



## Current Issues in Education

Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College • Arizona State University  
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## Shaping the Futures of Learning in the Digital Age

### The Digitization of White Women's Tears

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**Abstract:** Social media is a digital mirror of society. Across disciplines, scholars have written of social justice as it exists and as it should be within higher education and beyond. Looking to social media spaces where higher education practitioners and scholars interact with one another, we can see how scholars who discuss social justice initiatives can themselves perpetuate systems of oppression. Utilizing Mamta Motwani Accapadi's (2007) article "When White Women Cry: How White Women's Tears Oppress Women of Color" as a foundation, I reflect through poetry on how white women in positions of power within higher education engage in harmful behavior in digital spaces. Finally, I provide recommendations on how fellow white women can disrupt these acts of oppression.

**Keywords:** *Race, Social Media, Whiteness, Gender*

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### The Digitization of White Women's Tears

Mamta Accapadi told us in 2007<sup>1</sup>

The power, the fragility  
Of White Women's Tears

Mamta Accapadi told us  
About "One up, One Down"  
White women always thinking they're "down"

When that reality is disrupted?

They cry a river  
Their whiteness a raft  
Carrying them downstream  
Far from judgement

But on social media?  
Minoritized folks share their voice  
In a way they can't always at work

In the digital space there is power  
In the digital space there is voice  
In the digital space...

There's still white woman's tears.

We keep seeing it in higher ed  
These white women with 3 letter acronyms  
C. R. Y.

They take issue with a meme  
Because they got time in an 80-hour work week  
Because they got time to misgender folks

They call folks a dumpster fire  
Because folks talk about oppression at work  
Because folks aren't shiny happy people

Because folks aren't  
Cis, White, Nondisabled  
Content with the status quo

Call them out?  
Call them in?

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on this reference, review Dr. Accapadi's 2007 article "When White Women Cry: How White Women's Tears Oppress Women of Color".

Watch the digitization of white women's tears

Pie is delicious  
But the P.I.E. defense mechanisms?<sup>2</sup>  
Leaves a bitter taste

The bitterness of  
"The Black List"  
Threatening that these minoritized folks won't get hired

The bitterness of  
Their privilege of legal teams  
Threatening a lawsuit

Online or off  
White Women's Tears  
Are a protective force (for them)(for us)

But what can we do?  
We white women?  
How do we hold our people accountable?  
How do we hold *ourselves* accountable?

We retweet  
(online and off)  
Folks of color and their critiques

We dam their white women tears  
We talk to them  
We teach

We visibly interrupt their acts of oppression  
We make it known that it is unacceptable  
If there's a Black List? They're on it

We can't let  
White Women's Tears  
Keep drowning folks

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on this reference, please review Dr. Watt's 2007 article "Difficult Dialogues, Privilege and Social Justice: Uses of the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model in Student Affairs Practice."

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