much "prompting."

As it emerged in these organic conversations, the use of culturally relevant lexicon, colloquialisms, and references to intergenerational tales collectively understood by a "you know," or the mere nonverbals (like a side-eye, or the nuances of a pause, smirk, a poked-out lip, and an eyebrow raise) were also used in communicating our stories. I believe this to be where our collective narrative truly began to take palpable form and shape—when stories were communicated, felt and understood without requiring much explanation. What emerged in this phase greatly informed what was deepened and discovered in *Phase II*, the art informed inquiry.

Phase II. In this invitation to be critical, to deeply inquire and to rethink the world around us, *Phase II*, the art-informed inquiry, is a manner in which the agents (and myself) chronicled what was felt, learned, and discovered beyond the liminal confines of diction. Beyond that of a performative means interview data collection, intellectual domains with respect to

creative arts (such as expressions of music, dance, and visual arts) are regarded as mediums that spiritually and emotionally liberate those involved, encourage critical processing of complex ideas and/or experiences, and invite the most authentic and uninhibited parts of ourselves to a space— this is especially true for those who produce the art themselves (Wilson, 2005). For this reason, the use of the arts inquiry, and more specifically the use of *portraiture*, intended to deepen our (both myself and the research agent[s]) access to our most authentic selves and/or expressions through a personal and creative medium (Elliott, 2018;; Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Pioneered by sistah Lightfoot (1997), the data rich portraiture methodology uses both interview data and observations to construct visual representations of emergent expressions and interpretations of such; particular to this study, this phase required us to create the art as we to engaged in critical thought guided by stories and themes emergent out of Phase I (Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In this approach agents were able to offer their own take-aways, describing and portraying reality from their own perspective(s) and feelings (Reviere, 2001).

With respect to this methodology, agents were also invited to reimagine ways of connecting with others that reflected the ways in which we connected through this art-informed inquiry. As noted by agents, the creation of our art inspired ways of exploring possibilities beyond the rigid parameters that historically inform methods to connecting, and establishing relationships, with donors; “This exercise was weird but so fun; wouldn’t it be cool and different to host donor meetings like this? Go to one of those guided painting classes, or like, use movement and go to a dance class with live drums or something, hmm.”

Collectively, this methodology not only captured the information-rich nature of the narratives by citing direct quotes and sharing relative interpretations, but will also achieve such by citing somatic responses as depicted in the portraiture (Lightfoot, 1985; Lightfoot & Davis,

1997). As in alignment with our Afrocentric philosophy, these methods aspire to speak to all fundamental aspects to our human condition—feeling, knowing, and acting (Asante, 2009).

Ukweli (Validity)

Concept. Analogous to *truth*, this tenet emphasizes research inquiry that is grounded in the experiences of the community(ies) being researched. Particular to this research, the community is considered: (a) generally speaking, the Black community, and (b) more contextually specific, Black professionals working in philanthropy, fundraising, or akin areas of benevolence. As underscored by the Afro-centric philosophy, community members will ultimately authorize and discern *truth*; they will ultimately be the final arbiters of this research's *trustworthiness*. As a utility for this inquiry, this specific tenet opposes an overreliance of *objectivity* of research approaches and critique; instead, this study postulates that *truth* will be both discerned heuristically and negotiated through *Black Consciousness*—a biopsychological characterization of the racial and cultural experiences as commonly shared and understood by Black Americans (Haynie, 1999; More, 2012).

Application. In service of validating this work, receiving feedback from both research agents and the larger community was integral in assuring alignment between my interpretations and intent; for this reason an approach to continual community validation is, and continues to be, employed where both agents and the community review a number of their direct quotes and interpretations to ensure they are both understood and duly reflect that of the co-generated knowledge created in Phase I and II of data collection. The *agent-validation and review* was approached through agents' individual review of this study's write-up. Through this review agents provided critical feedback regarding overall themes, interpretations and their own takeaways.

In continuation of the Ukweli tenet, granting access to and receiving feedback from the larger community is also integral to this study and its impact. This element is achieved through an ongoing *community validation/affirmation and review* phase of which took place after the initial agent validation and review. This community validation process is ongoingly approached through soliciting critical feedback by sharing findings, interpretations, themes, and takeaways with the Black fundraiser community. Doing so is achieved by accessing and posting to one of the largest online networks of Black fundraising professionals, the African American Development Officers Network. To note, this element of the methodology will rely heavily on virtual mediums and measures; with consent from the African American Development Officers, a Qualtrics survey with this research's purpose, approach, and emergent findings was distributed to the network for nonobligatory response. To best make use of the community's feedback, responses were openly coded to capture sentiments and opinions regarding this study's work; to date, words such as *timely*, *important*, and *thought provoking* represent the community's resonances with this research's findings. (Please see Appendix B for the *community validation/affirmation* guide).

Utulivu (Data Analysis)

Concept. Analogous to *justice*, utulivu is to be understood as the commitment of the researcher/research to being a means to justice—of which is measured on fairness of research practices and procedures, and the openness of its application. Furthermore, “Utulivu requires that the researcher actively avoid creating, exaggerating, or sustaining divisions between or within communities but rather strive to create harmonious relationships between and within these groups” (Reviere, 2001, p. 717).

Application. While meeting this research requirement it deems appropriate that the manner in which this work is analyzed is based on the principle of justice and fairness. Analyzing data through this tenet demands that I as the researcher rely on two explicit sources for data interpretation—one being my own lived experience relative to the inquiry (as noted in *Kujitoo*), and secondly, engaging the wider community for guidance in the interpretation of data (as noted in *Ukweli*), all of which are in service of ensuring interpretations are fair and just to the people of which it aims to honor and represent (Reviere, 2001).

In preparing data for analysis it was imperative that the shared narratives were coherently transcribed from speech to text. Subsequent to the Zoom video conferencing platform used to record both in-person and online engagements I elected to use an online transcription service, Otter, to transcribe the exchanges. Through this medium I was able to distinguish speaker voices (e.g., researcher and agent) and correct any discrepancies in miswording/misspelling picked up by the recording (e.g., repetition of filler words) thus making the narratives coherent, free from major grammatical errors that may make the transcription incomprehensible. It is also pertinent to note that these adjustments were done with an intention not to alter the essence and meaning(s) of the what and how of what was shared. Attentiveness to such aims to ensure that these narratives remain authentic to the voices contributing to the collective narrative.

As this study centers Black stories and experiences, or “counternarratives to the stories most often told” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 14), the application of critical narrative analysis will be used to describe *meaning* of experiences of those narratives historically left out of the common rhetoric and research inquiries of this context. This *critical* narrative analysis sought to both describe the experiences and seek to unearth what might lie beyond the surface of our narratives-- how this research might assist in constructing, deconstructing, reconstructing our

understanding/knowledge around the relationships between identity (race), power, and fundraising (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, as cited by Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

This approach to narrative analysis required a coding software that assisted with capturing the emergent themes and concepts uncovered in these narratives. The use of MaxQDA software in the analysis phase granted the ability to do line-by-line coding, create abstract codes that reflect that of this study's explorative content, and both organize and employ cross-case analyses (Deterding & Waters, 2018). As suggested by literature emanating coding techniques for methodologies similar to what this study employs, this study engaged open, or "flexible," coding/analysis that began by assigning narrative elements (e.g., specific words, quotes, emotions, actions/reactions, etc.) to broad/emergent concepts of this study (e.g., *the why*, *identity salience*, *dissonance*, *negotiation*, *adaptive practices*; Elliot, 2018; Punch, 2014). As coding progresses the initial codes were then further delineated into more "fine-grained codes" (Deterding & Waters, 2018, p. 716) and bracketed into subsections of the prior abstract themes (e.g., expressions of identity negotiation through physical presentation, positioning and orientation, [not] being heard, and other adaptive considerations based on context). This coding approach assisted in creating coherent themes across all six transcriptions. Through these organized themes it is also plausible that the emergent core of these themes create a foundation for future *grounded theory(ies)* contextualizing the phenomena explored in this study (Deterding & Waters, 2018; Elliot, 2018).

In addition to this methodology's approach to just and fair analyses of data, it was also imperative that the manner in which the data are interpreted and presented reflect that of *just* and *fair* as well. Inherently, by the nature of qualitative research, interpretations are subjectively constructed; respective to just and fair approaches, narratives and respective interpretations are

both coauthored and validated by researcher and agent(s). Furthermore, these narratives and interpretations are validated by the larger community (as noted in Ukweli). The manner in which I manage my own positionality as “insider” to the study’s context is imperative to the scheme of justice and fairness. Interpretations of the narrative(s) will not be exclusively constructed on my own personal assumptions of “reality,” but instead, confirmed by a shared understanding of reality as it is recounted in our reflective and critical dialogue. Confirmation of interpretations might simply reflect that of an expressed affirmations (verbal or otherwise) between myself and agent, or, confirmed by resonance to my own lived experiences (Reviere, 2001). In this case, all elements of this methodology and design require that I commit to this process beyond that of the technical “researcher” role, starting with placing myself within this work.

Kujitoa

Concept. Analogous to *commitment*, this tenet requires me to emphasize how knowledge created through this process is structured and used, and to not evade emotional connection to the topic in service of tending to research objectivity. This essentially means that my own assumptions are not avoided but instead brought to the foreground of the research activities and that acknowledging said assumptions necessitates on-going critical self-reflection. As ascertained by Reviere (2001), “good” and legitimate research entails the researcher “being aware and honest about how one’s own beliefs, values, and biases affect the research process” (Reviere, 2001, p. 182). The learning that occurs through these reflections shall be covered in the following statement of positionality, my *place*. This *place* serves as an interpretation of my relationship to the phenomena and research being conducted; it simultaneously serves as an intentional deconstruction of the subject-object duality. The following section not only denotes my relationship to the study and how I might manage the researcher identity and innate biases

implied by this perspective, but it expresses the undeniable interconnectedness between myself and this work by actively refuting a reliance on objectivity in defense of this study's validity. Furthermore, as Reviere (2001) endorses, it is a rejection of the *personal-theoretical (or academic) dichotomy*—for I am this research, this research is me; this research intends to honor both my and the voice(s) of my community.

Application. A student, educator, philanthropist, artist and creative are just a few roles and identities I oscillate through on the daily. I invest a great deal of myself to fulfill what I sense to be a divine purpose, serving as a conduit of deep learning, discovery, and healing. An embodiment of such mission goes beyond that of reciting an elevator pitch, it entails actively imbuing the values of *empathy*, *compassion*, and *liberation* in all that I do, including how/what I choose to contribute to the academy and the work of social impact. Though these values have led me to serve in several professional roles in the institution of higher education, I am pulled to ensure opportunities for discovery and learning are more equitable, socially just, and accessible for all those who seek it—not simply those who have access to the academy.

In a greater vision of positive-transformational change and liberation I find it imperative to exercise a growing level of awareness of both self and context; as it pertains to this study, this refers to a deep understanding of both the space I occupy within the ecosystem and *the place* from which I guide my work (considering both this research and beyond). I am a (relatively) young , proud, Black, caribeño, multicultural, multifaceted, eclectic, able-bodied, fluid, cis-gendered male committed to honoring and expressing himself fully within all of the complexities his identity (See Portrait 7). While naming these personal and social identities, I would be remiss not to name that I did not just innately arrive at this place of “freedom,” on my own accord, it has been a journey, and frankly, continues to be. What I can attest is that within

this journey I have made a commitment to both myself and ancestors (of which fought for me to live freely) that I will live fully and authentically within this true self in spite of societies incessant pursuit to police this body, to bound my liberation to that of its own comfort.

While positioned in the context of this study it is imperative to name the manner in which, historically, the marginalized identities of which I hold have not been widely represented in our fundraising and philanthropy spaces. The genesis of this study was fomented through a critical awareness that by desiring to play an impactful role in philanthropy and other means of systematic benevolence I would be called to engage and partner with a variety of people whom make up this interconnected ecosystem; this not only includes those folk of historically marginalized identities of which share similar identities, but also considers those varying “traditional” donor constituencies and those who have historically occupied philanthropy spaces.

In the field it is becoming more apparent that individuals holding similar identities to my own, or other marginalized identities, have *different* experiences than those who have historically occupied fundraising and philanthropy spaces. Candidly put, these experiences can, and have been noted to be painted by racialized harm and trauma. My personal experiences, and those of other fundraisers of color/marginalized identities, reveal patterns of being subject to microaggressive behaviors, glass ceilings, *othering*, which often warrants an inclination to *show up* tactfully while navigating these spaces—this, I might add, can be both emotionally and spiritually taxing. In the year of 2022 I find this “it is what it is” mentality unacceptable, particularly in the case of the Black identity/culture, where we have been socialized for generations to manage our *Blackness* to be more palatable or respected in many White contexts—I am tired. Dub it a doctrine of the rebellious millennial, but I cannot accept this as “just the way it is.” So yes, my initial gravitation toward this nuanced topic was, and possibly still is, birthed

from a place of personal resistance and rejection of the normative white-supremacist culture, and, this work is not simply “me-search,” it is “we-search,” and ultimately involves us all.

Therefore, my task in this research is to explore these particulars in the context of fundraising/philanthropy with community members who, similar to myself, navigate normative White-contexts yet manage to be effective conduits of social impact. In exploring the complexities of these narratives, I am further allured to learn of and honor the innate creative and adaptive nature of our people, of which has not yet been given its due attention within this context.

Within this Afrocentric *place* is where I as a researcher can acknowledge personal values that ground this inquiry, this element speaks to the inseparability of the research, researcher, and the inclusion of *place* (Asante, 1990). Given the saliency to my own lived experience(s), it was critical that I refrain from projecting onto the data while also not leaving myself out of the equation, a balancing act for sure. This *place* was used as a tool to further our co-generative knowledge and meaning created within our shared space(s). Considering that I am Black engaging Black folk, this emic, or “insider,” resonance served as the grounding of the following narrative and those to follow.

~~In closing, I find it imperative to reiterate the core intention(s) from which this research emerges; with great assurance I claim that this exploration shall not vilify a particular social group nor perpetuate a White vs Black narrative-- that is not where our progression lies.~~ As to tenderly shift me to face the mirror, Dr. Spencer, a dissertation committee member and sistah, asked whether the above statement was in fact an expression of my own negotiation of identity? To that I respond, “yes, inarguably so.” The irony and hubris of it all; within my own journey toward liberation I still find myself contorting in ways to be palatable and received respectfully,

oftentimes beyond what my conscious mind tracks. Alas, as ever-so resonant here, is the need for our stories to be told, for our voices to be heard, for our presence to be felt in their most authentic and unapologetic ways. And even more so, we need to be held (accountable and embraced) by our community, for that is where life is revitalized, nurtured, where our budding dreams and imaginations can flourish, where hope and joy are elevated and tended to. I believe there is both great power and potential for great social change within our work, and through this study I hope to further encourage each of us to *show up* more fully for the sake of our collective transformation, Ubuntu.

CHAPTER 4

OUR NARRATIVE

In offering this narrative Chapter 4 will rest upon the foundations of Afrocentric methodology and the tradition(s) of Black storytelling; including origin stories and tales of woe and successes, generational parables and budding dreams of the future, it is intended to retell our observations of this experience to embolden a new *knowing* and *being* around this work (Smitheran, 1977; Toliver, 2021). Rather simply centering multiple stories of autonomous individuals, as it is assembled co-narrators' voices blend to create our communal and collective narrative; each anecdote marking and retelling aspects of this observed reality from which we (myself, coauthors, and readers) make-meaning— that is, the essence of Black storywork (Coles, 2020; Toliver, 2021).

