

5-2018

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Annie Calloway

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Representations of Black Characters in Children's Literature: A Product of Histories,
Ideologies, Narratives, Depictions, Politics, and Laws

By
Annie Elizabeth Calloway

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2018

Approval Page

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Abstract

Representations of Black Characters in Children's Literature: A Product of Histories, Ideologies, Narratives, Depictions, Politics, and Laws. Calloway, Annie Elizabeth, 2018: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Black Characters/Children's Literature/Histories/Ideologies/Narratives/Depictions/Politics/Laws

This qualitative, directed content analysis examined fiction and nonfiction children's literature published between 2015 and 2017. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, the study describes the ways in which Black characters are represented in early readers. Using books located in community libraries, school media centers and retail outlets, the study concludes that Black characters are represented less frequently and in ways that often do not take into account cultural, political, and legal manifestations of White privilege.

This discussion of race, identity, power structures, and education aims to create and promote thought and discussions surrounding the genealogies of racial oppressions. The study is also meant as a challenge to rethink perceptions of race and equality and dignity. As educators charged with balancing the scale of equality and fair practice, there are many questions: Who determines what counts as knowledge? Who represents and who is represented? What stories will be remembered? Whose voices will be heard? Such questions go to the heart of children's literature and how the history of race and equity is interpreted and validated.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois, 1953, pp. 2-3)

The 2008 United States presidential campaign boasted many firsts. Barack Obama, a first-term senator from Illinois carried 95% of the Black vote, 67% of the Hispanic vote, and 66% of the Asian vote. He also dominated the race with the support of young voters: In the 18-20 range, Obama garnered 66%. Importantly, he appealed to poor voters as well. Seventy-three percent of Americans who earned less than \$15,000 per year voted for the Democratic candidate. Seventy percent of voters who identify as gay supported him. Mobilizing more than 6.5 million first-time voters under the age of 30 and a record breaking 15% of registered Black voters, Barack Obama pioneered social media to ignite interest in his campaign. Incorporating the slogan *Hope* into his campaign strategy, Obama connected with a variety of disenfranchised voters (Roper Center for Public Opinion, 2016).

Also in 2008, for the first time in over a decade, the U.S. prison population decreased. Slower growth in the state and federal prison population was related to fewer new court commitments and an increase in the number of people released from prison. Still, in the 18 years between 1980 and 2008, the prison population in the United States quadrupled from 500,000 to 2.3 million people. Nationwide, Blacks make up 26% of juvenile arrests, 44% of the youth who are detained, 46% of the youth who are judicially

waived to criminal court, and 58% of the youth admitted to state and federal prisons (National Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017). This disparity is defined as a new racial caste system designed to denote a “stigmatized racial group locked into an inferior position by law and custom, much like slavery and Jim Crow” (Alexander, 2010, p. 4).

While the notion that future prison populations are predicted by third grade reading scores has been debunked as an urban legend, statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Adult Literacy Survey (2015) indicated that the percentage of prisoners in United States jails who tested at the two lowest levels of reading proficiency is 70%. The United States Department of Justice (DOJ, 2002) and the United States Department of Commerce estimated that 30% of federal inmates, 40% of state inmates, and 50% of death-row inmates are high school dropouts. Researchers cite statistical evidence that “schooling can significantly reduce the probability of incarceration and arrest” (Lochner & Moretti, 2004, p. 175).

Statement of the Problem

Race continues to be a momentous factor in dialogs surrounding inequities and has become a descriptor for the economic and social decay facing segments of U.S. society.

It seems that it (racism) has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphoric life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before. (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48)

Rarely do individuals openly admit to racial bias; yet schools, legal systems, and pop culture reflect the ongoing and often unsteady gains in race-based equity. The incongruity between individual and systemic biases and the tensions between the

majority and ethnic minority stakeholders are regularly headline news.

On the one hand, recent studies indicate steadily improving racial attitudes (Brown, Kaiser, & Jackson, 2014; Stanley, Sokol-Hessner, Banaji, Phelps, & Kahneman, 2011). Much of the progress in improving racial attitudes is attributed to a rising Black middle class (Marsh, Darity, Cohen, Casper, & Salters, 2007; see also Pattillo, 2005). Other research indicates that while the Black middle class has gained economic ground, they lag behind their White peers in earning power and ability to advance in their careers (Bobo, Kluegel, & Smith, 1993; Collins, 1983). Recent setbacks in higher education are documented in studies examining affirmative action (Loury & Garman, 1993; Orlans, 1992) and ethnic studies (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Hu-DeHart, 1993; Juan, 2005). Still other studies find that race bias begins in early childhood and continues through adulthood (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Katz, 1993). A complex and sometimes contradictory set of ideologies about modern racism “reflects individual perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and ideological constructs with social structural arrangements that have been created historically, but that demonstrate taken-for-granted arrangements, conscious practice, and active decision making on the part of powerful and strategically located social actors” (Lowy, 1991, p. 543). These taken-for-granted arrangements continue to present challenges in schools; for administrators, teachers, and students facing increasing accountability for their work. The persistence of racism and the lessons of history serve as reminders of the contradictions between the “peculiar institution” and the American ideologies of fair play, equality, justice, and meritocratic outcomes.

Significance of the Study

Educational leaders are aware that changes are necessary in schools if the needs of children are going to be met and student achievement improved. Reading is a key

component to school success; creating students who can decode texts fluently and think critically in order to advocate for themselves and others. Countless educational resources exist, all aiming to train teachers to effectively reach students through professional development, curriculum, and instructional strategies; yet many students fail to reach the reading goals measured by state-mandated assessments. Often, these students live in poverty, in large urban districts, and are part of the ethnic minority (NCES, 2016). Black students report reading less than their White counterparts, showing sporadic patterns of growth and decline. Beginning in 1984, 55% reported reading daily or weekly. By 2012, that number had slipped to 47% (National Forum on Education Statistics, United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2017). Scholars have studied the reading habits of Black adolescent males (Deane, 1989; Heath, 1983; Husband, 2012), the race-based achievement gap in reading (Banks, 1984; Nisbett, 2011), and the responsibilities of the publishing industry (Richardson, 1974); yet in a review of the existing scholarship, no recent research has considered the correlation between the decline in time spent reading and the availability of books that represent the ethnic minority.

This study sought to shed light on the access to the early literature available to students and how the representations of Black characters are presented visually and through text. In addition, this research aims to help educators become aware of the institutionalization of race-based advantages and disadvantages students encounter. This awareness will offer opportunities for teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, and university professors to become more mindful of the literature available to the students they teach and to the ways in which the characters in these books are represented.

Setting and Audience

Educational leaders, teacher-leaders, school-based administrators, and university professors have the ability to advocate for change and will benefit from the results of this study by making more thoughtful, well-informed decisions about the literature included in lessons, curriculum, and training. The researcher completed the study by analyzing early literature in the media collections of a large metropolitan library, a rural Title I school's media center, and a variety of retail books stores, both large and small in urban and rural settings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine books available to early readers across three settings (public school libraries, public community libraries, and retail bookstores) to determine the representations of Blacks and to consider the ways in which these representations contribute to the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings. Existing studies deal with early literature quantitatively, reporting the number of books published by Black authors or the number of Black characters in picture books (Horning, 2017; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Larrick, 1965). Other studies examine genre. Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall (1979) found a greater representation of Black biographies, with the majority "being about sports figures and popular entertainers" (p. 531). No known comprehensive study deals with the representation of race in early books.

Weinberg (1977) posited the idea that research studies which examine race narratives should move beyond the conceptual framework associated with an inferiority/self-rejection paradigm. Rather, Weinberg encouraged, narratives must include a pertinent historical and legal background, considerations about the ideology of

racism, a continuing reexamination of prevailing views of the role of race and social class in learning, and the influence of ethnic minority communities in schools. Weinberg's theory served as the foundation of this study of children's literature and the racial representations therein by examining the ways in which race is institutionalized historically, legally, ideologically, and as a social construction.

Conceptual Base

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the theoretical framework for this study. CRT has its origins in the legal field and has expanded to become a cross-disciplinary framework for discourses on diversity that includes the work of anthropologists, ethnographers, historians, linguists, sociologists, and others. CRT

recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and systems of American society.

The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is prevalent in the dominant culture. This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining the dominant culture. (UCLA School of Public Affairs, 2009, para. 2)

Early work focused on race as a social class (Davis, 1962) and the permanence of racism (Bell, 1976, 1980, 1987, 1992, 1996, 2004). Additional scholarship is more interdisciplinary, including feminism (Crenshaw, 1988, 1989), politics and identity (Crenshaw, 1991), law and the judiciary (Guinier, 1991, 1994, 2008, 2013), and education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2005, 2013); yet despite this diversity in scholarship, CRT embodies common themes including an assumption that racism is deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and psychologically. CRT challenges legal neutrality, colorblindness, and the self-interest of the dominant groups. Finally, CRT seeks subjectivity by relying on first-person accounts of racialized experiences.

Initially, CRT “failed to penetrate the salience of racism in schooling . . . and to summon scholars in the politics of education to critical analysis of race as an issue in public schools” (Anderson, 1990, p. 38). As more scholars and educators recognize the correlation between success in schooling and the material resources available to ethnic minority students, CRT has become a part of educational discourse.

While some might argue that poor children, regardless of race, do worse in school and that the high proportion of African-American poor contributes to their dismal school performance, we argue the cause of their poverty in conjunction with the condition of their schools and schooling is institutional racism. (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 55)

This study examined racial representations in early children’s literature to determine how Blacks are represented or if the lack of representation constitutes a continuation of institutionalized racism.

Today many scholars in the field of education consider themselves critical races theorists who use CRT’s ideas to understand issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, affirmative action, high stakes testing, controversies over curriculum and history, bilingual and multicultural education, and alternative and charter schools. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 7)

The depth and breadth of race and racism is complex and often contentious; it is a topic in politics; it is brought into sharp relief in questions of power and privilege; it announces itself in our culture; and it dictates much of the work of educators. Using CRT will allow the researcher to consider questions surrounding the relationships between power, dominance, and social inequality and the resulting consequences on society.

This discussion of race, identity, power structures, and education will attempt to create and promote thought and discussions surrounding the genealogies of racial oppressions. The study is also meant as a challenge to rethink perceptions of race and equality and dignity. As educators charged with balancing the scale of equality and fair practice, there are many questions: Who determines what counts as knowledge? Who represents and who is represented? What stories will be remembered? Whose voices will be heard? Such questions go to the heart of children's literature and how the history of race and equity is interpreted and validated.

Overview of the Methodology

Children's literature has been examined by researchers for many decades. Recent scholarly work focuses on the frequency of representations of ethnic minority groups in children's literature as society has become more aware of racial inequalities in schooling. Many of the older studies relied on quantitative data which produced a limited understanding of the way in which children of color are represented, leaving a gap in the assessment of children's literature. The methodology of this study is a qualitative approach that includes Directed Content Analysis (DCA). DCA is grounded in using an established theory (CRT) to "interpret the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and classifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p. 1278). Textual data can be both visual and verbal (Schwarcz & Schwarcz, 1991). The researcher used this process to complete a step-by-step examination of the content in early children's literature to unearth patterns and thematic content. This study examined early children's books located in a variety of settings. In order to fully represent the sources available to young readers, this study examined books located in large urban areas and small-town settings, in public community libraries, and in school

media centers. Books published between 2015 and 2017 were scanned for representations of race using a coding instrument tested in a pilot study.

Research Questions

Commencing in 1998, a longitudinal study followed roughly 25,000 kindergarten students in the United States. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) tracked these students from the first year of their schooling until eighth grade, assessing their literacy skills each year. Students were assessed on both word reading proficiencies and knowledge-based competencies. Recent data from 2008 indicates literacy competencies in both word knowledge and comprehension have narrowed more slowly in recent years; thus, the gains made in the 1970s and 1980s appear to be slipping away (NCES, 2016; Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2012; USDOE, 2017). This research sought to expose and overturn these realities by questioning the racial themes and patterns in children's early books.

Research Question 1. What themes in early children's literature emerge as relevant in the representations of Black characters?

Research Question 2. What differences in themes are found in early children's literature in books located in a school library, community public library, and retail bookstores?

Research Question 3. What do the emergent themes demonstrate in the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings.

Limitations of the Study

One of the central themes of CRT is the idea that both neutrality and objectivity are impossible. Even if researchers could be completely objective, that objectivity would be a detractor from the experiences of Blacks in this and all studies. White academics

should make no claim to have experienced the effects of racism.

The investigator's knowledge about race and racism is limited to research and should not detract from the experiences of the other. By exposing the ideologies and manifestations of racism, the researcher hopes to bring an awareness of the importance of stories and experiences to the attention of the reader. It is just this sort of questioning that this study examined. Every precaution was taken to ensure that the study was completed in an objective and neutral manner.

Delimitations of the Study

Additionally, it is understood that there are many school media centers and many public libraries located in North Carolina. A delimitation of the study was the ability of the researcher to conveniently reach these venues. In order to achieve diversity in the choice of settings, the research was undertaken in both rural and urban sites, in both high wealth retail areas and rural bookstores.

While other ethnic minority students also struggle with reading, this study focuses on representations of Black characters in picture books. The historical construction of race and the challenges of ongoing racism, both conscious and unconscious, are unique to Black students.

Definition of Key Terms

CRT. An analytical framework that addresses the racial inequalities in society (Delgado, 1995a).

Directed Qualitative Content Analysis. An interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice using an accepted theoretical framework (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Dominant group. Those who hold power and authority in society, who set the parameters within which they and others operate and assign the roles for themselves and others (Crenshaw, 1989).

Historical distancing. Elevating events of the past to a privileged position with respect to existing knowledge and roles without acknowledging counterstories (Banks, 1991).

Prejudice. Preconceived opinions not based on reason; contributing factors include stereotypes, omissions, and distortions (Cox, 1967).

Race. A socially constructed classification of humans into groups based on physical traits, ancestry, genetics, or culture-based assumptions (Eze, 1997).

Racism. Systems of prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person who is classified by race based on the belief that one race is superior (Matsuda, 1987).

Race-based emotions. Used as a way to mediate an experience; make sense of the present, and connect it to the past, both internal and external reactions to systems of oppression.

Race-based exclusion. The act of denying access to a place, group, or privilege based on race.

Race-based omission. The act of leaving someone or something out or the failure to recognize the contributions of the other (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Social group. A collection of two or more people bound together by a common experience, background, or ideology with the ability to influence each other and affirm stereotypes (Fredrickson, 2002).

Subordinate group. Labeled by the dominant group as defective, substandard, or

incapable of performing the roles assigned to the dominant group (Delgado, 1990).

White privilege. Accepted as the natural, inevitable order of the dominant group, benefits result from membership that the other is unable to access.

Note about Term Selection

Racial term selection presents its own set of problems. Many racial terms are inaccurate or insensitive. In order to fully illustrate the historical attitudes toward race, primary source material is quoted exactly as it appears. In addition, many CRT scholars choose to capitalize Black as a descriptor of African-Americans while using the term White in lower case letters. The terms Black and African-American are often used interchangeably yet are distinctive. African-American refers to people whose ancestors are from Africa, while Black includes ancestry from Africa, Caribbean, and South and Latin America. Since this study involves all of these origins, the researcher has chosen to use uppercase letters to equally represent both Black and White Americans.

Organization of the Dissertation

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces current issues surrounding race and racism in the United States. A resurgence in racism is apparent in several ways: increasing instances of racially motivated incidents and the resulting judicial consequences, the continued controversy surrounding Black studies programs and affirmative action, the shift in funding from university grants and scholarship funds to loans, and the misconception that racism is an individual choice rather than a group dynamic.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature supporting this research. With contributions from historians, philanthropic foundations, governmental agencies, and Critical Race theorists, the intersectionality of these disciplines facilitates a dialogue centered on access and

equity. These connections move the issue from academe into the public sphere by bringing the problems of bias front and center.

No study of modern race and racism would be complete without an historical understanding of the development of racial ideologies. This section, *History: A Genealogy of Racial Thinking: History, Ideas and Narratives*, is a timeline of the development of modern ideas about race and racism. Discourses focusing on power, relationships, language, and practices surrounding race bring to light a complete historical taxonomy, taking into account the implications of geography, social structure, institutions, and mentalities. With an understanding of the past, the study turns to the present.

The face of America is changing. According to United States Census Bureau (2000) projections, the majority of children in the U.S. will be of color by 2018. This also means that when these children are ready to enter the workforce, a similar demographic is plausible. *Race in the Age of Accountability* uses data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Kaiser Foundation to offer snapshots into current trends in poverty and education.

Crime, Punishment, and the Law takes on the cumulative effects of racism by discussing the modern penal system and the educational background of prisoners. Race-based bias can be found at the institutional level, and this section offers a prerequisite aimed at raising awareness of individual and group stereotypes, sometimes conscious and sometimes unconscious.

Counterstorytelling offers an alternative or opposing narrative. *Chronicles in Pop Culture* challenges perceptions about Blacks in sports, music, and parenting: three areas that are often at the center of race-based narratives. In this section, counterstories are

used to challenge the normalized stories of existing race-based ideologies.

Politics and the Judiciary offers examples of tests to race-neutral laws and policies and frames a discussion around the interest convergence theory, that is the idea that laws and regulations that benefit Blacks are only sustainable if they also serve the interests of the White elite. The intersectionality of liberalism into the other four dimensions offers an opportunity to transform the way educators think about the negativity in which those with power consciously and unconsciously exclude those who are marginalized or different. Challenges to multicultural education illustrate how through interest convergence, teaching diversity is the domain of White curriculum writers, editors, and teachers. In the final segment of the chapter, *Whiteness as Property and Blackness as Status in the Age of Multicultural Education*, the study moves toward addressing the question, “how much notice do those in power give to race in children’s literature?”

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology of the study. Using an established analytical strategy, the accessibility, frequency, and nature of racial depiction in children’s picture books are examined. Qualitative Content Analysis, like CRT, emerged in the 1960s. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of language, it soon came to encompass semiotics, narratives, and philosophy. Twenty years later, scholars incorporated the ethnography of communication, classroom interactions, and education to deconstruct the root causes of social inequalities that are normalized through institutions including schools. The interdisciplinary nature of the work challenged the status quo perceptions of literacy; that is to say that literacy, defined as a mental state with mental processes, was in fact something much more. Literacy is more than a cognitive exercise; it is a direct result of social and cultural achievements. Chapter 4 offers the data in table

form and is accompanied by a series of thematic analyses. Chapter 5 brings these ideas together in a discussion of the implications of the study for professors, teachers, and their students.

Conclusion

This discussion of race, identity, power structures, and education attempts to create and promote thought and facilitate discussions surrounding the genealogies of racial oppressions.