Sequentially, the story begins by naming *our place* and *why* to acquaint readers with the quasi-paradigmatic perspective(s) from which we are narrating and making sense of this context, or as Asante (2009) named it, *where my sistas and brothas are coming from*. Within this place we name and define the ideas of trust and the emergent *business of yes*, a generalized descriptor of fundraising that ensues a chameleonic means of *showing up* in service of our professional mission to facilitate “trust-based” philanthropic relationships. Next, *our narrative* opens by further contextualizing this business—attributing the adaptive practice to negotiating physical presentation(s), positioning on the frontline, and being (un)heard. Following, *Our Narrative* offers other pertinent elements which further characterize this *business of yes* (e.g., matters of diversity, equity, inclusion, truth, and authenticity). Lastly, our narrative closes with an offering of *freedom technologies*— a manner in which we can escape psychological bondage by reimagining ways of *showing up* within this practice (Lavender, 2019).

Before we begin, let's briefly introduce the co-narrators of our story...

Agents/Co-Narrators

Angela (See Portrait 1, *Journey*)

Meet Angela, a spunky and vibrant local nonprofit leader. Angela grew up as a navy kid, from a middle-class and very civically engaged household—father, a navy captain, and mother, who's full-time career and passions were her family and civic engagement. Mom was all about the civic engagement stuff—volunteering, service, church, community, and the arts. This household culture cultivated a passion to participate in social change—“They never preached about it. They never said that is what you should do. They modeled it. They modeled, ‘This is just what we do,’” Angela shares.

Angela started her career as a fundraiser very early in life— starting in the 60's, accompanying her mother doing door to door solicitations in support of March of Dimes. That is all she wrote! It was from then on did Angela realize her passion, talent, and potential for connecting with people and accumulating resources to support causes most dear to her; “I can either be a recipient, or I enable it to happen,” as Angela declares.

Arriving in California in adulthood it was clear to Angela that she was meant to continue her work in the nonprofit and social sector. As she was married to a professional football player, she notes that unarguably provided the privilege of working from a place of passion rather than pay, because “nonprofit work surely did not/does not pay very much,” it is expensive to be charitable! So there began Angela's journey exploring her impact in spaces where, though she was not particularly “trained” to be in, she gained access because of her circumstance, heart, and drive— as can be said for many people married to white-collar professionals working in the social sector.

Today, continuing to work through passion, serving in senior-level leadership within a notable local nonprofit arts organization [ABC Organization], Angela wears many hats and juggles innumerable responsibilities to keep the organization thriving—fundraising, of course, playing an integral role.

Portrait 1

Journey



Note. By Angela:

I was thinking of two journeys, and within these paths we have incredible highs and these lows . . . Sometimes that is where you are; you have these peaks and the valleys and often at the end, it may not be much higher than where you began, but cumulatively you can average all of these things and you're still making progress. . . . You know, I am. I'll be 67 in November. I have many decades of being in this thing going on here . . . Yeah . . . and I realized I am not done yet.

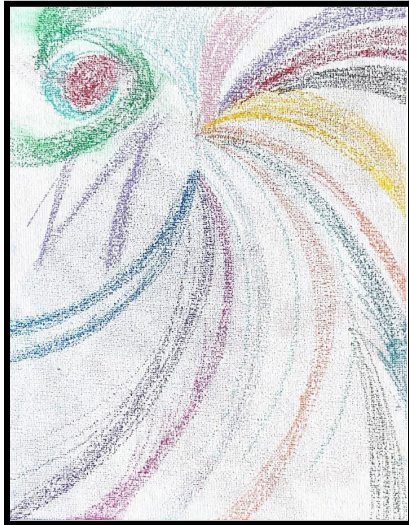
Olivia (See Portrait 2, *Development Shop In Progress*)

A youthful, kind, and vivacious energy, Olivia reigns from the illustrious Kingston, Jamaica. In 2001 Olivia landed in the United States in pursuit of furthering her education. Not certain of her postgraduate plans, Olivia knew that as a first-generation, low-income student she had to make this education count. While in school Olivia was the beneficiary of both merit and identity-based scholarships, of which supported her through her educational journey. Through this “privilege,” as she names it, she was able to explore her talents and interests in ways her peers couldn’t. Having resources that allowed her to explore creating a lasting impact on Olivia; she knew that she too was called to be a part of providing similar access to others—“I am getting to fundraise for the thing that’s allowed me to go to school, that is cool,” she says.

Olivia’s introduction to philanthropy dates back further than her engagement with western philanthropy supporting institutions of higher education; though in less “formal” approaches, philanthropy is, and has been, ingrained in Olivia’s native culture for centuries—communal giving and support is the culture. Olivia’s formal fundraising career dates back to that undergrad experience; getting her start in a university call center making cold calls to alumni donors, Olivia was granted an opportunity to explore fundraising “without the pressure of metrics,” she shared. Admittedly learning a lot about rejection within that space, all it took was a single “yes” to catapult her into her passion for fundraising. Since then, Olivia has advanced far beyond those early days in the call center; having developed an extensive multimillion dollar portfolio, she now serves as a senior-level director of major gifts at a renowned public university.

Portrait 2

Development Shop in Progress



Note. By Olivia:

Continuing to have circles and arcs and things kind of intersecting with each other. They are not complementary colors at all buuut I feel like this is the chaos of wider fundraising operation can look like, but it works. So you will try your best to bring in all of these perspectives and experiences, and then you try to synthesize it in a way that we can at least agree on (e.g., how we communicate with people). Yeah, and then you try to project that out to the world.

Irene (See Portrait 3, *Pieces of the Movement*)

Meet Irene; a warm, joyful, yet no-nonsense kind of sistah. Also hailing from the beautiful island of Jamaica, Irene immigrated to the United States back in 1985. A first-generation U.S. citizen, Irene quickly learned that she would need to develop ways to adapt to this foreign culture— how to navigate the multilayered, sociopolitical and economic systems.

Irene successfully graduated undergrad from a private institution and immediately landed a career in banking. This 12-year span in banking and finance was spent administering loans, small business lending, and prospecting—“I was attracted to the stability and the idea of financial know-how and navigating our capitalist American society,” she attests. The tools developed continue to inform Irene’s ability to navigate, and make meaning of, the sociopolitical/socioeconomic systems of which we are embedded; now, serving in a senior director role at a large public research university, Irene leads national/international annual giving and outreach initiatives.

Portrait 3

Pieces of the Movement



Note. By Irene:

A lot of words are in it; things like “space,” and then the pillars of community because I feel like community for me feels like that [. . .] And then “space” for me, is like sky and thoughts. There’s a river; the river represents resources. And then they’re dollar marks, because it’s sort of that idea of resources. And then there is a world that is about the sort

of cycle and that nature of the things are not linear and in community building, they are round. For me, it is a flow, it is a movement; and so, they are pieces of the movement.

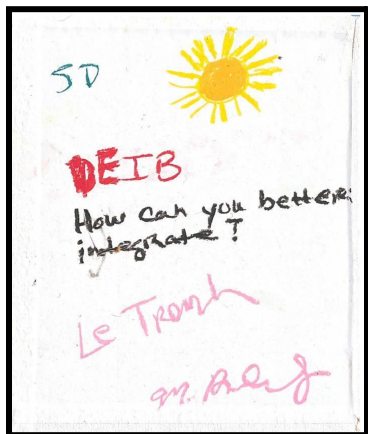
Gary (See Portrait 4, *Le Trash*)

Holding it down as the only brotha of the bunch (that is, besides myself), meet Gary . . . Dr. Gary, PhD. Unfortunately, being one of the only brothas in these spaces is no foreign occasion for Gary; while serving as a senior-level leader of alumni outreach for a leading public research university, he notes being the only black male in the entire advancement department. For Gary, this is not much of a deterrent; he believes work in fundraising always presents new and various challenges which require a level of adaptive practice and mental gymnastics— that is what keeps his work interesting.

A self-proclaimed futurist, someone always contemplating and planning for the future, Gary's landing in fundraising was not accidental, it was purposeful and in part strategic— fundraising plays an integral role to the sustainability of organizations, these occupational roles are “high commodity” and show promise for both horizontal and vertical career advancement. Fifteen years of higher education experience, ranging in student affairs, development, and alumni engagement, Gary has fashioned an identity as a fundraiser and researcher examining sociopolitical influences on philanthropic engagements among alumni of color, women, and LGBT individuals.

Portrait 4

Le Trash



Note. By Gary. “I am leaving here with the question of, ‘how can I better integrate?’”

Marley

Sixteen years in the fundraising game, Marley arrives with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. With a degree in English and philosophy, our sistah is a graduate from “the number one HBCU in the country,” Spelman College—go Jaguars! After undergraduate studies Marley landed at DePaul University (in Chicago) where she completed her graduate studies in Masters of Technical Writing, where she was one of five Black people in the program. Born and raised in a predominantly Black city, Detroit, and later attending a historically Black university, the DePaul experience was the first time Marley had the experience of being “a minority” within her immediate environment—“huh, this is what everybody has been talking about . . .,” she chuckled.

Having grown up in supportive, nurturing, and thriving majority-Black communities and spaces instilled in Marley this awareness that she had the potential to do anything and everything—“I never had this sense of, ‘You can’t succeed or do whatever you want,’ which I

think plays into the long range story,” she exclaims. Not until Marley’s navigating majority-White spaces did she feel the need to “prove herself” as others doubted her capabilities due to her race and gender. They’d always be like, “Oh, you’re brilliant, you’re so eloquent.” “Why wouldn’t I be . . .,” Marley retorts.

Marley was one that continued to persevere and achieve. Through a series of graduate internships and fellowships, volunteer roles within Chicago inner-city nonprofits, and corporate relation roles, Marley honed and mastered her grant writing skills. Today Marley serves as a senior director of a relatively large arts and culture nonprofit organization, leading grant initiatives and operations.

Allyson

Meet Allyson, a Los Angeles-Central Watts native and the youngest member of the bunch. A shy, wise and pensive spirit, Allyson and her 11 years in fundraising brings a wealth of knowledge and reflexivity to our space. Though she has an innate demure personality, the persona of “fundraiser Allyson” is outgoing, sociable, and genuinely excited to share her love of fundraising.

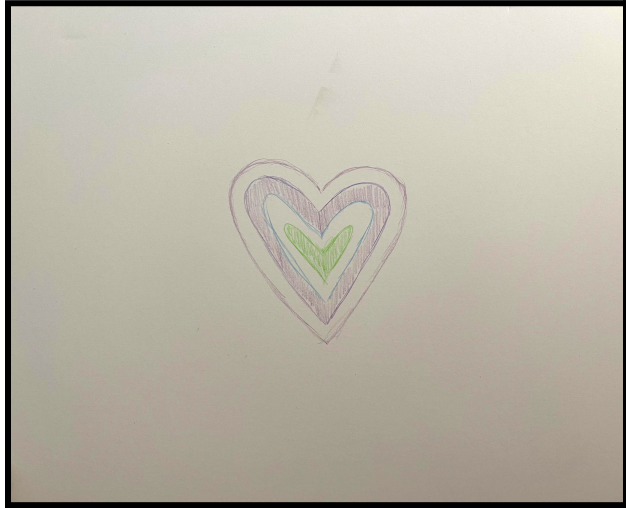
A UCLA alum, track athlete majoring in Gender Studies, Allyson contributes a lot of her work to the understanding the complexities of *intersectionality*— a concept she integrates within fundraising spaces as it “helps with understanding people and makes sense for what I do now, which is all relationship building and dealing with people as my intersectional self,” she shares.

This clarity was not always apparent in Allyson’s professional practice. Allyson’s start in fundraising is similar to that of other agents; beginning in call-center fundraising while as an undergraduate. Although seemingly “falling into it,” Allyson admittedly did not know what she was getting into before arriving at her first fundraising job orientation— “Oh, I am asking people for money, that’s something we don’t do where I grew up,” she stated smilingly. Initially, she believed that this type of work was not for her, she simply wanted a job. But as mentioned prior, Allyson was a devoted athlete, that innate competitiveness was what propelled her forward, securing the job despite the initial hesitation.

As a student athlete, Allyson was a recipient of athletic scholarships. Because of this, she became accustomed to speaking to donors as a student ambassador of sorts, to later manage and teach “the art of fundraising” to other students who had no initial interest, just as she. Allyson fell in love with fundraising and never looked back. Allyson now manages annual giving at a local 501c(3) serving foster youth.

Portrait 5

Love is the Center



Note. By Allyson:

There is a heart and it is in the center because at the end of the day I feel like love needs to be in the center of all of this, and there's layers to it . . . And I chose purple because purple is royalty. And I think that so many times, we let our history of traumas make us forget the royalty that we all are. The hole at the center, and the surrounding empty blank canvas, signifies leaving room.

Our Place

You know that one scene in the movies where there is a momentous exchange between two parties, one character makes an offer in writing, placing the paper face-down and sliding it across the table, then follows a looming and eerie silence? As Olivia tells it, whether metaphorically or literally, that is what this fundraising thing feels like. "There's just silence in the room, and as I have learned, that's usually the donors thinking about what they need, and whether or not we've done enough for them to say, 'yes,' I feel like this is something I can partner with you on, I feel ownership of it, and I feel that it is worthwhile," she shared.

Given the nature of this work, we are perpetually in the business of that “yes”; there persists a lot of no’s, you get used to rejection, but the “yes,” as laborious as it may be to receive, is what makes it all worthwhile. The “yes” is more than an agreement of a gift amount, it is a stamp of affirmation. As Olivia iterates, it is a sense of recognition that the fundraiser has done justice and the donor/grantor is validating these efforts by saying, “I see your vision, you are the right person to speak to me about this vision, and I want to be a part of it.” Landing that “yes” you have done your job, you have garnered trust within this *business of yes*.

With its many contested definitions, here within this study, the idea of “trust-based” philanthropy is multilayered. We can recognize the various macro and meso-level interpretations of this philosophy, at its core lies an “individual to individual connection, it can be very personal” as Irene describes it. Within this connection there is a sense that we are “aligned in terms of language, and understanding, and our intention, and that there is a trust that we know each other’s truths,” and it is reciprocal of course. “It is two-way; it is not just about the staff person of an institution going out to the donor prospects, it is about those two individuals connecting in some way . . . THAT is truly what philanthropy is about,” Olivia offered. The thing is, we live in a very skeptical world where trust of one another is not inherently granted nor expected, ESPECIALLY as it concerns “sensitive matters,” as Marley calls it, like “asking someone to do something with their hard-earned income.” So in the most simplified understanding, *trust-based philanthropy* in this context boils down to, *do we know each other?* And through that knowing, *can we trust one another to the extent that we are able to transmit this connection to that of a mutual impact within the community, society, world, etc.?*

From this place, fundraising can be generally understood as an art of learning people, the way we communicate and the way we connect to the greater whole (as expressed in Portrait 2). It

is a means to build community and “advance institutional relationships with people within the community,” Gary offers. As Irene supplements, it is not just about building a community, but a “healthy community.” A healthy community, as Irene expresses, is one of abundant resources and that is self-sustaining. Within these healthy communities each community member has an opportunity, or space, to express, or more plainly, to be seen— “to be seen through art, through music and movement and conversation, and thought,” our sistah Irene expresses through Portrait 3. That is the role of fundraising; to facilitate space for all those elements to thrive— “creating a foundation of, not an individual expression, but of an expression of *the whole*,” Irene so beautifully stated.