An analysis of current children's picture books was used to gauge the racial representations of Black children. Racial attitudes are formed early in life, and characters in books help young readers to formulate and adhere to race-based social codes (Blee, 2002; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Quillian, 2008). By thinking about these codes, educators and academics can come to understand and incorporate change through research and writing and in practice. These transformative applications can help raise consciousness and reconsider the ways in which teachers advocate for students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Contributions from historians, philanthropic foundations, governmental agencies and Critical Race theorists frame the intersectionality of their respective disciplines to facilitate this study on access and equity in children's literature. First, ideas about racial perceptions are described through an historical lens, culminating with a discussion of the school desegregation struggles that followed Reconstruction. Bridging the gap into modernity, current demographic data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation illustrate the changing racial demographic of children in the U.S. and the challenges of accountability facing educators competing for funding with charter schools and vouchers. Citing both long- and short-term studies in the reading habits of students sheds light on the successes and failures of these programs.

CRT places race at the center of the discussion that follows by explaining microaggressions, macroaggressions, and individual and institutional forms of racism. This is followed by case studies which use a tenet of CRT to offer proof that race-based inequalities continue in modern U.S. society. The cumulative effects of racism are discussed in crime, punishment, and the law including trends in the modern penal system and the race and educational background of prisoners. Counterstorytelling contributes to the intersectional and multidimensional experiences of Blacks, the "two-ness" described by DuBois (1953). These counterstories, some oppressive and some oppositional, are examined by means of pop culture. Critical Race Theorists posit that interest convergence informs our judicial system, serving the interests of the dominant group. Research on Supreme Court cases indicates that race-based gerrymandering and school-based, race-neutral policies are frequently challenged as legislators attempt to control

voting precincts and school district borders. Finally, multicultural education and the perceptions of Whiteness as property and Blackness as status is examined. The final section of the CRT discussion brings front and center the research questions of this study focusing on access, availability, and thematic content of early books for children. Concluding the section is a description of case study research of culturally relevant literature and the impact on student reading skills. The purpose of this study was to examine books available to early readers, to determine the representations of Black characters, and to consider the ways in which these representations contribute to the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings.

A Genealogy of Racial Thinking: Histories, Ideologies, and Narratives

In the context of historical analysis, Foucauldian discourses focusing on power relationships, language, and practices surrounding race bring to light a complete historical taxonomy, taking into account the implications of geography, social structure, institutions, and mentalities. The purpose of this section is to frame an historical understanding of the development of racial ideologies.

From the late Republic to late antiquity, slavery is well documented by both ancient and modern historians. As the builders of the world's first civilizations including Sumer, Ancient Egypt, Assyria, the Akkadian Empire, Ancient Greece, and Rome understood, the capitalistic/imperialistic nature of nation building required an organized labor force. Early slavery bears little resemblance to the American slave trade during the 18th century when more than six million people were deported from Africa's Gold Coast into the Caribbean and both Americas (Beckert, 2015). In these early societies, enslaved people were prisoners of debt-slavery, punishment, or war. Children were enslaved as a result of abandonment or by birthright.

Unlike the back-breaking labor borne by their descendants, ancient slaves held a variety of positions: “estate managers, field hands, shepherds, hunters, domestic servants, craftsmen, construction workers, retailers, miners, clerks, teachers, doctors, midwives, wet-nurses, textile workers, potters, and entertainers” (Schidel, 2010, p. 4). In addition to private sector employment, slaves worked in public administration and served in military support functions. Slaves were owned by private individuals as well as the state, communities, temples, and partnerships, thus, unlike antebellum slavery which wholly depended on slave labor, ancient slave societies were a cog in the capitalistic wheel of budding civilizations, “never dominating market production in quantitative terms but creating vital pockets of development” (Schidel, 2010, p. 17).

The opening of early trade routes exposed travelers to people very different than their neighbors. The discoveries of unknown continents and populations opened a floodgate of social and intellectual questions that created, defined, and solidified differences between people. Christians, Muslims, and Jews on the Iberian Peninsula coexisted during the 12th and 13th centuries practicing their own respective faiths. Al Andalus was a progressive society in which Muslim authorities recognized both Jews and Christians with limited legal autonomy, yet “the idea of tolerance in medieval Spain was a de facto tolerance, suffered rather than desired” (Perez, 2005, p. 13). Several events comingled during medieval Spain to create the first “unconscious stirring of the concept of race” (Perez, 2005, p. 13). From these religious distinctions, medieval Spain is credited with the development of “blood purity,” the initial marker between races.

Despite this uneasy alliance, an ethnic minority of Jews used their expertise in trade and money lending as well as their knowledge of Arabic to integrate themselves into Muslim society. Medieval decrees directed that interest could not be charged on

loans made to fellow believers; however, Perez (2005) indicated that loans with interest rates up to 33% could be charged in transactions involving Christians to Jews and vice versa (p. 14). When disputes arose, the King was called on to arbitrate; and since the king also depended on loans, his position was often dictated by the fiscal needs of the court. In addition, Arabic authorities assigned Jews the unpopular tasks of tax collection. Taxes were necessary to arm the military and maintain the bureaucracy. As a result, the ethnic minority of Jews who became wealthy tax collectors were representative of the Jewish population, and a simmering anti-Semitism “became a propaganda weapon for the nobles of Castile” (Perez, 2005, p. 7). This anti-Semitism was closely tied to the state tax system, thus institutionalizing the first race-based labels.

With the second wave of Muslim immigration in the 12th century, many Jews migrated north in order to escape the growing anti-Semitism. During this period, the Catholic church convened the fourth Council of Lateran (1215) creating new regulations that sought to limit contacts between Jews and Christians. Mixed marriages were banned, Jews were forbidden to employ Christians, Christians and Jews could not share meals, and Christians mothers could not employ Jewish wet nurses. The Council also proposed that Jews wear an identifying sign. A series of political and natural disasters in the early 14th century further eroded the relationships between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Territorial wars, rapid economic expansion, and the Black Death ushered in a phase of recession, hardship, and tensions. Following this, the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella sought to establish a uniformly Christian state by expelling both Jews and Muslims. Large groups of Jews and Muslims converted to Christianity to avoid expulsion, but the monarchy mistrusted the *conversos*. To address this, the monarchs appointed the first Holy Inquisitors led by Tomas de Torquemada in 1483. As a result,

medieval Spain and the Catholic church heavily influenced the burgeoning relationship between race and religious identities.

Numbers are vague; but in the course of the 15th century, as “many as one-third to one-half of the kingdom’s former Jewish population had been baptized” (Kagan & Dyer, 2013, p. 13). These *christen nuevos*, or New Christians, were different from the *cristian viejos*, or Old Christians. The important distinction here was the *conversos* were thought to have blood that may have been mixed with Arabs or Jews, and this very characteristic made them suspect. While it is likely that these new converts practiced their religion in a variety of ways, the “central idea to inquisitorial understanding of this religious group were issues of inheritance and blood (Kagan & Dyer, 2013, p. 15). This “blood purity” would become a central component in the rise of African slavery following the conclusion of the Inquisition. These “blood libels” were based on a belief that blood could convey supernatural or sacred properties. This notion, explicit in accusations of witchcraft and sorcery, was central in establishing that Christian blood differed from Jewish blood. By the 13th and 14th century, Spain had created a folk mythology surrounding the purity of Christian blood and demonizing Jewish blood based on the supposition that Jews denied the divinity of Christ. During the Inquisition, Jews were accused and burned at the stake for heresies including stealing the consecrated host from churches, thus symbolically torturing and killing Christ. This myth communicated the belief that Jews were evil, possessed by Satan, and intent on destroying Christians. These notions of magic and beguiling evil spirits continued to inform the language of racism into modernity.

Other historians attribute the rise of modern racism to Arab and European slave merchants:

The fact that Europeans were ceasing to enslave other Europeans at the time when African slaves became suddenly and readily available was at the root of White supremacist attitudes and policies; although for reasons that remain to be explored, it took a considerable time for anti-Black racism to crystallize into a fully elaborated ideology. (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 30)

Still others suggest that racism was a result of a conglomeration of labels attributed to assign dark skinned slaves to menial labor. “Slavery had always been more than an economic institution; in Western culture it had long represented the ultimate limit of dehumanization, of treating and regarding man as a thing” (Davis, 1968, p. 10). Arabs, seeking to spread Islam, became pioneers in establishing caravan routes from the northern tip of Africa westward to Nigeria and later through the coastal areas in West Africa. These paths, the Trans-Saharan slave routes, were instrumental in establishing the Trans-Atlantic routes. In addition, European slave traders established the first “Code Noir” in 1685. These rules governed everything from brandy consumption and firearms to conversion to Catholicism and were enforced by both the authorities and the owners. By 1724, these policies were modified and regulated the slave trade across the Atlantic. “In March 1724, a new “Code Noir” was issued for the province and colony of Louisiana. All slaves were to be baptized and educated in the Roman Catholic faith. They were to observe Sundays and Fete-days” (Riddell, 1925, p. 327).

The Trans-Saharan routes were established internally to transport gold, salt, and slaves within the continent of Africa. Slaves were often captured and used as booty from war, while others were sold by their village chiefs in order to raise capital. Various accounts of non-African merchants exist, but the bulk of the trade was a result of trade routes near the empires of Mali, Songhai, Ghana, Timbuktu, and Djenné and the Berbers,

and later westward toward Nigeria. The routes continued to expand as Arab and Asian traders demanded more labor for their own emerging markets: “Thereafter the routes continue into coastal regions. Reaching capes in west Africa such as Santiago, Cape Verde, and those of the Senegambia, granting future explorers a coastal gateway to begin the Trans-Atlantic slave trade” (Beckert, 2015, p. 19). European slave traders built fortified trading stations along the western coast of Goree, present day Senegal, Elmina, present day Ghana, and Ouidah, present day Benin. Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, and Dutch traders “paid African rulers to go on a hunt for labor, exchanging captives for the products of Indian weavers” (Beckert, 2015, p. 35). From the gold coast of Africa, more than eight million slaves were transported to the Americas in the three centuries after 1500. Beckert’s (2015) recent scholarship on the global cotton trade illustrates the expropriation of labor to build the European institutions and state, leading to extraordinary economic development. The dependence of capitalists on labor and land proved to be an early manifestation of the rise of disenfranchising people for monetary gain. Without the geographic features of Africa including miles of coastline and navigable ports and the isolated nature of tribal culture, these highly aggressive tactics would have been much more difficult to accomplish.