Fanciful as it is presented, connecting individuals to that of *the whole* is an assumedly complex notion; consisting of a series of strategic measures to appeal to those with resources— this is a bit of the “grunt work,” as Olivia speaks to it. So, the goal is to ultimately garner philanthropic support, the technical metrics provide guidance within said process; these metrics quantify frequency of donor contacts/outreach, number of donor meetings, event attendees, volunteers, etc.; however, both the technical (and adaptive) pieces of practice are ultimately matters of navigating complex social power dynamics. “There is power in money, period” Angela weighs in. “Giving money provides more power than . . . asking for it,” she plainly stated. As it has been named, we are not simply working within complex power dynamics, but we are working within power disequilibrium. Considering both power conferred money and social identity, this disequilibrium is only exacerbated within the insular world of philanthropy. The *business of yes* is more than a notion.

As it enmeshed in the innumerable systems of power, suffice it to say, fundraising can be a very transient job for Black folk, turnover rates attest to that. Black fundraisers often leave for

reasons unrelated to the common transient-ness that one might find within nonprofit work (e.g., worker exploitation, overworked and underpaid)—“life’s too short, to deal with the BS,” as Marley exclaimed. There are layers to it, and as it is named within *our narrative*, different hurdles persist for people of color to overcome within these spaces. As Olivia names, doing the “performative work” of selling the brand of the organization while dealing with very real and poignant social issues (e.g., a racial pandemic amid a global health crisis) is a lot. It is a lot to keep one’s head afloat, manage/lead teams, maintain engagement metrics, raise funds, all whilst navigating these complex social dynamics— of which are now amplified within the racial reckoning and conversations around equity within this work. If, like our agents, you are one of very few or the only Black person in their respective fundraising divisions and/or staff, you can bear a great deal of this weight. The *business of yes* is more than a notion.

So how do we find ourselves in this work? Furthermore, why do we stay? “Finding that piece that you can really get behind,” is the key, Olivia says— find your *why*. Through our narratives what has been made evident is that when Black folk choose to stay in fundraising it is for a reason; there is purpose, there is a *why*.

Our Why

At face value this work might be perceived as a career of asking for money—or “begging” depending on who you ask. As understood by us, it is far more than that. This work is bigger than me, it is bigger than us, it is about the collective we. A sense of purpose and mutual responsibility, this civic engagement is cultural, it is spiritual, it is who we are not just what we do. We do not seek to simply occupy this land, suck the world dry of its resources, taking, taking, and taking; through this work we give back, aligning passions and talents to that of the greater

mission. It is a matter of giving back in ways that have been given to us—just as the cyclical nature of an ecosystem, it comes back around.

It is communal; grounded in a deep care for people and community, this is a matter of familiarity and connection to *the whole*. An expression and means toward social change, we work to recognize gaps between resources people have and the resources people need— mending these gaps, improving the conditions of our communities. Whether obtaining resources to fund university scholarships in support of students in their educational journeys, writing grants for institutions researching medicinal botany aimed to decrease the development of Alzheimer’s Disease, or raising funds to support the collective wellbeing of our foster youth, our work is a means to create change in our corners of the world.

We do this as an expression of advocacy and activism; once we are among *them*³, we influence and lead change from within the system. This is a means to provide access to future generations— more open doors and opportunities for historically marginalized folk and for our Black and Brown youth to explore, to be front and center, to show up fully, to be seen, to be heard, to lead. We do this because it is an opportunity to plant seeds that eventually blossom into rich fruit-bearing trees that nurture the lives of the global community. We may not be the ones signing the checks or the ones with our surnames plastered upon the walls of recognition being admired by the passersby, but we are comforted by the palpable impact of our seemingly esoteric work.

We do this because of the stories. The stories are the compelling narrative pieces that ground us to the interdependent nature of our human experience. The stories of *why* ground us within these relationships, connecting and appealing to the hearts of one another, humanizing a

³ As defined by our co-narrators, there are many “thems,” and the among the them are various and multiple intersecting identities and ways of identification and classification; so, *being among them* refers to those identities that are not resonate to that of our own culture(s), experiences, images, etc.

feign transactional exchange. The stories of impact, entailing the moving accounts of positive influences of the work, feel like warm and fuzzy embraces that let us know that we were here, we are doing our part. As our individual stories bring us here, our collective story keeps us here.

Our Narrative

This *business of yes* is more than a notion— what is negotiated in service of that stamp of approval, the “yes,” is what we will excavate here. Throughout personal development it is not anomalous to find ones’ self-*negotiating* to meet expectations of our external environments— particularly as it pertains to matters of identity, such as physical presentation(s), behaviors, or even ideologies and beliefs. We are all figuring it out— you know, coming into your own and understanding who you are while negotiating who the world wants you to be. This context is no different.

Perhaps this is all a matter of “respectability politics,” Olivia offered in an attempt to make sense of this phenomenon of appealing to donors. *Is this who they are expecting, or what they expect a Black (wo)man to look like or speak like if we are going to talk to them about their money?* “All those things, that truly have nothing to do with the actual job of fundraising, would always be top of my mind,” Marley begrudgingly added. So, in addition to the slew of other technical elements we have to get right, we are also considering many other complex and adaptive elements in service of that “yes.” What has it taken to be in this *business of yes* one might ask. As it has emerged here, chameleon-like ability to adapt, a precautionary effort to disarm against stereotypes and an ongoing, complex and multilayered process of negotiating ways of *showing up*, collectively informs this practice.

Chameleonism, the Impetus of Adaptation

As our stories were shared, many of these adaptive practices and considerations began to emerge in very palpable and remarkable ways, expressing themselves through symbolic, imaginative, and creative means— hence the emergence of the chameleon metaphor here. Although we began our exploration with descriptors such as *navigating* and/or *negotiating* to contextualize this experience(s), it has since been collectively defined and understood as a matter of *adaptation*. As Olivia offers, *I am a chameleon, I can adapt to whatever is needed*.

At its core, *chameleonism* is a matter of survival. An ironic analogy, the chameleon has the ability to manipulate its coloration to adapt to/and camouflage with its surroundings while also using its coloring for social signaling (or a means to express a state of being). Just as the chameleon's eyes permit a full 360° range view of its environment, *chameleonism* also implies a keen awareness and perspective— a critical consciousness of surroundings. A conscious practice of versatility, malleability, and tactical assimilation has proven itself a helpful tool while navigating the social landscape of philanthropy and fundraising, the culture(s) and ways of operating. Although helpful in some cases, as it aids in the grand scheme of one's fundraising mission, appealing to grantors and ultimately amassing resources, it can also have considerable effects on how one *shows up*— all of which we will explore as our narrative unfolds.

Although some might stand firm in, *I'm here, this is me, this is who I am and I won't change, you must adapt to me*, others might lean heavily into the latter (chameleonism) and simply do not navigate this context in that manner. There is great value in both the chameleon-like practice and, *I am going to be unapologetically me whether you like it or not*, because, as Marley puts it, “people need to see different presentations of Blackness within these spaces.”

This means of adaptation appears as a relatively healthy practice, no? We all adapt to our environments in some regard. However, in this context there is a paradoxical element to this *chameleonism* where adapting too much can result in the opposite of its intended purpose. The goal is to “fit in” or acclimate as to not be an outlier, but as firmly stated, “I don’t want to be your mascot,” Olivia asserted. “That’s where I think I adapt too much (being too much of a chameleon) and I need to pay better attention.” One’s ability to fit into majority-White spaces can be conflated with playing the role of, and being affirmed as, the “right kind of Black,” as Olivia recounts. Eek! Yea, I winced a little too. When this is the case, you have probably done too much. “Going forward I try to make a conscious decision to not do that . . . I really don’t want to reinforce that stereotype,” she followed remorsefully. “If *they* see me as the poster child of [x organization, program, department] because of my ability to assimilate to the majority culture, that is a problem, we do not want any part of that.”

“Why not just be yourself,” as some of you are probably thinking at this point; surely it ain’t that simple. The concept of authenticity is later visited within the narrative, but before then we will unpack this chameleonic practice a bit further. Again, chameleonism is a matter of survival, a (sometimes preemptive) tactic of defense in service of the *yes*; chameleonism is the manner in which we attempt to placate and combat the disequilibrium, to create a level playing field, how we disarm them within the *business of yes*.

Chameleonism, A Matter of Disarming

You know, this is not exclusive to the philanthropy/fundraising context; Black people navigating a normative-White majority culture (in many contexts) are not foreign to, as Marley speaks to, “the extra work,” required to mitigate society’s assumptions about their being. As Gary also stresses, it is fair to say that it is not just because we are Black that we want to make

good impressions, but in large part, because we know that as Black (wo)men we are stereotyped in often unfavorable ways; “I try to combat those stereotypes any way that I can,” our brotha shared. Synchronously, Irene elaborates with one of her tools of the trade:

One of my old tricks is to identify associations [between the donor and myself] that would not typically be associated with me; whether it’s my love of travel, theater, or, that I am really into gardening and wine. It’s to speak to those things that are atypical on the onset, right? Like, that is my go to conversation, I try to disarm people from the beginning, it is a tactic.

To *disarm* is an alluring and provocative choice of verbiage, it almost elicits imagery of an unsafe or hostile scenario, no? Perhaps it does, and it still seems appropriate when considering the nature of navigating racial-political discourse. If, like us, you grew up in the 70’s, 80’s and 90s, feeling as though people can feel threatened by your mere presence because of the color of your skin, and ultimately can harm you in response to this so-called “threat,” *disarm* seems like a suitable term in this context. “To *disarm* is a sense of creating a space where I am not a threat and am also welcomed in spaces that I enter,” Irene offers. This could mean anything from establishing credibility and caché by leaning into one’s senior title and/or extensive fundraising portfolio as Olivia mentions, or as Marley offers, attaching one’s headshot within online exchanges so as to not surprise the other party upon arrival— there runs the gambit.

As part of this disarming strategy is due diligence of research; research in the sense of knowing who you are meeting, what might make this person/organization, the types of initiatives they typically fund, etc.— providing insight to who they are, and who you might need to be. As Olivia offered, through this research one will be able to, “look and see who the organization leaders are, that will give you an idea of what their comfort zone might be [if you catch her

drift]. I think about it less of an, ‘oh, you’re in a room looking at me, and you don’t expect to see me more, at least initially.’”

As Irene puts it, through this practice of *disarming* “you should not want to go get your shotgun because I am walking across your lawn,” figuratively speaking, of course... This element of practice seems justifiable and to be frank, quite resonant. As it is, it is possible that we adopt this practice of *disarming* in more ways and far more often than we are actually aware of; that is, if you are in this *business of yes*. This begs the question though, in considering these adaptive practices, especially in the context of negotiating identity within these spaces, who is truly being disarmed?

Expressions of *Chameleonism*, Negotiating Identity

“I need to make sure my mother would still claim me,” Olivia shared in a flippant manner. This is the barometer by which she chooses what, why, how, and to what extent to exercise this chameleonic practice, to to negotiate parts of herself within this context. As our narrative suggests, this negotiation process is an active, intentional, and both conscious and unconscious practice within the *business of yes*— doing what you have got to do and adapting to what is needed to seal the deal. Throughout these narratives this concept of negotiation has, and continues to, take different shapes and forms, painted and expressed using different modalities of our being.

Gary is adamant about refuting the idea of Blackness being a monolith, especially within the context of its expression(s) within these spaces— we all agree that there is no one way to be Black. In this, there are a multitude of ways *Blackness* is expressed that are not exclusive to physical presentation or linguistic locution yet can still manifest in identifiable and perceptible form. To further expand, the manner in which we dress and adorn ourselves as reflective of our

subculture(s)/perceptions of beauty/body types, the way in which we wear our hair respective to the manner in which it grows and requires care, or even the ways in which we both verbally and nonverbally communicate and comprehend are not causal to the *epidermal* Black identity (obviously); instead, these are expressions of a shared culture and experience associated with the undergirded Black racial identity (Fanon, 2005). We will take a closer look as to how the expressions of physical presentation, positioning and orientation, and being (un)heard have been negotiated within this chameleonic practice.

Physical Presentation(s)

Dressing the Part. Within this particular context, in this time and before, it has been expressed that being Black in these spaces can make one hyper-aware of how they present—being compelled to be increasingly thoughtful about how to present and *show up*, insistent on keeping it “buttoned-up” and “put together,” Gary names. We could spend the entirety of this paper unpacking descriptors such as these in the context of a majority-White context, but as for our narratives we could assume this to depict a general conservative presentation as reflected in the white-collar workforce. In this case, frequent compliments on how “well” one is “put together” has layers to it; though appearing as a seemingly kind gesture to some, as Gary candidly shares, it can oftentimes feel rooted in, “we did not expect that [form of presentation] from you.” So what is expected of us?

With so much attention placed on the presentation of a fundraiser, especially considering the assumptive expectations of what one should be wearing as they navigate circles of high-net worth individuals, our group names an ongoing contemplation in the mirror like: *Am I dressed appropriately and properly? Is my skirt the appropriate length? Are the hems on my pants*

perfect? Are my heels high enough? Are they too high? Am I doing too much? Should I tone it down? Am I doing enough? Should I spruce it up?

“We [Black People] have to be like a Nobel Prize winner or something, everything has to be buttoned up and perfect, before we feel like we have a right to be somewhere,” Angela said. Mmhm. “Is not wild that our white colleagues probably do not think about this as they enter these spaces,” Olivia cheekingly said to me. WILD is precisely how I would describe it too. Though, I wonder what it would be like not to *dress the part* and, bare with me, be fine with it?

Although some resonate with having to *dress the part*, there are also some of us located elsewhere on the spectrum. Olivia intentionally challenges this dress norm as it does not reflect her nor her Caribbean culture— it does not quite fit the same (pun intended). As not to cower in the face of this cultural dissonance, unabashedly honoring her God-given curvy frame, she wears pencil skirts and high heels. She is also known for a signature walk that she describes as, “a sachet with an attitude”—Caribbean women, ya’ gotta love ‘em. Despite the looks she may get for challenging the normative expectations of womanhood in these conservative spaces, our sistah is insistent on not changing it—“that’s just how I feel confident walking into these rooms, that is my power suit,” she proclaimed. In a similar tone, I too feel most confident entering these spaces dressing in a way that honors me, my uniqueness, and my identities—that is, not forcing myself to fit in with the same blue suit and white button-up that 20 other gentlemen have on in the room. Less about the drab blue suit, this anecdote speaks more so to what the suit/dress represents, the chameleon-like effort to camouflage. Sure, while some preferred attire might be aligned to that of this uniform, *dressing the part* as a conceptual matter speaks more to the manner in which we attempt to fit into a role or archetype for the performance—for *the business of yes*.

This all appears to be extra work. Sometimes it could even feel like the work of meeting these physical expectations can take precedence over the actual job of raising funds. “I have got my suit on, got my heels, I’ve got my Kenneth Cole bag, blow out, lipstick is perfect.” You know, I went to the Mac counter and got a good face going, and then show up to have the donor meeting, *takes deep exhale*, ‘okay, it worked out,” Marley adds as she recounts her experiences preparing for donor meetings. Here speaks the manner in which, within this process, far more is considered as opposed to simply showing up without the performance; preparation for donor meetings/events also implies preparing to meet a physical expectation. That is the game we are in, that is *the business of yes*.

Expectations of [Black] Womanhood. “Thirteen years ago I decided I was done with the makeup game, so I don’t wear makeup anymore, that is a choice. Especially as a fundraiser, it is a thing [women and being “made-up”], but it is not my thing,” Marley shared. Meeting physical expectations and *dressing the part, and ultimately, expectations of womanhood* have manifested itself uniquely within the Black woman’s experience. It is imperative to also name that this matter is not simply a contextual culture of philanthropy/fundraising, as both Olivia and Marley add, it is a systemic issue.

While referencing the audacious ‘97 Chris Rock standup skit, *N*ggas vs Black People*, “IT’S THE MEDIA, IT’S THE MEDIA,” Marley jokingly attributed these expectations within these spaces. Olivia suggests that this could be promoted within the media, but it is ultimately upheld within our own culture— both within the Black culture and the culture of philanthropy/fundraising. “It is like picking up an early 2000’s Essence Magazine and thinking ‘Oh, I have to get a Dark and Lovely perm, or have to wear this makeup, etc.— THIS is what is beautiful and acceptable to present to the world. Even within Black spaces, like Ebony magazine

being founded on the notion of “Black women are dark and lovely in THIS particular way.” All these elements influence this physical expectation of *what is acceptable to show up as*. “Alright, I have to make sure I go have an appointment, get a blow out, a fresh trim, have my hair as expected,” Marley said begrudgingly. “I’m gonna put in some hair, I’m gonna straighten it out,” Olivia added. “I have got to have my eyebrows arched, I’ve got on pinkish blush and mauve lipstick,” all to meet this *expectation of womanhood*.

Let’s Talk Hair. Relatively superficial to some, our hair holds great significance in our physical presentation and has, continues to be, a subject of much discourse (hello, CROWN Act). A lot of Black women can and will speak on the transitional journey from natural, relaxed, and returning natural. “You have to be ready for it because it IS-A-TRANSITION,” Olivia facetiously emphasized. As we have come to understand it, there is a process in which returning natural can drastically change physical presentation— for example, the “Big Chop” and “hacks everything off,” as Olivia names it, or the sporting of transitional/protective stylings like braids, twists, sew-ins, wigs, head wraps, etc. There then presents a psychological piece that one must wrap their head around (no pun intended)— which is ultimately a shift in personal identity, self-perception, and ultimately, public perception, lending to a mourning of one persona, of which is chopped off, and (re)acclimating to anew, the new growth. In this (re)acclimation, Allyson cautions us to follow suit as she “stays ready,” for at any moment, “I don’t know when someone’s gonna say, ‘Oh, wow, I really like your hair,’” and then you are pulled into giving an entire soliloquy regarding your hair. Speaking of similar circumstances of public fascination with our hair, “I have had my fair share of people go, ‘oh, this is interestingggg,’ and just REACH,” Olivia said. Channeling the movie *The Matrix*, she bobbed-and-weaved in slow motion as if to dodge the imaginary hands advancing toward her locks, “not ask, just reach in!” The audacity,

am I right? So, in this transition it is important to be conscious that our surrounding environments will need to acclimate as well—duly noted.

As with most things pertaining to transitioning of any sort, it is not a linear process (especially considering the occupational context and culture in which we navigate); “The first time I did it, I just, I got really nervous and really annoyed . . . early in my career I wasn’t comfortable enough saying, ‘Okay, I’m natural,’ so I transitioned twice.” As Olivia explains it, *transitioning* within this professional context goes beyond that of hair texture and presentation, it is the transition of one’s personality, too:

Initially I was not walking in confidence of, “I own this, and I feel good about what I’m doing.” I was still kind of behind the scenes doing the job [nonfrontline work] so didn’t really know how I was presenting. There definitely was a clear dissonance within the internal culture though; I just so happened to be working with someone who was very “old school,” and they made it known that they thought my natural hair was “juvenile.”

As I look back at it, now, I realize, “oh, there were like actual roadblocks in my career because of how I looked, and because of *who I reported in*. So, I went straight again and all of a sudden, things started happening! I didn’t make the connection until years later.

At some point or another we arrive at a space of liberatory awareness, challenging our own questioning of whether our natural textures and culturally relevant styles are “appropriate” or “proper” within these spaces. Whereas there are some elements of this social landscape and culture we are receptive to adapt to, hair seems to be one that is no longer negotiable (well, for the women here at least). “I present as ____ and this is what I’ve been for the last 10 years,” Olivia doubled down. “If you’ve seen my LinkedIn profile, I got cornrows in there. There’s a reason for that; it’s a very intentional decision,” it is a public declaration of, “*this is me and this*

is who I go out into the world as,” Marley echoed. It is also important here to note, as Olivia recalls, a bit of caché can greatly inform this narrative; each of our sistahs leads programs and have significant titles with extensive portfolios, “maybe we can do this and feel confident because all of those things are working together,” Olivia added. At this point of their careers they make no apologies about it, everyone else has to accept them just as they have accepted themselves. To be a witness of our sistahs Marley and Olivia, makeupless, skin glowing, naturally luxurious tresses beautifully twisted and styled, standing confidently in their skin (hair), what a vision and a stunning personification of “nah’, take it or leave it, this is me,” as Allyson declares.

What our sistahs are helping us arrive at is that an assuredness in one’s own identity is not simply being comfortable and uncompromisingly secure in one’s identity and presentation, but it is about knowing one’s truth and standing in it. It is made evident that these sistahs are not going to change because their particular presentation of a Black woman might implicitly challenge the normative culture, making some uncomfortable. “If you don’t like that, I’m not for you,” Marley responds. As I have spoken to my own hyper-awareness as an eclectic loc’d brotha navigating these spaces, Olivia offers that the key is to find a place (e.g., institution, organization, community, culture) that respects you enough to honor you as is—a dream!

As we persisted we reflected on how it is, or is not, possible to be this steadfast in the nonnegotiables in different philanthropic/fundraising spaces? We acknowledge that we could continue to be successful and effective in our work here in Southern California because, well you know, it has a culture of being relatively progressive and what-not, but “it probably does not work the same in New England or something. You probably cannot work in Harvard fundraising like that [. . .],” Olivia said facetiously.

The Right One in Front, Positioning and Orientation

Have you ever taken notice of who is standing at the entrance of fundraising events welcoming guests? Or, what about the ones working the room, connecting with donors and patrons, what do they look like? How do they present? Do we think it is intentional, the positioning of fundraisers? Our narrative begs us to consider so. As we continue to unpack these expressions of negotiation we open critical conversations around the subtleties of strategic physical positioning and orientation of fundraisers in service of this *business of yes*— how do we discern “the people who ‘deserve’ to be in this room versus the others just dealing with the name tags,” as Olivia offered.

As our group has named, donor stories, their *why*’s, greatly inform the fundraising strategy. Our strategies do not exclusively consider the topics of conversation of which we engage donors nor the manner in which we appeal to donors’ personal interests and affinities, but the *who*’s that are engaging them is just as important— who is to be positioned in front of the donors, someone with whom these donors trust and connect with. Though it may be a technical function of the fundraising role, in some cases, “I am not the right person to talk to the donor,” Olivia candidly puts it. Expanding our understanding of the *frontline*’s responsibilities, Olivia includes that finding someone who will inspire *them* to make a gift (“let me then introduce you to my colleague”) is part of the frontline work. I do not know about you, but this challenges my understanding of being *on the frontline* as a fundraiser, deferring to others who might need to be in front at that moment.

What could it mean to be the “right person” in this case? As it emerged, being the “right person” could infer experience and/or knowledge of a particular program or initiative being fundraised for, one’s title, or more complex . . . you and the identities you hold. “This happens to

me a lot actually,” says Olivia. “Either you are [donor] so old school to the point where you need to talk to a man while discussing finances, or, even less heartening, you’re not used to talking to a Black person about these matters,” she followed. Similarly, Olivia names that:

There have been instances where I walk into the room with a colleague and I am completely miserable because my colleague is seen as the person that has all the leadership and has ‘the important conversations’ directed towards them. ‘Is this because a Black? Is it because I am a woman? Is it because I said something wrong?’

Perhaps it is all the reason, perhaps none of those elements are correlative to the experience, perhaps she was simply not *the right one in front* . . . yea, curious indeed. Though there is probably no sensible way to retrospectively track whether these engagements are irrefutably influenced by how our identities are received (as the group articulates, these happenstances are not *always* concerning being Black), these exchanges beg us to remain “side-eyeingly” suspicious and conscious of our space (as the chameleon is, of course).

As some of her experiences have resonance to Olivia’s, Marley assures us that the matter of microaggressive behaviors such as these are becoming more available for critical dialogue within these spaces, especially as people are becoming more conscious of their own biases and their impact on this work. Doubling-back, she notes that just because there might be some progress it does not negate that it “is-a-thing.” That is the reality of fundraising, *the business of yes*, and precisely why Marley gravitates toward the corporate foundation and government grant writing that happen in the background, not explicitly engaging with donors. “Let me write some proposals for you and then you can read it and see how amazing it is,” she put; this is a way in which one might mitigate assumptions about capacity based on physical presentation or audible linguistic performance.

Positioning oneself within the grant writing process also emerged as *a thing*. Professional fundraisers are keen on what it takes to raise the money and to close a gift, they know what to say and how to say it. It has been accounted that fundraisers, like within the chameleon-like practice, can solidify support from particular granting foundations known for asking “old school questions,” as Marley puts it, by adapting language and skillfully communicating within grant proposals in a way that appeals to said foundations—“it’s a matter of how you answer them, because you know the people reading them and what they’re expecting [not] to read,” Marley says. And for those curious minds, yes, it has also been named that this negotiation happens in considering Blackness (or other marginalized social identities for that matter) within the grant proposal process too; from the language used in describing particular programming, expressing the who’s of which the programming is intended to serve, to even what grant writers’ names are included/visible within the proposal have been considered within this negotiation. It is about the positioning and orienting of oneself in the most tactical ways—this is *chameleonism* within *the business of yes*.

It is said that dealing with biases, prejudices, or the discomfort of others in regard to a Black fundraiser’s visibility in this space is simply not a fight one can take on everyday—whether due to one’s emotional, spiritual or physical capacity, it is just too much to combat everyday. Holding steadfast to *our why* can sustain us within our work, even in navigating some of these complex elements named previously. This *why* grounds us in our responsibilities as fundraisers—“my job is to fundraise for the organization [the cause], if I’m [the physical presence] hindering that I have to step back . . . that does not mean I won’t get credit for my work, I just cannot be the face of it,” Olivia earnestly shares. “So that brings me to the big question,” Angela follows:

When I go on a call and I am representing this organization and I'm going to ask Mrs. XYZ for her hard-earned money, 'am I the right person to be sitting here? Do I know if her looking at me is going to get the \$10,000 check or only \$1,000? Is she going to devalue her contribution because I am sitting there? I mean what is going through her mind, that I'm going to misuse the money? Or, she writes a check and I'm going to look at her address and break into her house later on or something . . . [we collectively burst into hysterical laughter]. Or, maybe is she thinking, "oh, I am lifting up the poor Black people," and she can now go have a story to tell her friends about the lovely lunch she had with this 'articulate' and 'passionate' woman she wrote a check to, and now she feels real good about herself.

Noting her own cynicism, Angela attests that based on her experience, this narrative is not far-fetched. The notion being *the right one in front* continues to challenge our understanding of frontline work, especially holding the contextual nature of this positionality. Perhaps this matter is not always in regard to *stepping back*, but might sometimes call for us to step in/forward— "there are other spaces, especially as our donor population changes [and increasingly diversifies], where I AM *the right person* and others need to step back for me to step in, and that's a very different look," Olivia offers. This an approach to cultural and identity mirroring that I am not sure the industry/literature is yet comfortable in naming, let alone embracing.

(Not) Being Heard, Antecedent to Code-Switching

As noted in many of our co-narrators' bios, we are often introduced to the career of fundraising through very humbling means— as understood by many fundraisers, this means interning at a call center of some sort. As most might attest, cold calling is not particularly "fun," but we definitely learn a great deal about strategy, patience, and rejection in this space— all

elements of which fundraisers become increasingly comfortable with as they advance in their careers. Along the way we pick up little tips like how to refine our voice and things of the sort—kind of like the voice your mom makes when she answers the phone with bill collectors on the other line, yeah, that kind of refinement.

While having a “refined voice” and possessing the ability to “communicate professionally” with respective use of field-specific jargon and lexicon is a skill praised across all professional contexts; in this context it ensues a mindfulness around “how one says particular things,” as our brother Gary names. Gary recounts on how he is told how “incredibly articulate” he is. As he expresses, this *diplomacy*, knowing the appropriate things to say and how to say them (impartial to one’s audience), serves one well and can lead to often unwarranted “compliments”—“you’re so eloquent,” they say. Again, innocent to some, but it can feel undergirded, and oftentimes rooted in, *we did not expect that from you*. The words in which we express, and the manner in which we choose to express them, are done so with great intention, thoughtfulness, and dare we say *diplomacy*. “I can’t afford not to be diplomatic as a Black man in these spaces,” Gary said with a cynical giggle. “It probably does connect to, again, the larger salience of being a Black man in this society,” *pointing to the skin on his forearm*, but “I cannot take it off,” so what is there to do?

As it has been named in anecdotes before, code switching is not uncommon while navigating spaces such as these— you know, having the capacity to use *political acumen*. Olivia advises that, “you have to be yourself, yes, BUT you have to know how to fit into the team [and be able to communicate with said team] because it is a team dynamic and you are representing some-thing, not yourself.” As she names it, this is a “brand management piece” of the work that

is imperative to understand. “You have to know how to present yourself through that,” she continued. “There is a filter, but that does not mean you swallow your entire self.”

To this point of narrative, *being heard* has focused on the manner in which we are heard, what we say and how we say it. Within this theme might also entail the dialectic of *not being heard* at all? Hm. As shared within our narrative, *being heard* also considers knowing what ideas one should and could offer in meetings and the extent to which one could and should push back or challenge ideas within these meetings. In this context this is expressed as an extension of negotiation, being aware of contextual influences that could inform how interjections within our spaces will be taken up— who is saying what, who in the room is receiving what is being said, and how (or not) are they receiving it. This idea of (*not*) *being heard* has also been expressed as a precautionary skill used while navigating certain “political” conversations with donors that emerge within meetings. As our brotha Gary shares, “there’s still a lot of danger, or risk, of people saying something insensitive or ignorant around the ‘LGBTQ issue’ (as *they* refer to it).” Additionally, with so much occurring around race relations, protests, racially targeted murders and shootings, donors are bound to say something; for the sake of not further engaging in these “political” conversations, and possibly upsetting donors, Gary, as a gay Black man of which these topics are deeply resonate to, suggests to “avoid it all together . . . there is a lot at stake.” To this point of our narratives we have been introduced to how negotiation can manifest in regard to the intersections of race and gender, our brother now expands this concept to now considering negotiation in regard to the intersections of both race and sexual orientation. It is curious to ponder what is required of someone to refrain from speaking on these relevant social issues as they come up in conversation, all for the sake of avoiding possible conflict of opinions.