Philosophical and Scientific Racism

By the dawn of the European Enlightenment in the late 17th century, respected philosophers believed that humanity was divided into four distinct races: “White or Caucasian, Black or African, Yellow or Asian, and Red, or Native American” (Eze, 1997, p. 41). Much of the emerging philosophical and scientific racism was leveled directly at the Black race. A number of prominent philosophers put forth the notion that Blacks were inferior to Whites. Scottish philosopher Hume (1744) penned this observation: “I

am apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation” (Selby-Bigge & Nidditch, 1978, p.298). Voltaire (1769, as cited in Cohen, 1980) went further, describing Blacks as displaying phenotypical characteristics that cast them as beasts:

It is a serious question among them whether the Africans are descended from monkeys or whether the monkeys come from them. Our wise men have said that man was created in the image of God. Now here is a lovely image of the Devine Maker: a flat and black nose with little or hardly any intelligence. A time will doubtless come when these animals will know how to cultivate the land well, beautify their houses and gardens, and know the paths of the stars: one needs time for everything. (p. 88)

Immanuel Kant was the first to suggest a taxonomy of race, writing in 1775, “there is an essential and natural ‘gift’ that those who are ‘white’ inherently have and those who are ‘black’ inherently lack - and the evidence for this ‘natural endowment’ or the lack thereof is the skin color, ‘white’ or ‘black.’” (Kant, in Eze, 1997, p. 16). Kant was among the first philosophers to move beyond the religiosity of past generations toward a more unified version of science and religion, suggesting that a systematic treatise,

compromising our knowledge of human beings (anthropology) can adopt either a physiological or a pragmatic perspective. Physiological knowledge of the human being investigates what nature makes of him; pragmatic, what the human being as a free agent makes, or can and should make of himself. (Kant, in Eze, 1997, p. 39)

This quote originates from a textbook Kant wrote and used at the University of Konigsberg to teach for 23 years. French aristocrat de Gobineau (1848) helped to further legitimize racism:

The American savages, like the Hindus, are certainly our inferiors in this respect as are also the Australians. The Negroes too have less muscle power: and all these people are infinitely less able to bear fatigue. We must distinguish however, between purely muscular strength, which needs to spend itself for a single instant victory, and the power of keeping up a prolonged resistance. The latter is far more typical than the former, of which we may find examples even in notoriously feeble races. If we take the blow of the fist as the sole criterion of strength, we shall find, among very backward Negro races, among New Zealanders, among Lascars and Malays, certain individuals who can deliver such a blow as any Englishman. But if we take the people as a whole, and judge them by the amount of labor that they can go through without flinching, we shall give the palm to those belonging to the white race. (para. 1)

These are examples of early racial classifications based on both physical and intellectual differences with European intellect and prowess defining the apex of the scale. Still other thinkers refined these racial classifications, narrowing indigenous Europeans into categories including Nordic or Mediterranean. This taxonomy was adopted by wealthy planters seeking to justify forced labor on Virginia and Georgia plantations. Writing in *The Federalist Papers* in 1788, Jefferson mirrored the opinion of the philosophers in his description of Blacks:

Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They

secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour. This greater degree of transpiration, renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold than the whites. Perhaps too a difference of structure in the pulmonary apparatus, which a late ingenious experimentalist has discovered to be the principal regulator of animal heat, may have disabled them from extricating, in the act of inspiration, so much of that fluid from the outer air, or obliged them in expiration, to part with more of it. They seem to require less sleep. A black after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female; but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations

of Euclid: and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous. It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation. We will consider them here, on the same stage with the whites, and where the facts are not apochryphal on which a judgment is to be formed. (pp. 65-66)

There is no room for status between freedom and enslavement. The ideologies of Hume, Kant, Voltaire, and de Gobineau as well as other philosophers served as justification for the latter. For White supremacists such as Jefferson, science put forth a rational explanation for enslavement. Grounded in science, biblical scholars joined in to construct a culture of racism in the United States and an acceptance of the inevitability of a racial caste system in Europe. Transforming the religious ideology of blood purity from Al Andalus, polygenesis and monogenesis completed the path to full-blown racism in the United States and offered biblical proof of the difference between races.

Up until this time, evangelicals put forth the idea that mankind emerged from the biblical story of Adam and Eve. Using the Bible as a framework, Monogenists relied on the text to support the theory that internal biological forces and factors related to location combined to explain differences in phenotypes. Monogenists argued that all of humanity had devolved since the creation and that despite racial disparities, all humans belong to a common species. The central scripture of the movement is illustrated in the New Testament teachings of the Apostle Paul, “And [God] hath made of all nations of men” Acts 17:26 (KJV). Discrepancies between races were a result of intermarriages or environmental factors; that is that different body types are a result of climate, locale, and other physical effects. These early stirrings of abolitionist, though, were in direct opposition to modernists who supported polygenesis, the theory of multiple, separate creations for each race as a distinct species.

One widely known theorist of the era is Charles Darwin. While acknowledging that humans are of one species, Darwin and his contemporaries fully supported the idea of racial classification:

But the weightiest of all the arguments against treating the races as a distinct species, is that they graduate into each other, independently in many cases, as far as we can judge, of their having intercrossed. Man has been studied more carefully than any other animal and yet there is the greatest possible diversity amongst capable judges whether he should be classed as a single species or race, or as two (Vivry), as three (Jacquinot), as four (Kant), as five, (Blumenbach), as six (Buffon), seven (Hunter), eight (Agassiz), eleven (Pickering) fifteen (Bory de St-Vincent), sixteen (Desmoulins), twenty-two (Morton), or sixty-three according to Burke. This diversity of judgment does not prove that the races ought not to be ranked as species, but it shewes that they graduate into each other, and that it is hardly possible to discover clear distinctive characters between them. (Darwin, 1871, pp. 232-233)

Inspired by the philosophical work of Hume, Kant, Voltaire, and de Gobineau, emerging scientific thought wrestled with the nuances of race and environmental factors. One of the first physicians and naturalists who associated anthropology with race was Johann Frederich Blumenbach. Written in 1776, Blumenbach posited that humanity was a product of polygenesis, although his work on measuring skulls noted variations that decidedly recognized the superiority of the European race:

Blumenbach's writing retained a scientific stance, but he exposed his bias on beauty when he wrote that the Caucasian skull of a Georgian female was the "most handsome and becoming . . . the most beautiful people live in the Southern

slope of Mount Caucasus’—that is, the Georgian people. (Blumenbach in Bhopal, 2007, p. 335)

Blumenbach’s work is supported by the following generation of scientists continuing the work of racial classification. Blumenbach had widespread support for his ideas. Publishing two compendia of his work, Samuel Morton became a central figure of the movement toward a theory of polygenesis. *Cranis Americana* (Morton, 1839) and *Crania Aegyptiaca* (Morton, 1844) became influential texts in the development of the philosophy of polygenesis. In particular, the latter text asserted that the ruling elite of ancient Egypt had been “Caucasian,” while the slave class had been “Negroid.” This observation from a well-respected physician resonated with Morton’s contemporaries who supported slavery and the argument that there existed a natural caste system based on race. Morton’s work also offered the first published drawings of skulls collected from around the world.