In revisiting *Our Why*, our role as fundraisers can be understood as an expression of advocacy and activism, social change (in some regard) is the core of our mission. These conversations probably would not be completely circumvented in service of donor comfort if all parties were mutually grounded in this *why*. As Olivia draws us in the reality of this circumstance, there are times when it is really not the “right time,” to voice opinions on certain matters, “as right as it may be [to defend oneself, *call-in* an opportunity for learning, or otherwise], it could be the wrong conversation,’ and can ultimately detract from closing a gift. “I have had gifts that I have worked on with donors that I know are completely problematic, but I also know that that gift coming in is going to transform the lives of 30 students. I can deal with my personal feelings . . . I can shelve my ego and figure this out. Okay, fine, cool,” Olivia discloses. No matter how it is negotiated, perhaps there will always be a price of (not) being heard in this *business of yes*.

Part of *The Equation*

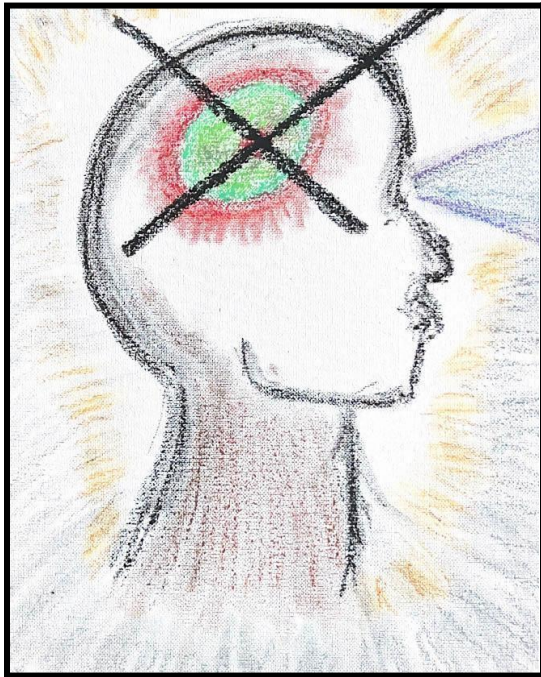
“Check your ego at the door,” Olivia gently advises. “We all have an ego, I do not ever want to lie to you and say, ‘I do not feel anything at all,’ that is not true, but I also know that at the end of the day, we need to close this gift,” she followed as we worked through these matters of negotiation. At this point of our narrative the *business of yes* has placed us, the Black fundraisers, at the center of this phenomena, but as it is expressed within our group, “it’s not about me [as an individual, rather *the why*]” (as depicted in Portrait 9). Fair. We can collectively acknowledge that the intention(s) and outcome(s) of the *business of yes* might not be about us (instead, about the mission or causes that we represent), but the process of said business, as we have gathered thus far, inarguably concerns us. In some ways I believe it to be habitual for us to negate our presence in these spaces as we do not want it to be about us or the attention placed on

us (hence the chameleon's ability to camouflage as to go undetected) possibly because" the focus is always on us as Black people in the room; focus on the dogs, the kitties, or something,"

Angela sarcastically adds. This *business of yes* is about the exchanges in which we engage, the social exchanges; therefore, we are a part of the equation, it is all a part of the equation.

Portrait 9

Surrender the Ego



Note. By Novien Yarber (Researcher).

"Fundraising is so much so about relationships, how can you not be a part of the equation at the end of the day," Angela added. As Angela argues, yes, donors are supporting the mission/vision of which we represent as fundraisers, "but guess what, they are supporting me too," she asserted. As Angela dispels, as much as this matter "is not about us," it actually is! A nod to what this collectively narrative hints at, we as fundraisers, too must appeal to

grantors/donors, it is a matter of them seemingly “liking us” to an extent of which allows them to engage with us fully, and that is, as Angela speaks to it, “where it gets weird,” ha:

That is where it gets weird because you [the fundraiser] are pouring on. . . I won’t say “the charm,” (you are hopefully being your authentic self) in order to have this connection with this other person. The thought in the back of my head the whole time is, “Are they funding the organization or me? Which one?” Should it or should not matter? Can they not like me and still be able to give to the organization? Can they like, NOT like me (forget my color), “she is a nasty person, I cannot stand her but I like the ABC Organization and I am gonna write this check.” Does that work? Is that likely to happen?

I would presume not as we are a part of the equation. Angela best contextualizes this matter with the following anecdote: Angela’s organization has a large banquet event that recognizes local women leaders and philanthropists for their lifetime achievements and accomplishments. There was one woman being recognized who was no longer living, so Angela, leading this initiative, was charged with liasoning with the woman’s family representative, a woman of which would represent the nominee at the banquet. At the end of a long phone conversation, just as the two were about to end the call, the woman says to Angela, “I have a question for you. I’m hearing an accent, some type of accent,” “an accent?” Angela responded. “I do not know, I’ve been in California since the 70’s (ya know, most people in California have very neutral accents),” Angela responded. Unsure of what inflection or accent this woman was picking up on Angela continued with, “my parents are from the South, maybe you are hearing a little bit of that . . . I am African American, maybe that’s what you’re picking up.” “Is that what she could be hearing,” Angela thought to herself:

And from that point on, since this woman now had her verification of what she heard, ('cause she heard "something") and she now knows and she has confirmed who I am, the conversation goes in a totally different direction. All of a sudden we are having all kinds of conversations about her life, and her work in civil rights—she wanted to tell me all about her past work and how she was connected with me. She has got me on the phone now, haha! Now she can have this connection with me for herself, or for the benefit of whoever she is going to tell about this conversation later or whatever. At the end of the call, mind you I didn't solicit her, she says, "I am going to send a donation to support [ABC Museum]." "First of all, thank you," I said. "We know that we can use it!" And now I am wondering about this conversation and transaction that just took place. What was that? Was she gonna still make a donation if I had said, "well, I come by way of the Nordic region; my people came over on the Mayflower." Was I still gonna get that check? Do I care? No, I do not. But I thought it was hilarious. We had a good conversation, but I saw what she was doing.

Do we think anything was particularly wrong with what she was doing? Angela does not think so! At the end of the day no harm was done and a gift was made. A fascinating anecdote, we could unpack many layers present here. What elicits great reflection is the manner in which these expressions of negotiation can manifest themselves, not only in the practice(s) of fundraisers, but from that of the other parties' as well—there is a negotiation that happens on our behalf. "It was like, 'let me make sure they know I am about the cause. I do not want to get off this call without letting you know, 'I know who you are, and I want to acknowledge you, I want to put in something in the bucket . . . for you,'" Angela recited while reflecting on what happened within this exchange. You know, this is kind of reminiscent of some of the

precautionary acts displayed within contemporary social justice movements; you know, businesses putting “Black Lives Matter” signs in their windows as to ward off protestors, or, similarly, corporate institutions boasting newly erected diversity statements as to insure that it is widely known that, “we are on your side,” or at least appear to be. Or, as Marley adds, engaging with an older and whiter population where you run into an “over-exuberant tone” of kindness that then makes one question “are you REALLY being friendly,” like authentically, or is this exultant friendliness an overcompensation for something—a way to ensure we know you are one of the accepting ones? Hm. That is a conversation for another study.

So, the burning question is whether the manner of this exchange, and exchanges alike, was elicited by the donor’s appeal to the organization, or was it about Angela and what she represented within this social exchange? “It was me,” Angela said confidently. “The conversation was not going in that direction; we had finished up with discussing the organization then she turned her attention to me; after we got done with me then the museum had a contribution,” she said. “Okaaay, that is a win,” and we high-fived in celebration.

In the end, what is argued here is not a case of *either-or*, but instead a matter of considering the *both-and* within these engagements. Angela’s presence (or voice for that matter) was probably not the only variable that contributed to the positive outcome within this engagement, this *business of yes*, but it most certainly was a variable. Per the initial offering of the chameleon-like practice there is an implicit assumption that this adaptive practice is intended to make oneself unnoticeable. As we learn here, that is not the case; as contextualized in this anecdote, even within the chameleon-like practice we are seen and we are heard. Ultimately, *chameleonism* as an adaptive practice embraces the notion of critical awareness; awareness of ourselves in relation to the context and the context as it relates to us. Oftentimes the adaptation

can manifest itself with regard to how we negotiate aspects of ourselves, now we might broaden the scope of this concept to consider how the environment could adapt, or negotiate, on our behalf. As suggested within *chameleonism*, there is an ability to choose what to do with it, ultimately, choose how to respond—again, adapting to what is needed in the greater context of the *business of yes*. All in all, it is all a part of the equation, YOU are part of the equation.

Matters of *The Equation*

Throughout our exploration of negotiation within *the business of yes*, there persist innumerable underlying ideas and abstractions of which emerged throughout this sense-making process. Beyond that of *what's* and *how's* of the chameleon-like practice, the following elements are very much alive within our considerations of our work moving forward, thus, will be honored here as they create the foundation for the *what now, where do we go from here?* Within this section, we will begin with the topic of which evoked the very research questions of this study, the diversification of the fundraising workforce (“ticking the box”), and begin to contextualize diversity measures within our experience(s), within this greater equation. We will continue with critical offerings regarding the concept(s) of truth and authenticity as they inform the “trust-based” element within the greater narrative of diversity matters. Rounding out this study, led by final reflections and invitations for the future, we will close with a call to action to truly *show up*.

Ticking the Box, DEI Matters

Particular to those historically exclusive spaces and cultures that are now attempting to venture into the cool waters of equity-centeredness, the presence of our Blackness in these spaces holds considerable significance— I am certain that we have probably noticed this in some way or another. It is evident that nonprofit organizations have drastically increased their

attention/intention toward the work of diversity, equity, inclusion, (DEI or DEIB/DEIA/JEDI/other iterations)—everyone is trying it on for size. As for philanthropy and fundraising, “I am not sure that the profession does the best job at doing outreach or grooming and developing talent that are people of color . . . the numbers are the numbers,” Gary queries while reflecting on the “limited DEI budgets” and the minimal prioritization of DEI efforts in the fundraising wheelhouse. So when Black folk land in these spaces, and ultimately stay, it holds considerable significance. Within this narrative, for many fundraising/philanthropy shops, Blackness and the physical representation it holds, in many ways *ticks a box*—there go those quantifiable metrics again. Is this inherently negative and/or exploitative? We would like to think not, but it is most certainly a salient element within our narrative.

Angela, the arts organization executive, humors us with an account that speaks to the role of an individual’s Blackness, and representation of said Blackness, in the public perception of an organization’s identity. Now as she tells it, the organization of which she leads and fundraises for has a very complex past. This organization and the sociopolitical movement by which undergirds the museum’s espoused values, has an exclusionary and blatant racist history—much of these inherited ideals have been transmitted to the organization’s present identity. It is not a minority serving organization nor an “organization of color,” as she names it. “So you are a Black woman leading this organization who has this racist past, all of a sudden, because I am leading it, grantmaking agencies now think of us as an ‘African American organization.’” The perception of a Black woman on the frontline then implies that now this organization is a “Black organization,” ain’t that something! It does not end there though; Angela explains that when applying for grants, particularly government grants where they solicit demographic information

of the organization by prompting questions like whether, “‘this organization is led by a person of color,’ I tick the ‘yes’ box,’ she says.

It [the presentation of a single Black woman in the organization’s leadership] has nothing to do with the organization’s actual and collective demographic makeup but I am finding that the organization is getting brownie points for me being who I am (but within an organization that is NOT ethnically/racially diverse, nor serving underrepresented communities). I find it hilarious and unfair honestly. The simple fact of me being me, that I HAPPEN to be leading this organization, all of a sudden the organization is elevated as a different kind of institution [assuming an identity of ‘diverse’] when it’s not! It is not at all.

By now some of us are probably thinking, “Okay, so the organization gets access to additional diversity grants and such, implying greater financial support, what pray-tell is the issue?” Well, it might not be an issue for some, but for others it might not feel like an alignment grounded in truth and authenticity:

It has happened more than once, particularly during COVID, but somehow by virtue of being me, who happens to be here, I am getting this organization extra support. Nobody knows if said museum has done *the work*, right? No one knows whether I, particularly, am bringing that consciousness to *the work*. This [as she points to her skin] does not mean that I am arriving with that purpose and intent [of diversity, equity, and inclusion]. Because of the color of my skin I get the stamp of *okay-ness*, what is that?

That, my sistah, is *ticking the box*. It is curious to observe how the public assumes that, by essence, the presence of the Black body on the frontline implies sensibility, or “wokeness;” it can seem quite performative, *ticking the box*, when it is not accompanied with actually doing *the*

work. Apparently, public state universities are better at pushing *the work* because, as Olivia shares from her experience, “there is an accountability factor . . . people [patrons, affiliates, alumni] are looking at the institution and going, ‘this institution does, or does not, represent the state that you support.’”

Perhaps on all ends, considering both granting entities and the receiving organizations, it is a matter of strategy; everyone is on the DEI train so let us make it known that we are doing “the work” because we gave money to X organization, “with ONE Black leader,” Angela interjects, or let us be sure to put *this* one person in a role of significance so those who are watching know we are doing “the work.” “Mmmhmmm,” Angela, Olivia, and I exhaled in collective skepticism.

The Work. “It is not my problem, but it is my problem at the same time,” Angela candidly put. To this point we have only broadly nodded to *the work* of diversity, equity, inclusion as a distal conceptual effort of correcting historical/present social harms, but as we have discovered here, this work is inevitably “a part of everything,” as Allyson and Olivia affirm. Fundraising spaces are no exception to this work; within this narrative, there are some of us who have arrived at a heuristic understanding of our role in this work as a fundraiser (like Marley, who actively exercises culturally relevant measures to make programming equitable and accessible for their large Latinx and Spanish-speaking donor consortium). There are then some of us who are still figuring it out (like our brotha Gary who is still trying to understand the relationship(s) between DEI and alumni engagement metrics; see Portrait 4). This work is all very complex and challenges our capacities to approach our work of fundraising differently than that of the past. On the whole, it begs the question of, “whose work is it to do?”

As the global COVID pandemic and quarantine measures have ensued, there emanated a collective consciousness around racial trauma and social injustice. With said awareness came a wider acknowledgment of *the work*— an intentional effort to unpack, unlearn, relearn, deconstruct and reconstruct our ways of operating and being that, in this context, complicates most social engagements— including professional responsibilities that now entail “foreign matters,” beyond that of technical training of the profession. As a Black body in this space it is expressed that this *work* is not only encouraged but assumed and obliged because of said Black identity. As Olivia and Gary spoke to, it was made clear during the “great awakening” quarantine period that, even as Black folk, it is possible to have fallen short within this work. With this heightened social expectation of *the work*, compounded with the expectation of being a Black body in this fight for social equity, *the work* swiftly translated to an “extra burden,” as our Angela names it.

“Somehow the system has now evolved to, just by nature of leading the organization, whether the organization’s mission/intent has a DEI focus, I now have an added responsibility to bring with it a commitment to diversity,” she notes. “Am I an expert in that,” she rhetorically asked. Probably not, as many of us are not. Black folk who find themselves in these spaces attest to taking on the projections of *being Black implies that all DEI matters concern you, so you inherently know what to do and how to do it*. “As soon as the DEI conversation comes up everybody in the room is turning around to look at you. ‘Please diversity expert, be on the committee,’ she mocked:

NO! Angela said firmly. ‘Lead the committee . . . matter of fact, why don’t you be a committee of one, do it all and report back. Fix the system that is about you . . . you have no power in the system but since it is about you, you fix it. Report back and we will put you on the website . . . you along with a few of your friends,’ she facetiously cracked.