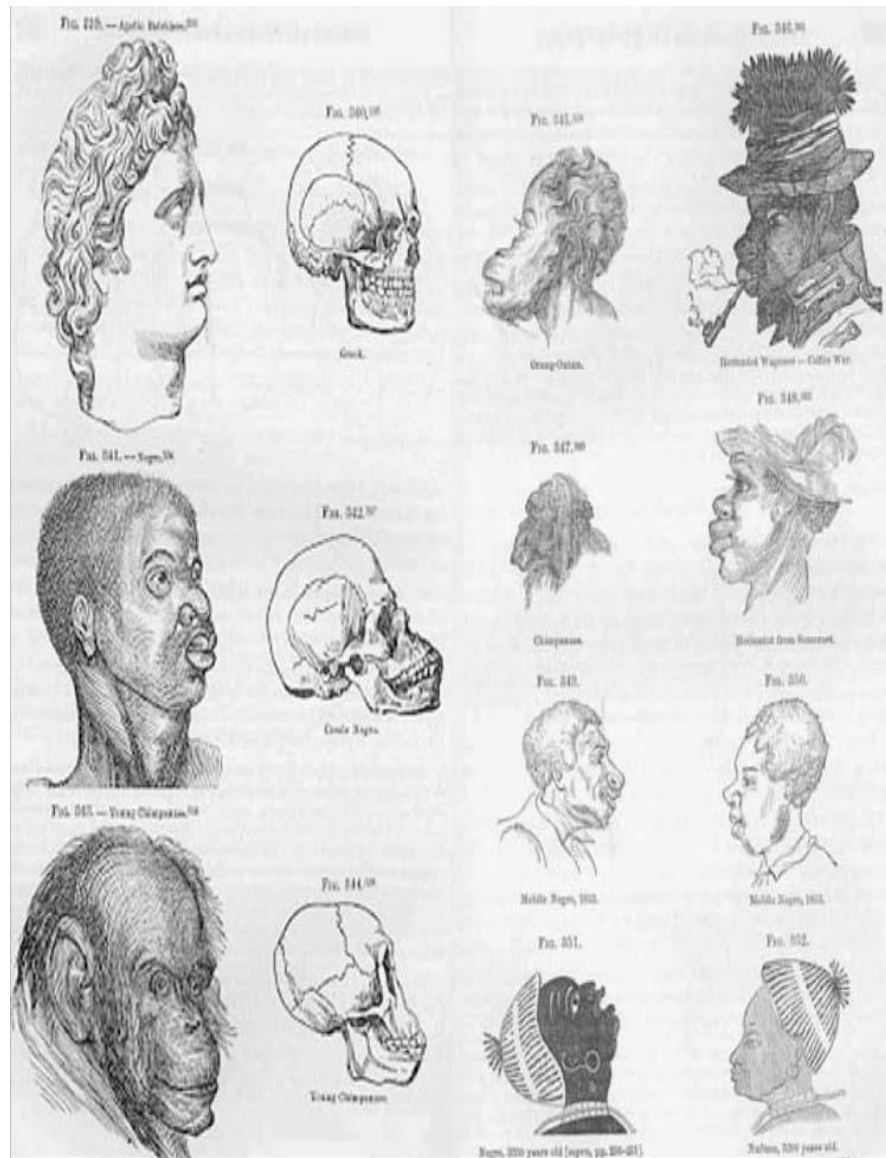


Figure 1. Samuel Morton's Skull Taxonomy. Reprinted from Samuel George Morton *Crania Americana* thedebrateoverslaver.files.wordpress.com

Meeting Morton in 1846, biologist and geologist Louis Agassiz found Morton's collection of skulls impressive. Writing to his mother, Agassiz commented on the collection of 600 crania as well as his first impression of Blacks:

I can scarcely express to you the painful impressions that I received, especially since the feeling they inspired in me is contrary to all the confraternity of the

human type and the unique origin of our species. . . . Nonetheless it is impossible for me to repress the feeling that they are not of the same blood as us. In seeing their black faces with their thick lips and grimacing teeth, the wool on their head their bent knees, their elongated hands and large curved nails, and especially the livid color of their palms, I could not take my eyes off their face in order to tell them to stay far away (in Wallis, 1996, p. 106)

Impressed by Morton and validated by this first encounter, Agassiz traveled to Charleston, South Carolina in 1850 to deliver the keynote address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. His support of polytheism drew the ire of attendees from Massachusetts; so in order to justify the theory, he sought out firsthand evidence. Touring the lowland plantations, he met owners who described living in fear of their slaves. In areas where the Black population outnumbered the White population, slave owners believed that “discipline was deemed necessary, and the need for discipline seemed to encourage an attitude of contempt toward the slaves” (Wallis, 1996, p. 104). Agassiz suggested that using a camera to create a collection of daguerreotypes as archival reference material might prove to be a useful tool for classifying the variances in African slaves. Soliciting the help of Robert Gibbes, a prominent collector of scientific specimens, Agassiz selected slaves from plantations near Columbia, South Carolina and had them photographed. The images, known as the *Zealy Daguerreotypes*, are among the first images of slaves. From an anthropological standpoint, Blacks were situated between White Europeans and monkeys. Using this pseudo-science, phrenologists and taxonomists measured and wrote about the images to develop what are now familiar stereotypes: “the popular images built on the scientific ones and enhanced or exaggerated distortions of the black body” (Wallis, 1996, p. 105). These images also are remarkable

in another way: The subjects are shown nude or partially nude, often in ripped, dirty clothing:

While there is no absolute connection between the photographs of the nude body and pornography, the vaguely eroticized nature of the slave daguerreotypes derives from the unwavering voyeuristic, manner with which they check indiscriminately survey the bodies of the Africans, irrespective of the subjects' lives. (Wallis, 1996, p. 106)



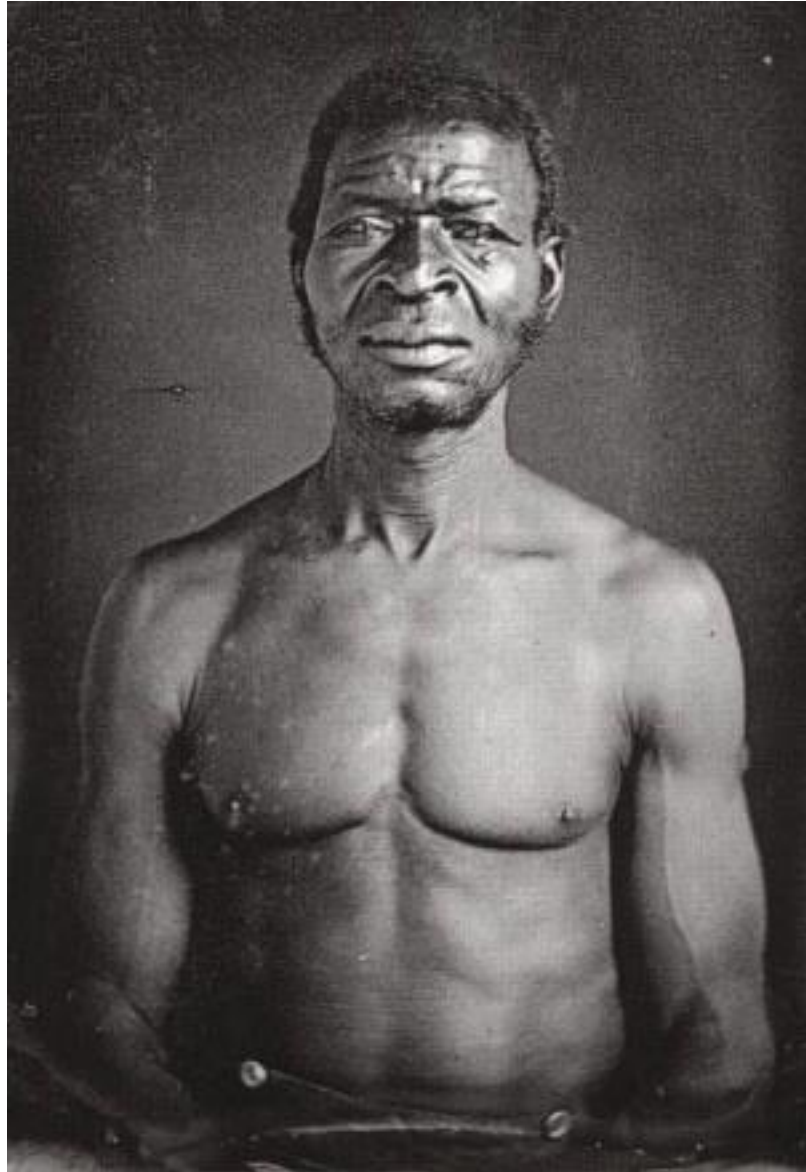


Figure 2. Zealy (1850) Daguerreotypes (reprinted from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ADelia1850FrontPortrait.jpg>).

Nonetheless, most historians and anthropologists agree that the effort to build a taxonomy of race coincides with the birth of the modern era: a period of scientific inquiry, expanding global trade routes, secular ideas, and humanism. In addition, this new taxonomy helped define the reconfiguration of the nature of forced labor.

Slavery in the American South

Slavery is a virtually universal feature in human history, and one of its universal characteristics is the systematic degradation of the enslaved. Though the particulars differ, slaves have generally been stigmatized as inferior, uncivilized, and bestial; yet in few societies was this logic carried further than in the United States, where people of African descent came to be regarded as a distinct race of persons, fashioned by nature for a servile role. An early anti-slavery treatise, published in the *Providence Gazette* in 1773, explained the process succinctly:

Slave keeping is a custom that casts the most indelible odium on a whole people, causing some to infer that they are a different race formed by the Creator for brutal service, to drudge for us with their brethren of the stalls. (Campbell, 2007, para. 6.)

In the decades that followed, this inference would acquire new veneers of “scientific” authority, all to demonstrate the innate, ineradicable inferiority of Black people.

During the Revolutionary Era in the United States, wealthy planters began to recognize the need to differentiate between Black and White races. For economic purposes, pro-slavery proponents developed an ideology about Blacks that reduced the group to a status more animal than human. Thomas Jefferson (1788), writing in his only published book, posited that

the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the Whites in the endowments both of body and mind. It is not against experience to suppose, that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications. (p. 17)

Jamestown colonists planned to conquer Virginia by force, determined to emulate the Spanish, to obtain wealth by conquering and enslaving the native peoples and forcing them to produce gold and silver. However, the natives proved to be difficult to manage, often escaping or dying of diseases imported by their European captors.

With the expanding global market for tobacco and cotton, these fledgling farmers needed a constant supply of manpower. Enticed by prospects of a better life, indentured servants from Europe began to sail across the Atlantic. These servants were often the poorest of the poor, hoping to escape the desperate poverty of England and the British Isles. Historian Abbott Smith (1947) estimated “that between one-half and two-thirds of all White immigrants to the British colonies between the Puritan migration of the 1630s and the Revolution came under indenture” (p. 16). This model of servitude proved ruthless. Many young workers were poorly fed and clothed and suffered regular beatings, thus the labor issue continued to prove problematic for the emerging planter class. By 1619, the first slaves arrived at the ports of Virginia and provided a much-needed economic boost to plantation owners. By the time *The Federalist Papers* were published in 1788, the slave economy had become a part of the American planter and merchant landscape. Jefferson (1788) posited, “In Europe the object is to make the most of their land, labor being abundant; here it is to make the most of our labor, land being abundant” (p. 84).