Though light was made of the scenario, many within our narrative find resonance with often being the point person when it comes to DEI matters; what a tremendous obligation, *the work*, as it is now expected of you because of what you represent within the space.

As we have mentioned prior, *the work* is an ongoing practice that aims to get to the root of social issues at hand. As it is very alive within the narrative, this work is often assumed of those Black or other marginalized identities within these spaces. While priorly working at a national nonprofit with the mission to support artists navigating disasters (“like a flood or a fire would burn out their studio”), Angela noticed that there was only one demographic of artists the organization supported, White artists. “They were always helping, overseeing and taking care of these White craft artists— who were a lot of women who had the support of husbands, or somebody,” she recalled. “They had their studio out in the mountains, and a fire would come up the mountain and take the studios out. Next thing you know, they would be on the list of people to help. You never saw any of these craft artists living in urban areas,” Angela said. Engaging in *the work*, Angela was called to offer her perspective on this matter to this organization; “What is a disaster? Is it always natural? What about economic disasters, it is the same as getting physically burned out of your studio.” In her perspective there was clear dissonance between the organization’s mission and patterns of implicit bias that the organization was not cognizant or present to. “I was on the board and they wanted me to be on this committee, lead the committee, to come up with a DEI commitment that would fix this whole nest egg,” she followed. “But we are talking about a situation that goes beyond this organization. We’re talking about the way the entire nation, or maybe the whole world, understands it,” she recites while recalling her attempt to engage the organization leaders in *the work*.

I said, ‘It goes back to our mission, and it goes back to, ‘who are you here to serve? Who did you say that you are here for? Is it a coincidence that every person you serve is somebody that lives in the hills of Vermont? How did that happen? Let’s take a look at the board. Let’s look at the way the grant process works.’ And they said, ‘EXACTLY, this is why you need to lead this committee, ‘cause you are asking the right questions.

With an eye roll conjured from the ancestors, “I should not have said nothin’“ she sneeringly concluded.

The previous account is far from anomalous and has taken various forms, as our group contextualizes here. There are layers to this work; you know, wanting to be a part of the change but also not wanting to do *the work* on behalf of other people, while also keeping yourself accountable to your own work and your own healing . . . yea, it is work for sure! “It is a lot,” as Allyson affirms. “I think in some ways, we need to reject that,” you know, doing too much of *the work* to where it becomes *the burden*, or later, *the performance*. “We need to hold others accountable,” she followed, and I agree, we do. “I think all advancement leaders have a responsibility to think about how, not just race, but how diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging impacts the work,” Gary followed in reflecting through an activation of his own learning and commitment to *the work*. In synchronicity, our sistah Olivia in alumni relations expressed that,

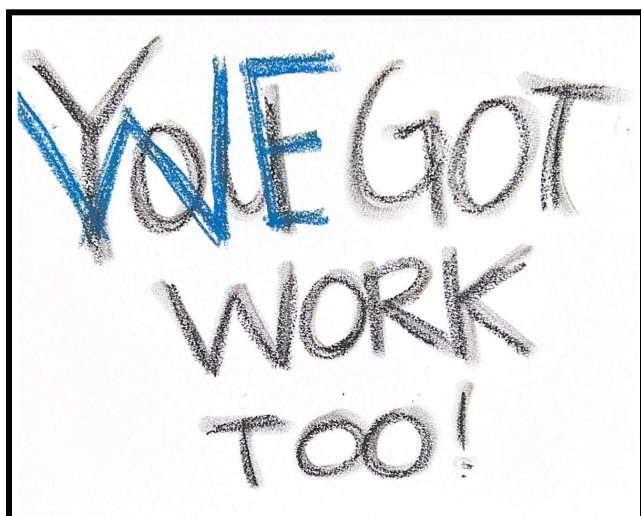
It is the responsibility of all of us as advancement leaders, and also as just human beings—especially when you work in higher education, we have a responsibility to create a place that is safe...and a place where you have a sense of belonging. Particularly within higher education, people should invest in better understanding cultural competence, better understanding themselves, all in the context of identity and all that comes with that. And

so I do not think it is solely on managers or leaders, but I think it is on all of us; the onus is on all of us.

Absolutely, the onus is on all of us, so what does that mean for our work in fundraising (See Portrait 8)? Within this shared responsibility is also a level of shared accountability that we can only achieve through collective efforts of *the work*. One of the most common means to accountability that shows up in our accounts entails playing an active role on THE committee—you know, the DEI committee.

Portrait 8.

We Got Work Too



Note. By Novien Yarber (Researcher).

The Committee. Visibly perturbed by the thought of being pulled into this “extra work,” as she calls it, “sometimes I put my foot down and say ‘I am not playing this game, I did not start this,’” our sistah Angela shared. “I want to do something more... you know, interesting. I want to learn about planned giving and things like that. I want to elevate myself.” On the contrary, Allyson has a more favorable perspective of these DEI obligations/opportunities; “One of the most beautiful things there is out there is realizing that you have support. These DEI committees,

it does not matter which you join, where you join, they will be the best people you ever meet,” Allyson praised.

It is the one place you will always feel supported in diversity, inclusion, belonging, justice, and access work? Why, you ask? Because it is a space that is naturally created for someone to bring . . . wow, I am putting this all together now, to bring their full selves. It is crazy how productive you can be when less energy is spent performing and more energy is spent on just being yourself and growing that person so that you can do your job with excellence. Some of the best support actually comes from those groups. Support comes from purpose and *the why*; the work in these committees helps me remember who I am doing this for . . . , Allyson exuberantly shared.

It is quite apparent that our relationships with DEI committees vary; for some it is a heavy load to carry, additional (misplaced) work. Some of us actually find a sanctuary, community, and support within this shared work. It is collectively understood though, *the work* as driven by DEI committees and programming, requires everyone’s engagement—everyone’s full selves and commitment. “We need your voice in the room,” they say. “And yes, yes they do,” Allyson affirms.

So, it takes investment from everyone, but the DEI committee work within our fundraising spaces, as expressed here, can feel isolating, isolated and disjointed. As Gary candidly admits, “we do have a DEI committee in the division, I have not heard much from them though so honestly I could not tell you what they are doing. There are some efforts but I cannot say that we integrate it as much as I would like.” Providing us a figurative depiction to help capture how the work is experienced within *this body*, Angela also speaks to this isolation but from a perspective within the committee: “Separate from everything else, you are going to know

how to fix everything else. So you have a huge organization, a body, that has this piece, this piece, this piece,” as she moves objects around within our shared space to illustrate their distance from one another. “They say, ‘you know what, we need to have an elbow committee.’ The elbow committee is going to fix what is wrong with the head, legs, and everything else in the body.” While facetiously imitating the persona of the *them*, “here, all you elbows, you fix everything else that is wrong with the body.” Meanwhile, we, “the elbows” are sitting there like, “we know about elbows, but we do not really know much about ears, and feet, etc. “But this is what you are going to do for your entire body,” she explains.

This is how diversity initiatives feel to me. It can not be a separate thing that is supposed to know about everything else; like the different identities that oftentimes make up these DEI committees and initiatives, it has to be somehow made up of representatives from all over the body; accounting department you come, Human Resources you come, Fundraising and Development, everybody comes, and we’re all talking about how this cancer is hurting the whole body. I can be there, but I cannot fix the whole body because I am not in the whole body, I am just here in this body [refers to her physical body as it sits across from me] (See Portrait 11).

Though fashioning our roles within this work is somewhat laborious, as it is suggested, *the work* has great return. “I think that it [*the work*] has certainly made me bolder,” Allyson claims. “I can be like, ‘Listen, y’all made the social contract that you wanted to do this [*the work*], so let’s do this thing, haha. I also feel like I could be less apologetic about my Blackness, and my pursuit of what I find is authentic in what that brings.” Beyond that of simply “dabbling in this DEI talk,” as Gary has offered, and truly leaning into the work “beyond that just racial matters,” could ultimately develop fundraisers into more culturally competent leaders— developing our own

capacities to be more authentic and receptive of others as they are. “We need to fix our culture inside, that actually makes it easier for people to be authentically themselves all the time,” Olivia offers in agreement. Even with being your *full authentic self* within these spaces, “there are layers to it; (as depicted in Portrait 5) there are layers to love, there are layers to relationships, there are layers of trust within these partnerships,” Allyson adds.

Portrait 11

In This Body



Note. By Novien Yarber (Researcher):

Everytime I sit down and do one of these [portraits] they have something to do with the body for some reason . . . and you brought the elbow so I just followed it. It’s something about the physical body but also the spiritual body, the essence of presence and just being fully within it. And as like you [Angela] said, ‘make your mark and bring your whole body/ self into it, and insist upon it! They’ll try to put you into a box, label you, and in turn, marginalize you (in attempts to make sense of the world) . . . So, you have to make people slow down and SEE YOU. . . . You [future generations] will be making decisions for decades, helping alot of people, which is a huge responsibility. Within that you cannot

just say, “Yea, I got me a job, get some free lunches, sit front row at the ballet,” make [or help] people change. Make em. Surprise them. Make them take away a memory that is more than “I had lunch with this cool dude . . . with an accent.”

Variables of *The Equation*

There are undoubtedly multiple levels to this trust-based relationship thing. As the genesis of this research inquiry centers the idea of *trust-based partnerships* as a conceptual matter, we have contextualized a bit of what it has entailed for Black fundraisers to facilitate said trust in the pragmatic sense— the *what/how* negotiated within the *business of yes*. As it is deconstructed by our narrators, sequentially, the elements of *truth* and *authenticity* and an intention to *show up* fully, are ultimately the foundational variables of the equation of “trust-based” philanthropic relationship. The variables as described by our collective:

Truth

Both knowing and owning one’s truth is probably easier said than done. How does one distinguish their truth from . . . well, a false self? Is there a singular truth? We are multifaceted beings so it is probable that we hold a multitude of truths, right? Are truths contextual? Meaning, are there varying expressions of truth based on the surrounding environments and contexts? Does that then negate the idea of it being a truth if it can be negotiated as such? All these queries are still very much alive since our dialogues.

While speaking to contextual specificities, our sistah Irene expresses truth as, “being honest about how I am feeling, and setting parameters around my time and what I have available and being comfortable with that.” Also, being “very straightforward” with what is real is part of said truth—you know us island folk can be like that sometimes. “It is hard to articulate my truth,

because I am my truth,” she said. “I think the likeness in which I engage, smile, and giggle, that is some of my truth.” Yes, absolutely. My joy is my truth as well.

In contextualizing *Black in philanthropy* there presents an intriguing subcultural element that perhaps shapes our understanding of *truth* and its embodiment; as our Caribbean sistahs Irene and Olivia invite us to hold within consciousness, Black Americans/African Americans are perceived to have an “extra layer” painting the refurbishing of *truth* within this narrative— a “chip on the shoulder,” as it was named. As a result of the specific historical harm and trauma, this “chip,” “baggage,” or psychological and physiological weight that Black Americans may shoulder, then ensues (justifiable) sensitivities around negotiating *where one belongs, who one could talk to, and what one could say, etc.*; it is quite dissimilar to our Caribbean perspective(s) of, “there is no space that is not for me,” as Irene assures us. Although this type of “baggage” may not have cultural resonance to some, it is affirmed that subcultural relatedness does not exclude a Black individual from experiencing this while in pursuit of *truth*.

Even though that is the case, and I feel that way [that *there is no space that is not for me*], not everybody else feels that way. I am still in this White-male society that has biases against me; so even without the chip on my shoulder, there is some extra work to transmit my truth in a way that can be heard, rather than assumed... because sometimes people assume your truth . . . , Irene followed.

Authenticity

It is expressed that to be authentic means that you are working in your truth, or deeply connected and embodying that truth whether regarding personal identities, social identities, or other salient matters. “It can be incredibly liberating,” Allyson exhaled into our space. “It is so

comfortable and so easy and so like, not stressful [to be authentic],” and to not be consumed by the desire to “fit into” these spaces.

Usually, I am one of the youngest, if not the youngest. I am Black. I am a female. So I walk into a lot of rooms where I am often the only young Black lady in that room. And I’m a Christian; that one is not verbalized but it is who I am. So in thinking about this conversation, like, wow, ‘how do you bring all those things together?’ My main goal after quarantine was to only enter spaces where every piece of me gets to walk into it. And if one area is going to be shut out, it’s just not going to be the space for me. And I was very strategic in that, which is probably why I’m so happy at my organization, because I did that vetting before going. So not once have I ever felt like a piece of me needs to be compartmentalized.

As our narrative continues to illustrate, a critical element of *chameleonism* emphasizes an awareness of environment, a *consciousness of space* if you will. In the case of embodying the aspirational authenticity as noted previously, one is not only aware of the environment, but also moves to *vet the space*. As parallel ideas, both being *conscious of space* and *vetting the space* “starts with me creating the same space for myself that I create for other people,” as Allyson shares. “I did not realize that prior but that is exactly what it is. I need to create that safe space for myself so that no matter what I do not disrespect me by hindering any piece of me.” Just as it is expected that fundraisers facilitate a space that allows donors to bring their full-selves to the table, might we envision such space for fundraisers to bring their authentic selves too?

A few of us might find resonance with this particular account; imagine walking into some type of board meeting, presenting at a rotary meeting, or facilitating a chamber event of some sort; upon arriving and getting a lay of the land you feel that sense of, “Oooh, yeah, mm okay,

this is it,” as Allyson demonstrates it. Without saying many words at all she is actually saying a lot— it is a sentiment that if expressed to any other African American/Black person walking into one of those spaces where you are one of very few (or the only), you get it, it is just one of those things. So, when we find ourselves within these spaces, word from the wise shares that they:

Create that safe space so that no matter where I have gotten, I remind myself that it is because of who I am. I will not, and I cannot, disrespect that person, because it is usually that person that these spaces need. Me trying to do *them* a favor, oftentimes would rob them of an opportunity to experience me and my fullness, and probably learn something. I don’t want to cheat myself. I do not want to cheat or rob someone else from a new experience . . . for the sake of “comfort.”

Absolutely, yes! We can all take note and recite that many times over: *I will not, and cannot, disrespect the full me because these spaces need all of me; I am not gonna rob you of experiencing all of this because that, in turn, would be a disservice to both you and I.* As we reflected on this philosophy we were reminded of a Mrs. Johnetta B. Cole, whose likeness has shown up in this dissertation before, she is EVERYTHING— if you do not know, now you know! While we do not know whether she would self-identify as such, to us she is the personification of *I am not gonna rob you of experiencing all of this* as she is an epitome of fully and authentically showing up while navigating the philanthropic social landscape; honoring who she is, her cultural roots, and being grounded in her badass intelligent Black womanness. Cole is cited as a HBCU president that has successfully partnered with various philanthropic entities in support of her institution and noted for inviting donors to experience a bit of her culture. This is one example of what it could look like to allow others to experience you in your fullness, whatever form that may take.