In late August 1619, a stolen English warship arrived in the port of Point-Comfort, Virginia carrying “20 and odd Negroes, which the Governor and Cape Merchant bought for victuals” (U.S. Park Service, 2015, para. 2). The original English settlers, unlike their European counterparts had neither slavery laws nor a tradition of slavery; thus, between the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 and the arrival of the stolen

warship *The White Lion*, Black Americans were either free or arrived as indentured servants. Dark-skinned Antonio came to Virginia in 1621 and was listed as a servant. He later became free, changed his name to Anthony Johnson, and ultimately accumulated land, held Whites as indentured servants, and would later own a Black slave. By 1640, Virginia, the first and largest mainland colony, began to codify laws for enslaving Black Americans. Over the next 30 years, the legislatures in Virginia and surrounding coastal states began to enact laws giving masters security over ownership of their slaves. While indentured servants were protected by laws fixing the length of their service, slaves had no such protections. By 1663, both Maryland and Virginia enacted laws covering “all negroes or other slaves to be hereinafter imported into the province shall serve *duarante vita*; and all children of any negroe or other slave, shall be slaves as their fathers were for the term of their lives” (Elkins, 1959, p. 41). In addition, *partus sequitur* situated the legal status of children born to slaves with the mother, changing 500 years of English common law. In this way, Black women could not claim their children were fathered by a White man in order to gain their freedom. Having defined the overreaching ideology of slavery by codifying the lifetime service classification, the courts began to refine legal categories pertaining to slavery including “marriage and the family, police and disciplinary powers over the slave, and property and other civil rights” (Elkins, 1959, p. 52).

It was during this time that Blacks, free and enslaved, began to experience the first smatterings of institutionalized racism within a nationalized power. The basis of political power is well guarded by the three-fifth clause of the Constitution, a document created and supported by “a whole series of slaveholding presidents, Supreme Court justices, and strong representation in both houses of Congress” (Beckert, 2015, p. 111).

The Naturalization Act of 1790 established the first legal definition of American nationality. With no debate, Congress restricted the process of becoming a citizen to “free white persons” (Foner, 1998, p. 39). The Westward expansion provided no legal relief and states were generally free to impose sanctions against slaves who came to be seen by the courts as property. The U.S. had a unique opportunity to expand slavery since settlers continued to push west and south. The pilgrims overcame the native inhabitants who were ill-equipped to fight off the encroachment of steel and disease, “turning the land of Native Americans into land that was legally empty. This was a land where social structures had been catastrophically weakened or eliminated, a land without most of its people and thus without the entanglements of history” (Beckert, 2015, p. 103).

Beginning with the Missouri Compromise in 1819, the Dred Scott decision in 1857, a variety of fugitive slave laws enacted between 1793 and 1850 and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment in 1867 and 1870 respectively,

the revolution widened the divide between free Americans and those who remained in slavery. Race, which had long constituted one of many kinds of legal and social inequality among colonial Americans, now emerged as a convenient justification for the existence of slavery in a land ideologically committed to freedom as a natural right. (Foner, 1998, p. 40)

The global markets created and sustained by cotton production and free labor underwent a profound change on April 12, 1860. As confederate troops fired on the federal garrison at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, the carefully constructed underpinnings of cotton and tobacco production became a desperate scramble for the dwindling supplies of these commodities. As tensions grew between slaves, their abolitionist supporters, and plantation owners, reports of violence spread throughout the southern states. In Texas, on

August 11, 1860, the *Rusk Enquirer* “reported a planned revolt on the Timmons plantation. The slaves were to arm themselves, fire the buildings, poison the wells, and kill the masters as they returned from the elections” (Maratoga Gazette, August 29, 1860, p. 1). History offers many stories of slave revolts and insurrections as well as slaves who sought escape to the north. Fear posed a moral problem that reflected deep tensions between Black and White Americans.

While historians acknowledge that the Civil War was about freedom and the preservation of the Union, for southerners it was also a “definition of freedom that centered on local self-government, opportunities for economic self-sufficiency security of property, –including property in slaves–and resistance to northern efforts to ‘enslave’ their region” (Foner, 1998, p. 95). Northern ideas about freedom were framed differently: “Millions of northerners who had not been abolitionists before the war became convinced that securing the Union as an embodiment of liberty required the destruction of slavery” (Foner, 1998, p. 10). Black soldiers set a precedent for those who followed by volunteering for military service and often taking on dangerous and difficult assignments. In the latter half of the war, over 200,000 Black volunteers were actively serving in the Union army. While racism certainly still existed, the service of these soldiers sent a clear signal that citizenship was their right.

Just as Harriet Tubman was named “Moses” by those who knew of her work on the Underground Railroad, Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 signaled an event known as the *Jubilee* for freed slaves. Like the biblical Moses, newly free slaves left the south in large numbers, seeking opportunities, including the vote. Speaking in 1865, Douglass posited that “slavery is not abolished until the black man has the ballot” (para. 4). Despite his rhetoric, not much thought was given to expanding the voting base

in the newly emancipated border states by giving Blacks the right to vote. Still, the groundwork was laid for future state-centered causes. In Maryland, a state divided internally over the question of slavery; about 87,000 people worked on plantations controlled by “an archaic system of legislative appointment that reduced the influence of Baltimore and the rapidly growing White farming counties to the north and west” (Foner, 1990, p. 18). While Maryland residents were not prepared to declare equality in state-supported systems, the creation and affirmation of these systems laid the groundwork for the legislation that would follow. The elections of 1863 committed the state to complete emancipation; established a free, tax supported school system; exempted property valued at under \$500.00 from seizure for debt; and by basing legislative representation of the White male population, reduced the power of the plantation owners.

Other Black voices of dissent were common. In the deep south, Lincoln used the Emancipation Proclamation to test the principles of freedom in the South’s largest city, New Orleans. With the largest free Black community in the deep south, many residents were descendants of French settlers or wealthy Haitian immigrants. While denied suffrage, free Blacks could travel at will and testify in court against Whites. Collectively, Black residents owned about \$2 million in assets. Many were craftsman including brick makers, metal workers, and merchants. There was a system of privately supported schools, orphanages, and benevolent societies. “By January 1864 Lincoln appears to have privately endorsed the enrollment of freeborn blacks as voters in Louisiana” (Foner, 1990, p. 22). The delegates at the March constitutional convention ratified the “urban orientation of the Unionist coalition . . . made New Orleans the state capital and sharply increased the city’s power in the legislature by basing representation upon voting population rather than total number of inhabitants” (Foner, 1990, p. 23). These stories

are representations of similar undertakings throughout the south during the war years and immediately following. The legal and political precedents set by centering state control would prove to be the vehicle for social change.

Reconstruction

These changes were propelled by valued Black institutions established during antebellum slavery including strong family ties and faith-based communities. As in New Orleans, free Blacks had used their wealth and influence to create and sustain schools and benevolent societies. Slaves, living under the threat of separation, came to value and protect family members.

With freedom, these institutions were consolidated, expanded, and liberated from white supervision, and new ones, particularly political organizations joined them as focal points of black life. In stabilizing their families, seizing control of their churches, greatly expanding their schools and benevolent societies, staking a claim to economic independence, and forging a political culture, blacks during Reconstruction laid the foundation for the modern black community, whose roots lay deep in slavery but whose structure and values reflected the consequences of emancipations. (Foner, 1990, p. 36)

Anxious to leave the trappings of life on a plantation, many freed slaves migrated to cities. Under the protection of the Freedman's Bureau, Blacks flocked to cities with established churches and schools. In the 5 years following the war, the population of the South's 10 largest cities doubled, yet the swelling numbers could not keep pace with either the demand for jobs or the infrastructure to support the new arrivals. As a result, Blacks were often forced to live in shantytowns. "Reconstruction witnessed the rise of a new, segregated urban geography" (Foner, 1990, p. 37).

Other freedmen chose to remain near their former masters. Long denied the opportunity to own land, these people associated autonomy with the ability to be independent of their former owners and to work as wage or tenant laborers. Unable to obtain credit for purchases, many families encountered new difficulties. “For it required them to adapt to the logic of the economic market, where the impersonal laws of supply and demand and the balance of power between an employer and an employee determine a laborer’s material circumstances” (Foner, 1990, p. 47).

While there are enduring legacies—legal protections, educational framework, reuniting of families, and consolidation of churches and benevolent societies—historians agree that Reconstruction was a failure. President Rutherford Hayes dismantled much of the existing checks and balances by removing federal troops from the south in 1878. This, according to Foner (1990) deeply affected the course of the nation’s development: “If racism contributed to the undoing of Reconstruction, so also Reconstruction’s demise and the emergence of blacks as disenfranchised dependent laborers accelerated racism’s spread, until by the early twentieth century it pervaded the nations culture and politics” (p. 256). Perhaps the greatest irony of the era came in May 1896 when the United States Supreme Court, with one dissenting vote, gave a green light to racism in public spaces: “Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts or to abolish racial distinctions in public places” (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896).

Jim Crow

The United States entered the 20th century as a global power, producing more coal and steel than any other country. International trade was second only to Britain, and the population of the United States doubled in the decades following the war. During this period, what began as a social movement grew into a political movement. Progressives

refined their interpretation of Social Darwinism to include “ideal family planning” with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. The American Hygienic Movement sought remedies for the economic and social problems brought on by rapid industrialization through an ideology of selective population control. Greed, poverty, violence, racism, and class warfare could be effectively addressed through quality education, sanitary living conditions and safe workplaces, and selective reproductive practices.