To this point of the narrative we have established that within these engagements/relationships there is a great deal at stake; as Gary has named, there is a lot at stake in respect to the fundraising mission, AND, as our emerging hypothesis would suggest, there is a lot at stake as it pertains to fundraisers' psychological and self-fulfillment needs as well (like a sense of *belonging*, self-confidence, and ability to achieve one's full potential, etc.). What is offered here speaks to the importance of our full selves *showing up* within this context and within these relationships, just as it is important when concerning donors. To *show up* in your truth in these spaces knowing that there is so much on the table, how radical.

Remaining steadfast in this authenticity within a context where there are often those not (yet) familiar with your *showing up* in this manner, and as Olivia names it, "we might have to train them to get used to this presence." "How is it then expressed? I asked. "You express it very plainly," Irene explains. "You are very clear and upfront about what the expectations are and you have to continually reinforce it," she followed. Sometimes setting these expectations means, for instance, being transparent about what is negotiable within the chameleon-like practice and what is not. Setting these expectations could also mean showing up fully in your advocacy for other Black people and Blackness within these spaces; "I actually had to say several times, 'this is not a 'Black' event,'" Irene says as she expresses expectations to her team members. "This is an event that we are having for Black constituents," she clarified. She makes this distinction because she has noticed when institutions classify particular programming as "Black events" it then ensues all kinds of biases, associations, and performative measures like "pandering usage of pan-African colors," as referenced by Olivia, that are inauthentic and frankly do not have a place in what we wish to accomplish here. Ultimately, Gary believes that, "the extent to which we can

just be ourselves, be authentic, and prove people wrong, excel, partner, and collaborate, and do our job, engage, and bring in money [let us not forget that], then we are okay.

Working from this place of truth and authenticity, and ultimately trust, takes a great deal of courage— courage to *show up fully* within these spaces. “I think you establish trust by being authentic,” Marley proposed. As she explains, authenticity, and subsequently trust, are things developed, understood, and embodied overtime; “When I was younger [in my fundraising career] I thought you established trust by finding something within that other person that you can relate to, and then exploit that,” which, as we learn might not be the case. There is still probably a good bit of that alive in our practices— fundraisers familiar with the range of donor-centric practices can attest to that. As we challenge ourselves to reimagine the practice of fundraising within this *business of yes*, it is curious to ponder how our practices might evolve when centering our own truth and authenticity. Allyson offered that *uniqueness as an individual operating from truth transcends how people might perceive you*, and that:

I find that if I am being my authentic self it is less stressful. It also gives people permission to be their authentic selves, and that is a comfortable place. Again, when we can speak our truth, and I can listen to someone else’s truth, then we can really establish trust.

In tandem, Marley encourages us to lean more into speaking your truth, so that you can truly listen to their truth, that is how you can establish trust. “I do not have to look like you, I do not have to dress like you, I do not have to be you, in order to establish trust,” Marley asserts, “I just need to walk authentically in who I am. And be very clear about that. And trust will come.”

It is our belief that this approach to fundraising, moving from the exclusive *donor-centric* to human-centric means of connection, will eventually be the norm (in due time) and will greatly

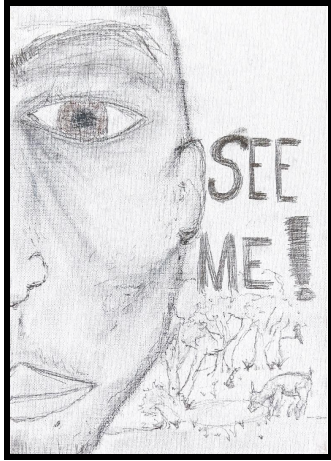
serve the profession as it evolves into a field that truly honors DEI matters. Taking a step back from the money talk within the *business of yes*, bringing in the fullness of our human qualities to our engagements, our truths, our stories, our shared *why's* is where the impact and connections lie. “I think the *why's* are the driving forces that’ll help create a long term partnership . . . but I have to bring a very authentic me to the space so that they trust sharing their story too,” Marley offered. Absolutely, we must *show up*.

Show Up and Show Out

While elusive and impalpable to some, the idea of *showing up* has had resonant implications on not only our practice(s), but on our holistic lived experience. As many Black folk are familiar with the cultural manifesto, *you have to be twice as good/achieve twice as much/etc. to get half of what they have*, it too has emerged within this context and ultimately completes our equation informing the “trust-based” practice. In a context where we partake in incessant negotiation in the *business of yes*, where *there is so much at stake*, it is probable that *showing up* fully is not inherently practiced or generally endorsed. If we were to construct a pragmatic characterization of it, to truly *show up* could imply intentionally authorizing self to be unabashedly visible, heard, and conspicuously present with a critical awareness of who they are, what they represent within the space, and ultimately, knowing their value/power within the space— especially as one finds themselves engulfed in normative-White supremacist culture (as expressed in Portrait 7). As momma has always encouraged, *show up and show out, be unapologetic about your presence and talent*; “I am gonna make sure you cannot deny me,” Olivia reiterates.

Portrait 7

See Me



Note. By Novien Yarber (Researcher):

To be seen fully, in all my complexities as a human being, is to be daringly vulnerable, to show up.

As it is expressed within *Our Narrative*, the spurr to *show up* fully within practice often comes later within personal and professional development— often after one has developed a substantial portfolio, has weight to their name and title, or accumulated some “credibility and caché,” as Olivia tells it. Through our examination of the *business of yes* and the chameleonic practice(s) we are invited to critically examine some of the ways in which we have traditionally navigated these spaces, with hesitance to *show up*, and in the process likely unlearn some of what we have taken on and internalized while navigating the normative-White systems at large. For example, unlearning things like, “not to trust my instinct as a Black woman,” Marley shared. “You know, to sort of seek the ‘White male’ way of doing it [the profession or otherwise] because we live in a White male society,” she explained while articulating how she arrived, and continues to arrive, at a fundraising practice that honors her and her identities as a Black woman.

In this practice of *showing up* it is important to note that the intention is not simply self-serving but rather in service of our collective progression; your ability to *show up* fully both authorizes others to do so; encouraging future generations to follow suite, while also honoring

generations past who have paved the way for us to do so. “There are generations of people who have been doing this work longer than me who have continued to help make it possible for us [Black people] show up fully,” Marley shares in reflection:

Early in my professional development, meeting Black women in development in positions of power, I remember being like, “Yesss, she is wearing Kente cloth (you know, 90s, early 2000s, everybody had kente cloth stoles on over their suits type of things), and I love how she presents herself.”

Sitting before me, twisted tresses and a Bob Marley portrait hung proudly above her head, it is evident that Marley has also leaned into showing up unapologetically herself within these spaces—which in turn has encouraged me, someone of the future generation of this work, to do the same. While this is one example of the way in which our *showing up* serves the greater mission within the fundraising community, it is noted that it can also have positive implications on our external partnerships.

According to Olivia, your willingness to *show up* is also imperative to the work of DEI and its implications within this field. “If we are changing the [donor] population and do not change who is in front of them, and then we do not really understand who they are [donors], and what they need, how they need to be communicated with, and how they want to be engaged,” she declared. In her case, *showing up* allows her to connect with the diversifying donor population as she “speaks a similar language,” as she reflects; “a Black woman is who understands what some of their struggles are and knows what it is like to be invisible in a room where you are not necessarily expected to be there, knows how to have a conversation with someone who is also used to being invisible,” she concluded. As it is argued here, all elements collectively—expertise, culture/perspective and a willingness to *show up*—give great return. Yes, although we might

adopt particular donor-centric practices that aim to encourage donors to be comfortable being themselves, not until we embody an authentic representation of ourselves, thus honoring our full selves and showing up in that regard, can we truly begin to connect, understand and earnestly honor the beauty and magic of DEI within our reimagined, socially just, and equitable, and trust-based work.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL REFLECTIONS & INVITATIONS

“Hopefully there are policies in place to support Black people in this work,” Gary said. Yes, hopefully! While unpacking what has been uncovered here, and ultimately beginning to reimagine our practice(s), my hope is that there will emerge systems that will support Black folk as we continue to move through this learning. Although policy could serve as a technical means of change and resolve within this narrative, I do not believe recommendations of policy to be appropriate in closing this study— as we began this exploration by centering the people, we shall end in similar fashion; moreover, what impact does policy have without the practices of the people, right? So, I invite us to start here, with ourselves; begin the work within ourselves in service of catalyzing the oneiric external and systemic changes we seek for the future.

Furthermore, as this study speaks to the Black experience in relation to the collective ecosystem, this final chapter will not project, deduce, nor propose recommendations of others’ actions based on what was uncovered within this exploration. For those nonBlack readers, or those who do not find personal resonance with this narrative, heuristic insights and learnings shall serve as invitations to expand perspective and catalyze and/or inform “what now” on your behalf— in my pedagogical practice this is what I refer to as “giving the work back,” do with these insights as you find appropriate.

As for my sistas and brothas (and all those identifying beyond the binary, of course), here we are; as this study centers Black folk, our experiences, hopes, and dreams, the final reflections and invitations are for us.

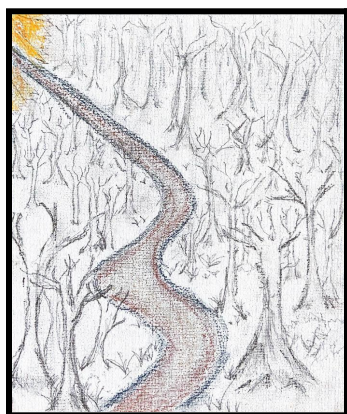
Closing Reflections

That one Spiderman quote, how does it go again? *With great awareness comes great social responsibility*, or something like that, right? With an expanded consciousness comes a tacit responsibility to continue to critically examine, learn, unlearn elements of ourselves, others, and the social systems in which we make up and operate in. Considerably within the work of fundraising and philanthropy that aims to further develop socially equitable and just practices, I believe it to be increasingly important to be both critical of, and curious about, our role(s) within this ecosystem—not only working on better understanding ourselves as practitioners, but also considering how our continuous learning emboldens the development of other stakeholders across the spectrum. What might it look like for us to support other Black folk (or those of other historically marginalized identities) in their professional/personal development while navigating this social landscape and work? How might we reimagine how we engage funding stakeholders, again, without deviating from the operative functions or philanthropic mission? Or, as depicted in both Portraits 1 and 10, might we venture new paths, reimagining the mission and goal of our work as a whole, to move beyond the exclusionary prioritization of money to broaden the mission to include the essence of *facilitating social change through just, equitable, inclusive, and authentic trust-based engagements*; within this would inherently consider how we authorize ourselves, and subsequently others, to *show up* fully within this work. I agree with Gary in that there is *a whole 'lot at stake* here. I would expand on this assertion by naming that there is a lot at stake beyond that of pledges or monetary gifts, there is a high price for sacrificing oneself or God forbid, being affirmed as “the right kind of Black,” as Olivia named) in the name of closing the gift. If we are to earnestly step into *contemporary philanthropic* practices that are socially responsive (relative to where we are and where we aspire to go) we must acknowledge what is at

stake as it pertains to our livelihood, our whole beings, *the souls of Black folk* as we forge forward in the work of justice and equity (Dubois, 1994; MacQuillin, 2020). I once heard Tyrone Freeman, researcher and educator at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, once speak to something similar as it resonates here; within the narrative of philanthropy and fundraising Black folk have been overwhelmingly represented as recipients, or objects, of philanthropic movements, it is time that we begin to reconcile our roles as subjects and agents within this narrative, within this change—we are here, now let us talk about it. I do not believe the extent of our presence within these context is to merely exist within these systems, compulsorily contorting to survive and fit within them (as we have proven to do successfully); radical is the conception of owning the spaces of which we occupy, unabashedly challenging the systems and practices with mere fullness of our presence, having a hand in the creation of the narrative going forward—*with great awareness comes great social responsibility*.

Portrait 10

The Goal



Note. By Novien Yarber (Researcher):

This path, this journey, creating a path through the woods (which represents ambiguity), is leading to a goal of some sort. There are clearly tangible goals of fundraising

operations, right, AND I feel like there is another element to it that is kind of elusive until defined for oneself. Once defined it can really inform how one approaches the work . . . figuring out the “why” and one’s role in this ecosystem, it is off in the distance somewhere. And naturally, the vision of goals changes once we get closer to them.

Chameleonism

As it is offered within the narrative, the emergent concept of *chameleonism*, as most considerably *endarkened*⁴ within the study, requires further attention and intention so that it is grounded in, and most importantly exercised, in the vein of justice and liberation as we forge forward in our work. *Chameleonism*, or the process by which one adapts, camouflages, and/or manipulates within this context has proven itself a functional tool in navigating the social landscape of philanthropy. Within the practice of *chameleonism* there implies various intentions of consciousness/awareness by which one can effectively navigate and vet spaces, thus, make meaning of an environment and/or dynamic so that “trust-based relationships” can be created. Although similar concepts such as assimilation or acculturation have been associated with adapting to these environments and *being Black in philanthropy* (Burton, 2020; Conley, 2000; Daniel et al., 2019), *chameleonism* as a concept seemingly positions agency and power⁵ at the hands of the *chameleon*; it is an intentional means of navigation by which “coloration” (those expressions of adaptation and negotiation, including but not exclusive to, assimilation, acculturation, or code-switching) can be used on, and understood as, a continuum— that is, a fluid

⁴ Offered by Black Storywork researcher, Coles (2004), *endarkened*, antithetical to the banal “illuminate” used in normative qualitative research measures, honors life, love, nurturing, spirituality, and the community within the acknowledgement of that which emerges from Black Storywork— that is, instead of “lightening” matters, we can associate “black” and/or darkness to that of what is *unknown*, where generative knowledge, knowing and innovation is discovered and created.

⁵ Power, as referred to here, is the ability to enact one’s will; to make conscious choice.

range of semantic and somatic means of shrouding and/or leveraging one's Blackness in response to context.

In considering such, it is imperative to acknowledge the shadow of this concept; while *chameleonism* has proven to serve as an effective practice, when considering critical elements of *what* is being negotiated and *why*, mal-practice of the chameleonism can ultimately repress one's ability to *show up* in an authentic self if not done with intention and a discernment through conscious practice. This shadow element of the practice ultimately impacts the nature of the desired "trust-based" relationship, where the foundation of the relationship can be based on a feign confidence of an unhealthy persona and not a true self. So, to reiterate, within this work we have a responsibility beyond that of just the monetary metrics, we have a responsibility to *show up* not only for ourselves but for our communities, for the collective whole— *with great awareness comes great social responsibility*.

What Now, Invitations for Further Exploration

A substantial amount has been uncovered within this study that should, and will be, further excavated and investigated in due time. As this study encourages further critical reflection of the previously underexplored matters, there is great work ahead for us all, in many regards. As this is a leadership studies dissertation, I would be remiss if the study did not conclude with invitations to deepen an understanding, further developing the capacities of our philanthropic leadership. Although these invitations do not entail distinct technical recommendations of practice, they do offer several matters of reflection of which I believe to be integral to the progression of our collective awareness on the matters of this study.