Despite the work of social reformers including Jane Addams and Jacob Riis and the rise of a Black middle-class in urban areas, racial segregation remained the focus of several important Supreme Court cases filed in the wake of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In *Berea College v. Kentucky* (1908), the court upheld the state’s right to segregate a college operated under a state charter. *Bailey v. Alabama* (1911) challenged the state law that supported peonage by treating breach of labor contracts as criminal fraud. In 1914, the Court struck down the practice of employers paying fines for Blacks to avoid the chain gang in return for voluntary servitude (*United States v. Reynolds*, 1879). In that same year, the court questioned The Grandfather Clause cases applied to the Fifteenth Amendment by striking down what was left of state attempts to deny the vote to Blacks. Finally, in 1917, the Court showed deference to state action regarding property law (*Buchanan v. Wharley*, 1917). These challenges to Jim Crow laws which initially covered segregated railroad cars in Florida proved to be “a fitting legal symbol for a southern society in motion, losing its roots in the solid earth of feudal agricultural arrangements that kept Blacks in their place without the need for a legal structure specifically enforcing racial separation” (Schmidt, 1982, p. 463). Often named the “Second Reconstruction” by progressive historians (Bowman, 2014; Ellis, 2014; Woodward, 1965), the decade following *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) can be described as

conspicuous judicial efforts at reform and less dramatic local efforts to undermine the new laws, yet even this mixed bag of legal interpretations did not prevent states from creating new ways to segregate the residents.

In Atlanta, Jim Crow rode building elevators, presided over toilets and drinking fountains, and swore to tell the truth on separate but equal Bibles in municipal courtrooms. Prisons and mental hospitals were segregated by force of state law in most of the South and private hospitals were segregated by law or custom. Not content with this separation in life, Jim Crow extended his hegemony beyond by segregating cemeteries, the practice of undertakers and medical school cadavers. (Schmidt, 1982, p. 473)

While the interpretations of the law in Washington institutionalized segregation in a culturally significant manner, the penal system also began to take on the trappings of modernity. Prior to the Civil War, most prisons were populated with Whites and were more a matter of “deviance control” than physical repercussions. Slaves were typically punished by their masters.

For the plantation to operate efficiently and profitably, and with a force of laborers not all of whom are fully broken to plantation discipline. The necessity of training them to work long hours and give unquestioning obedience to their masters and overseers superseded every other consideration. (Elkins 1959, p. 48)

After the war, this dynamic reversed; and many prisoners held in the United States were Black. In fact, privately owned businesses regularly leased state convicts for private labor. In addition, mortality rates were high among Blacks. “From the 1880s to the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, lynching and legal executions accounted for over 6,000 deaths. As with incarcerations, the Black male population of the south was greatly

overrepresented” (Massey & Myers, 1989, p. 459). Eventually, states lowered the rate of execution, opting instead to turn a profit by using convicts to build and maintain roadways. This practice also served as a visible reminder to travelers of the dangerous men working on a chain gang, guarded by armed patrols. Recent scholarship by Muhammad (2010) argued that this effort was intentional; orchestrated by liberal, social reformers to associate crime and Black skin. Muhammad described two changes in racial discourse:

The first was the appeal for ‘remedial measures’ in solving the Negro Problem, including expanded economic opportunities, education, social work and crime prevention. The second was the rejection of biological determinism, including redefining racial traits as cultural traits, a paradigmatic shift in the science of race that placed African Americans once and for all within the pale of civilization, at least in the minds of the most liberal social scientists. (p. 90)

The disenfranchisement ideology took hold in the decades following the Emancipation Proclamation in the forms of fear, violence, and political subordination; thus, the newly emerging social sciences validated the old belief systems of Black degeneracy, cultural and intellectual inferiority, and genetic and hereditary deficiencies.

America’s entrance into World War II and the participation of Black soldiers is a study in the disparity between democratic rhetoric and institutionalized racism. Soldiers returning from the European battlefields brought with them a heightened sense of cynicism and questions regarding their rights. From this experience, Southern soil became battlegrounds; Selma, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Little Rock were highly visible symbols of deep resentment and racially charged violence.

The Civil Rights Movement

While the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision is often cited as the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, the legal decision was far from fortuitous. In 1934, the Vice-Dean of Howard Law School, Charles Houston, was retained by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, 1934) to undertake legal proceedings aimed at weakening Jim Crow laws. The annual report that year stated, “the campaign [was] a carefully planned one to secure decisions, rulings and public opinion based on the broad principle instead of being devoted to miscellaneous cases” (NAACP, 1934, para. 4). The initiative was supported by many Black intellectuals including Dubois (1953) who noted,

The Negro needs neither segregated schools nor mixed schools. What he needs is Education. What he must remember is that there is no magic either in mixed or in segregated schools. A mixed school with poor and unsympathetic teachers, with hostile public opinion, and no teaching of truth concerning black folk is bad. A segregated school with ignorant placeholders, inadequate equipment, poor salaries and wretched housing, is equally bad. Other things being equal, the mixed school is the broader, more natural basis for the education of all youth. It gives wider contacts, it inspires greater self-confidence, and suppresses the inferiority complex. But other things are seldom equal, and in that case, Sympathy, Knowledge and Truth outweigh all a mixed school can offer. (p. 335)

Schools were representative of the blatant racism that affected families. The discrepancies in teacher salaries and school facilities were easily documented and difficult to dispute.

By 1939, Thurgood Marshall assumed leadership of the newly formed arm of the

organization, the Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF). In 1945, the Supreme Court rejected the request of the NAACP to desegregate all school districts, and Marshall and the national staff came to understand that segregated classrooms would need to be dismantled systematically, state by state. Because resources were limited, the NAACP used local attorneys to garner support from member families to file suit in their home districts. States continued to subvert the court's decision in numerous ways. As Bell (1976) observed, "where racial balance was not feasible because of population concentrations, political boundaries, or even educational considerations, there was adequate legal precedent for court-ordered remedies that emphasize educational improvement rather than racial balance" (p. 487). Because educational decisions rested with state and local legislative boards, efforts were often hampered by policies aimed at resisting the initiative to desegregate.

Several factors contributed to the gains made during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Racial narratives were challenged through the legal endeavors of the NAACP. The struggle for equality remained cloaked in a framework of major demonstrations and the and nonviolent aspects of the movement including the March on Washington and the nonviolent posture of the protestors in Birmingham, Memphis, and Selma. The Civil Rights Movement was an aim at total integration. Complementing this narrative are the stories of the organizing forces of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and The Congress for Racial Equality (CORE). Much of the work done in the rural areas was led by women and students who saw their efforts grounded in canvassing and building relationships. The primary goals included gaining access to political power and educational and economic equity and eliminating racial disparity and adult literacy. For example,

Septima Clark worked closely with the SCLC to set up citizenship schools in South Carolina while teaching adults to read. Her work inspired the Freedom Schools early in the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia and Mississippi. While the efforts of the NAACP to effect judicial change and the nonviolent posture of Martin Luther King and his associates are a part of the story, no narrative of the Civil Rights Movement would be complete without considering the ideologies of Black Power. In 1967, Carmichael and Hamilton published *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. Active in grass-roots activities including the Freedom Rides as well as legal challenges to Jim Crow, both became disillusioned with the trajectory of the movement and suggested a more violent solution to racism.

A political framework and ideology which represented the last reasonable opportunity for this society to work out its racial problems short of prolonged guerilla warfare. That such violent warfare may be unavoidable is not herein denied. But if there is the slightest chance to avoid it, the politics of Black Power as described in this book is seen as the only viable hope. (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967, back cover)

Two years before the publication of *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, Malcolm X was assassinated in Manhattan while preparing to speak to the Organization of Afro-American Unity. The influential leader of the Nation of Islam promoted Black supremacy and advocated for the separation of Black and White Americans. These militant positions challenged the work of King and the NAACP, the SCLC, and the SNCC. It was in this context that the Black Panther Party was formed in Oakland California in 1966. Conceived by Merritt college students Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, the nascent party published its manifesto, listing what the party wanted.

These included freedom, full employment, an end to capitalist exploitation, decent housing, education that emphasized Black history and the current plight of Blacks, exemption from military service, an end to police brutality, freeing of all Black prisoners, and juries of peers for Blacks on trial.

The Black Panther's philosophy was a sometimes inconsistent, often sophisticated amalgam, based on social contract theory as found in the Declaration of Independence, individual rights as outlined in the U.S. Constitution, Marxist anti-capitalism, national liberation theories . . . the self-determination espoused by the black power movement and the more generalized cultural and political radicalism of the New Left. (Delli-Carpini, 2000, p. 191)

The demands of the party became more threatening over time, as the members called for followers to arm themselves. Party operatives carried weapons openly at rallies and in everyday pursuits. "Police patrols" were used to guard Black neighborhoods and shield residents from brutal law enforcement. It was during this period that two significant factors contributed to the changing racial discourses. First, the violent nature of the Black Panther party and its association with the Nation of Islam was a regular feature in newspapers and on the television news. Second, the public outcry surrounding drug use became a political platform. In 1973, Nelson Rockefeller signed statutes into law that tied harsh penalties to drug-related crime. The association with violence, crime, and drugs was squarely centered in the Black community. More than once, these confrontations turned violent and became headline news, contributing to the militancy stereotype associated with the group.