One of the most salient elements within this narrative, that of chameleonism, elicits greater attention to the concept of *persona* and its functions within this context. As it is

understood here, the *persona*, is the self-imposed representative, or mask, we present to the social world; the persona, as Jung (1953) proposes, functions as to protect the true essence of ourselves. The persona is truly a complex notion that, if explored, can both provide language to and inform the nature in which we *show up* in these spaces. Although the persona is not an inherently disadvantageous concept, I believe it to be necessary to familiarize ourselves with these persona and investigate from *where* they are created and *why*— as *we* [Black folk] can often *wear the masks* as a response to systemic oppression and racism, in and beyond this particular research context (Dunbar, 1895; Fanon, 2005). In no way am I under the illusion that this is a black-or-white matter (no pun intended) where one is either operating through a persona or not, it is imperative to recognize that we can (and often do) live and operate through *multiple persona* contingent on social context (Stewart, 2008; Swann et al., 2009). Within this matter, to honor the multiplicity of our identities while enacting a just chameleonic practice, or *adaptation with authenticity*, there persists the need for further sensemaking of identity as it relates to context (and vise-versa), especially as it pertains to being *Black in philanthropy*.

Though it may not yet be adopted as a core element of the fundraising practice, I champion further investment in identity development for fundraising practitioners, especially as we consider the greater work around diversity, equity, and inclusion within the field. This approach to identity development would not merely emphasize that of single or isolated social identities (e.g., I am Black, I am male), but instead should analyze the complexities of intersectional identities, lending to a growing consciousness around social location and power in a critical, multisystems based lens. Particular to this context, discourse around *Blackness* and the Black social identity cannot, and should not, be constricted within a vacuum; racial identity development theories such as Cross' (1991) Black American Racial Identity Development Model

could serve in our contextualization/conceptualization of these identities as they are located within social context. I believe these elements to be critical to the *consciousness of space* element(s) of the chameleonic practice exercised with true intention—that is, to develop the capacity to be grounded in an understanding of social identity within context (as opposed to of the context). Developing the capacity to both critically analyze social issues on multi-socioecological levels, and simultaneously hold the multidimensionality of our identities that inform our practice(s) is, as I believe, imperative to the progression of philanthropy/fundraising and its impact.

Within this identity/professional development I also believe there to be great opportunity for change, both on the individual and collective levels of this practice. An expansion of consciousness around identity, power, and social systems will only further catalyze the capacity and agency to exercise further adaptive leadership practice— leading to an ability to *notice*, *name*, and dare I say *intervene* within this work (Heifetz & Linksy, 2002). As it was captured within our previously mentioned narrative, social-awareness and managing the metrics are not always in alignment, meaning, a practice that centers the dollars is usually prioritized over speaking to inequities or problematic issues that might occur in the social exchange of fundraising— *now is not the time, avoid it all together, there is a lot at stake*, amirite? Further critique of our practice(s) could serve by providing tools and ways of intervening/interjecting that will, in theory, not detract from the monetary-mission of the relationships but instead deepen the relationships, moving beyond transactional to transformative means of engagement where we all those involved are developing within the socially just work. I mean, all great relationships, those long-term and meaningful, require some level of productive conflict or discomfort (in service of growth and progress), no?

Many of our self-perceived roles in equity work have shifted over the last few years; some of us have been reignited, fired up, self-directed, and championing various means of advocacy and justice, and some of us are continuing to learn, develop, or just beginning to make sense of our role(s) in *this work*. No matter where we are in the process, it is all part of the work. Our being in it is it, our *showing up* is it. Through this study I have learned that our roles as fundraisers do not require the designations of *equity*, *diversity* and *inclusion* within our titles or job responsibilities (ya know, *ticking the box*) for us to do so, we are, by nature, authorized to *show up* within this work— a liberating concept.

The last offering, impart, is the invitation for us to continue to dream and explore— to wonder, to inquire, to fail, to succeed, to make mistakes, to get messy, and to learn from it all. What a privilege it is to explore, is it not? When I think about the final reflections/invitations of this study I cannot help but to sit with and reflect on the audaciousness emanating from the words from which I encourage you, the reader. Not long ago (like yesterday) were our ancestors fighting for equal human rights, the decency to be seen as human beings, to be heard, to be seen, to be cared for, to simply be, yet here we are contemplating ways in which we can change an oppressive system from positions of great privilege— a humbling realization to sit with. In this social world where *success* and *conformity* are bound to the “anesthetizing security of being identified with the majority” (King, 1981, p. 11), I believe there to be a willed responsibility/obligation to dream and to explore, to be unabashedly authentic, to be liberated, to show up as our full selves (even if it does not fit within the normative structures)— is that not what our ancestors fought for? Now speaking to my fellow cynics, you can softened your brow; by no means is this invitation meant as a whimsical fantasy absent of acknowledging the realness and gravity of our experiences, because there is indeed *a lot at stake*; this invitation is more so a

reminder that you/I/we actually do not need permission to be embrace our full beings, to create and innovate beyond that of what has already been presented to us as *the way as it is*—let us dream, fail, succeed, and learn on the way, it is (y)our divine right.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Phase I: Reflective Processing and Critical Dialogue Activity

Preface: I want to first express my immense gratitude for you sharing your time with me to today and being a part of this exploration, thank you. The first phase of this activity is simply a conversation, there are no wrong answers nor am I looking for any particular answers. What I will ask of you is for you to be honest and open to the best of your ability; honest with me, but more importantly, honest with yourself. As this is a conversation in service of eliciting critical thought I will probe at some points, and as conversations are reciprocal, do know that you too can ask questions and probe.

Theme	Prompt	Intention(s)
Setting the tone, establishing rapport, facilitating <i>the place</i> from which our learning will emerge	<p>Tell me about yourself; where are you from, what's your story?</p> <p>How long have you been in this field of fundraising?</p> <p>Why a career in fundraising?</p> <p>The work of fundraising, what does it mean to you?</p> <p>What does the work of fundraising mean to you given the context of this institution/organization</p> <p>What does "trust-based" partnerships mean to you? What does it look and feel like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from participant's personal narratives • Explore how the participant organically correlates or aligns personal accounts/experiences/values/perspectives to that of their work, organization, etc. (e.g., mission, purpose, values, etc.)

<p>Exploring self & self in relation to the work of fundraising/</p>	<p>What is your understanding of <i>social identity</i>?</p> <p>Given the context of this study centers the Black identity, how would you describe <i>Blackness</i>... how do you describe your Blackness?</p> <p><i>Identity salience</i>, what does that mean to you? Can you share some of your most salient social identities? (If it doesn't organically emerge, note such then probe further about Black identity salience) What makes them <i>salient</i>?</p> <p>What would you say were some of your most salient identities as it pertains to your work (e.g., within your specific organization, in the work of fundraising, your role/practice within the organization, etc.)</p> <p>What would you say were some of the most salient elements of the culture of which you're positioned in (e.g., what stands out to you about the culture of philanthropy, ways of operating within your organization, workforce demographics, donor demographics, patron demographics, etc.)? Why?</p> <p>Would you say that your social identities are mirrored to that of what you've identified as your organization's identity (and vis-versa)? Why or why not?</p> <p>Is the alignment of your identities/culture to that of the work you do in fundraising of importance to you? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn of participant narratives—actively listening for expressions of social identity and organizational identity ● Curate questions/approach to questions in a manner that further probes what the participant shares
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Phase II: Art Informed Inquiry

Preface: Now that we've set a foundation we'll take our processing a little bit further. As our conversation continues I will ask that you use our conversation/your thoughts/feelings/emotions to guide what's created on the provided canvas. Again, there is no "correct" way to approach this activity; I simply ask that you suspend judgement of what you create/what it looks like and allow yourself to express freely. You may take breaks and pause as you think but to the best of your abilities try to stay "here" and present to how/what you are responding.

Identity negotiation theory (INT) in the practice of fundraising

Provided your understanding of your own identity (ies)/culture and that of fundraising/philanthropy, can you speak to how this has/could/does influence your practice?

The work of fundraising is very much relational in nature, in what manner do you consider present identities (*differing or similar*) in connecting with or building relationships with donors/prospects?

Does this inform how you "show up" in this work? How so?

- Learn of participant narratives—actively listening to subjective experiences while avoiding projecting how INT manifests itself in practice

<p>A Path Forward</p>	<p>Envisioning a fundraising practice that authentically honors you/your identities/your culture what would that look like? (Consider both your own practice and beyond)</p> <p>What do you think the implications of said change(s) would be? Would fundraising be more, less, or just as effective? Why?</p> <p>Provided all that we've uncovered within our time together, where does this leave you? What are some of your thoughts/feelings at this very moment? Can you explain them?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn of participant narratives—actively listening to visions and dreams of a just approach to their practice, and the collective work of fundraising ● Facilitate a space that encourages both creativity and critical hope for these current practitioners ● Distinguish any actionable items shared
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APPENDIX B

*Community Validation/Affirmation Guide
Online Survey/Questionnaire (Qualtrics Platform)*

Honoring the Afrocentric approach adopted within this research, this community validation/affirmation process is designed to get your critical feedback, questions, comments, and resonances with this study's work. To ensure we capture your most honest and open feedback, this survey and your responses will be completely anonymous. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers-- the intention is to hear the many varying/diverse viewpoints/experiences about this research context.

If you choose to move forward with this survey you are consenting to the following [consent form](#); please print and keep a copy for your records. This consent allows this study/researcher to reference, integrate/apply, and or directly quote your feedback for the utility of this project and future work.

Preliminary Demographic Information:

Do you identify as Black ((referring to the social categorization of those persons of African descent)

[Yes or No]

What are your preferred gender pronouns (e.g., she/her, he/him, they/their, ze/hir)?

In which age demographic do you fall?

Baby Boomer: Born 1946 – 1964

Generation X: Born 1965 – 1976

Millennials or Gen Y: Born 1977 – 1995

Gen Z, iGen, or Centennials: Born 1996 – 2015

Very briefly describe the nature and/or role of your work in fundraising/philanthropy (in order to maintain anonymity, please refrain from using any explicit details/identifiable data/title/organization name within your description):

1. As it is named within this study, the act of fundraising, generally speaking, is metaphorically understood as being in the "business of yes"; as coined in the study, "the business of yes" is a descriptor of the fundraising practice that ensues perpetual means of adaptation within the social exchange of facilitating "trust-based" philanthropic relationships. In layman's terms, the fundraising practice implies going to great lengths to land the "yes;" whether representative of a gift agreement or otherwise, the "yes" is a stamp of affirmation/recognition that the fundraiser has done their job justice and the donor/grantor is validating these efforts with the "yes."

Your resonance(s)/thoughts/reflections:

2. Within the "business of yes," research participants consistently named that there is "a lot at stake" within these engagements (monetary or otherwise). In turn, this implies that fundraisers go to great lengths to ensure the donor/grantor is comfortable (ultimately, "trusting" of the fundraiser) within the interpersonal engagements-- "the dirty truth is, we have to make donor [grantors] comfortable with us, to trust us, especially when we are considering high-dollar asks," as expressed within the study.

Further descriptive words of this work have been, "performative" and "grunt work" to ensure we "do what needs to be done to get the job done."

Your resonance(s)/thoughts/reflections:

3. Regarding all that is at stake within this "business of yes," interpersonal engagements are more complex when considering cross-racial and cross-cultural dynamics. A conscious practice of versatility, malleability, and tactical assimilation has proven itself as helpful tools for Black fundraisers while navigating the social landscape of philanthropy and fundraising. As this adaptive practice aids in the grand scheme of the fundraising mission, appealing to grantors and ultimately amassing resources, it can also have considerable effects on how one shows up authentically within practice.

Your resonance(s)/thoughts/reflections:

4. Through our exploration, many of the adaptive practices and considerations began to emerge in very palpable and remarkable ways, which were expressed through symbolic, imaginative, and creative analogies (e.g. "I am a chameleon, I can adapt to whatever is needed").

As defined within this study, "chameleonism" is described as a process by which Black fundraisers, in respect to their Black identity or "Blackness," adapt, camouflage, and/or manipulate how they show up in service of effectively navigating/vetting spaces and philanthropic relationships.

Your resonance(s)/thoughts/reflections:

5. As it is captured within this study, "chameleonism" can be expressed in three distinct, non-mutually exclusive, ways:

Physical Presentation- this tenet considers elements like, but not limited to, "dressing the part" and embodying the societal expectations of [Black] womanhood (e.g. being "done up" with makeup, skirts, heels, and the rest, or even considering the manner in which hair is worn/adorned (i.e. being natural)).

Quote from the study: As captured in the study, "sometimes the work of meeting these physical expectations can take precedence over the actual job of raising funds; 'I have got my suit on, got my heels, I've got my Kenneth Cole bag, blow out, lipstick is perfect [...]' I

went to the Mac counter and got a good face going, and then show up to have the donor meeting, *takes deep exhale*, okay, it worked out.'"

Positioning & Orientation- being "the right one in front," or "the right person to speak with the donor," this is a manner in which fundraisers align their visibility (whether on the frontline or even within the grant writing space) to that of what's most palatable for the donor/grantor-- all in service of the fundraising mission.

Quote from the study: "My job is to fundraise for the organization [the cause], if I'm hindering that I have to step back [...] that does not mean I won't get credit for my work, I just cannot be the face of it," a participant named.

Being (Un)Heard- the antecedent to code-switching, this element refers to the manner in which Black fundraisers negotiate what to say, how to say it, and to whom to say it to-- diplomacy of sorts. Particular to the interpersonal donor: solicitor dynamics, among other things this entailed avoiding "sensitive" or "political" topics that may arise within donor meetings in order to evade "upsetting" them.

"There's still a lot of danger, or risk, of people saying something insensitive or ignorant around 'BLM' or the 'LGBTQ issue' (as donors have referred to it) [...] avoid it all together [...] there is a lot at stake," as a participant named.

Your resonance(s)/thoughts/reflections:

6. Please leave any additional thought/comments not captured above:



Oct 6, 2021 3:39:45 PM PDT

Novien Yarber
Sch of Leadership & Ed Science

Re: Expedited - Initial - IRB-2021-399, Endowed Trust: Facilitating "Trust-Based" Partnerships As Experienced by Black Fundraisers

Dear Novien Yarber:

The Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for IRB-2021-399, Endowed Trust: Facilitating "Trust-Based" Partnerships As Experienced by Black Fundraisers.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Findings:

Research Notes:

Internal Notes:

*The USD IRB requires annual renewal of all active studies reviewed and approved by the IRB. Please submit an application for renewal prior to the annual anniversary date of initial study approval.
If an application for renewal is not received, the study will be administratively closed.*

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited or exempt review at any time.

Sincerely,

Eileen K. Fry-Bowers, PhD, JD
Administrator, Institutional Review Board

Office of the Vice President and Provost
Hughes Administration Center, Room 214
5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, CA 92110-2492
Phone (619) 260-4553 • Fax (619) 260-2210 • www.sandiego.edu



Nov 18, 2021 1:38:54 PM PST

Novien Yarber

Sch of Leadership & Ed Science

Re: Modification - IRB-2021-399 Endowed Trust: Facilitating "Trust-Based" Partnerships As Experienced by Black Fundraisers

Dear Novien Yarber:

The Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for IRB-2021-399, Endowed Trust: Facilitating "Trust-Based" Partnerships As Experienced by Black Fundraisers.

Decision: Approved

Findings:

Research Notes:


Internal Notes:

The USD IRB requires annual renewal of all active studies reviewed and approved by the IRB. Please submit an application for renewal prior to the annual anniversary date of initial study approval. If an application for renewal is not received, the study will be administratively closed.

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The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited or exempt review at any time.

Sincerely,


Eileen K. Fry-Bowers, PhD, JD
Administrator, Institutional Review Board

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