Less well known were the social reforms directed by members of the Party. These free "Survival Programs" included breakfast programs for children, a medical

clinic, a sickle-cell research foundation, housing programs, transportation and escorts for elders, buses to prisons, clothing, pest control, food distribution, and ambulance programs. In 1967, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover initiated a surveillance campaign against the many high-profile members of the Party. The counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO)

waged a concerted war against the Black Panthers and other progressive or radical groups and individuals. These efforts were designed to promote violence between the Panthers and other black organizations, to encourage internal dissension within the party, to undermine support for the party and its leaders, and to provoke local police attacks. (Delli-Carpini, 2000, p. 195)

The duality of the ideologies encapsulated in the Black Panther movement, one of violence and militancy and another of social reforms, gave way to legal precedents aimed at enforcing the gains made by the Civil Rights movement. The work of the Black Panthers is a glimpse into protest politics and grass-roots activism; however, the stereotypes perpetuated by media coverage of the Harlem, Dixmoor and Humboldt Park (Chicago), Philadelphia, Compton, and Watts riots would have lasting effects on a generation of school children who were witness to the violence and fear, both in their homes and at their schools.

School Segregation

In 1968, 15 years after the Brown decision, the Supreme Court once again stepped in to bring an end to the tokenism and delays of implementing desegregation. “In *Green v. County School Board*, the nine justices ruled that school board had an ‘affirmative duty’ to take steps to ensure that segregation was eliminated ‘root and branch’” (Hall, 2008, p. 657). Large scale busing was one solution ordered by the court in *Swann v.*

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971). This order, which required both Black and White students to be removed from their community schools and bused to racially balanced schools was quite controversial. In some cases, violence erupted, parents pulled their children out of public schools or relocated to unaffected suburbs. While the South is often vilified as the source of the racial tensions that erupted into violence, Northern cities faced similar issues. In Boston, the schools were also segregated: “Over 80 percent of African-American pupils attended majority Black schools, and more than half were enrolled at schools that were 90 percent Black” (Hall, 2008, p. 658). Federal Judge Arthur Garrity ordered the schools to begin busing in 1973. Under this order, over 18,000 Boston students, about half of them White, were relocated from neighborhood schools to large urban buildings. Violence, protests, rallies, and vandalism brought “tragedy of the first rank” (Hall, 2008, p. 659). Rallies, boycotts, and sit-ins were held in cities across the country: New York, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Delaware. The Civil Rights movement stood as a model for protestors who used civil disobedience to justify their cause. The language of the Black Power movement was also co-opted; in Richmond for example, Citizens Against Busing, which organized rallies, drive-ins, and boycotts, claimed that White southerners were being treated like second class citizens. Meanwhile in one of history’s ironies, “‘We Shall Overcome,’ the iconic anthem of the Black freedom struggle, was sung at anti-busing protests in several American cities including Boston and Charlotte” (Hall, 2008, pp. 662-663).

In yet another irony, opponents of busing framed their arguments in the ideology of liberty and freedom of choice. The day before school began in Charlotte on Tuesday, September 8, 1970, a rally drew 10,000 protestors dressed in red, white, and blue. After

opening the rally with both “Dixie” and “God Bless America,” protest leaders urged parents to hold their children out of school the next day. Similar scenarios played out in other cities in the north and the south. In the end, the use of the American bulwarks of individual liberty and freedom became the rallying cry against desegregation. “Among the anti-busing forces, the championing of neighborhood schools, and the defense of local democracy against the tyranny of judicial, bureaucratic and political elites reflected a commitment to participatory democracy and community control” (Hall, 2008, p. 670).

The lessons of grass-roots activism, protest politics, and legal maneuverings of the previous decades were replaced in the 1980s with conservative politics, a focus on individual wealth and career status and questions of class. Many historians and social scientists posit that manifestations of racism have continued to evolve (Bobo et al., 1993; Lowy, 1991), reflected in the Reaganism of the 1980s, including conservative economic policies, the war on drugs, the emergence of neoliberalism, and increasingly global capitalist politics.

The current belief in racial progress involves two maneuvers which, when combined, fulfill the purpose of denying virulent racism. Americans plot Black progress by elaborating on the strength of the new Black middle class, which presumably proves that civil rights legislation has truly benefitted racial minorities. Then when the existence of the Black underclass is acknowledged, the result is viewed as a result of economic causes, rather than institutional racism. (Lowy, 1991, p. 455)

Like other aspects of race and racism, the idea of the Black middle class is multidimensional. The income disparity between all levels of educated workers remains high: “The average difference in wealth shows black households lagging behind White

households at a factor of nearly twelve times. That is for every one dollar of wealth in White households, blacks have ten cents” (Bobo et al., 1993, p. 3). In 1984, the average White household reported \$39,000 in wealth, while the average Black household reported \$3,000. In fact, “white households with incomes between \$7,500 and \$15, 000 have a higher net worth than black households making \$45,000 to \$60,000” (Bobo et al., 1993, p. 3). In addition, the gap between urban and suburban areas is reflected in social services, schools, housing, and public facilities. Coupled with the income disparities and the continuing controversies surrounding education, it became increasingly difficult for Blacks to negotiate from such a disadvantaged position. When the causes for racism are economic, the chronic poverty experienced by Blacks is often characterized by lack of work ethic; overdependence on social safety nets, drugs, and lifestyle; and poor educational opportunities.

Beginning with the movement of the slaves from Africa to Andalusia, slavery involved geography, economy, and subjugation. Three factors contributed to the rise of U.S. slavery: land expansion, cotton as a southern crop with global influence, and politics and lawmaking. These combinations laid the foundation for the necessity of a slave-based economy in the antebellum United States. Certainly, the economy of the slave trade defined both the North and the South in the antebellum years, and Jim Crow reified a similar result after the American Civil War.

The war inspired a shift from antebellum anti-institutionalism, which saw the purification of the individual as the route to social change, to a state-centered vision in which political power could be harnessed to social betterment.

Emancipation would long remain a model of social change, a touchstone for movements demanding other forms of liberation. (Foner, 1998, p. 99)

By Reconstruction, these social structures were firmly set in place, institutions including schools were affected, and finally the resulting mentalities, although refined, have remained static reflecting in folk behavior, rituals and customs, religions, esthetics and art, theologies, ideologies, and law.

The Civil Rights/Black Power movement's championing of African-American identity and group-based rights and the new left's emphasis on authenticity as a basis for political organizing augured a wider emergence of political and cultural mobilizations during the 1960s and 1970s that were rooted in identity. (Hall, 2008, p. 671).

These social movements provided new models for grass-roots organization and gave voices to the disenfranchised; yet a resurgence in racism is apparent in several ways: increasing instances of racially motivated incidents, the continued controversy surrounding Black studies programs and affirmative action, the shift in funding from university grants and scholarship funds to loans, and the idea that racism is held only individually rather than as a group dynamic. A complex set of ideologies of modern racism is,

the reflection of individual perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and ideological constructs with social structural arrangements that have been created historically, but that demonstrate taken-for-granted arrangements, conscious practice, and active decision making on the part of powerful and strategically located social actors. (Lowy, 1991, p. 543)

The persistence of racism and the lessons of history remind us of the contradictions between the "peculiar institution" and the American ideologies of fair play, equality, justice, and meritocratic outcomes. Given that race is woven into our cultural fabric, it is

a fair assumption that racial discourses become a part of music, social media, film, politics, television, newspapers, and literature. Just as this discussion has established the history of race as a social construct, children's literature of the past reflects the zeitgeist of the era.

Race in the Age of Accountability

Many well-known texts in the canon of children's literature contain race-based representations of well-established stereotypes. Published in 1911, J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* and Frances Hodgson-Burnett's (1911) *The Secret Garden* contain racist conceptions of characters. The characterizations have more modern manifestations as well, including *Souder* by William Armstrong (1969) and *The Indian in the Cupboard* by Banks (1980). These and other texts often portray Blacks and Whites as monolithic identities, yet racial identification in America is becoming a less fixed identity.

In March 2016, the Kaiser Foundation reported that 14% of American children between the ages of 0-18 identify as Black, and another 10% identify as Other (Asians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Aleutians and Eskimos as well as those who are two or more races). Twenty-five percent identify as Hispanic, and 52% as White (Dijuiolo, Norton, Jackson, & Brodie, 2015,). This is supported by the data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The data assembled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation indicate both positive and negative patterns. Since the end of the recession in 2009, economic and job growth has been steady, teen pregnancies are lower, and the high school graduation rate is on the uptick. Despite these gains, childhood poverty remains high, and the job recovery has not included those on the lower end of the wage scale. Fewer fiscal resources result in fewer opportunities for college. Troubling for educators is the data on early childhood

programs; fewer children are enrolled in programs aimed at leveling the playing field including Head Start and other prekindergarten schools. While fourth graders made gains in reading proficiency, a mere 18% of those students are Black. Similar results are in for math students in eighth grade. While proficiency overall is improving, 88% of Black students failed to meet competency goals (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016).

Table 1

Ethnicity of Children in the United States

| Race | Type | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Non-Hispanic | Number: | 643,874 | 638,620 | 634,740 | 632,003 | 629,658 |
| American Indian and Native Alaskan alone | Percent: | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Non-Hispanic Asian alone | | 3,297,176 | 3,356,857 | 3,431,472 | 3,505,336 | 3,579,248 |
| | | 4% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Non-Hispanic Black alone | | 10,324,137 | 10,238,781 | 10,186,845 | 10,176,109 | 10,166,122 |
| | | 14% | 14% | 14% | 14% | 14% |
| Hispanic or Latino | | 17,399,108 | 17,572,198 | 17,746,939 | 17,951,503 | 18,150,181 |
| | | 24% | 24% | 24% | 24% | 25% |
| Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone | | 140,537 | 141,319 | 142,834 | 144,425 | 146,226 |
| | | <5% | <5% | <5% | <5% | <5% |
| Non-Hispanic White alone | | 39,334,028 | 39,917,479 | 38,537,831 | 38,210,893 | 37,927,474 |
| | | 53% | 53% | 52% | 52% | 52% |
| United States | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Adapted with permission from www.aecf.org.

According to United States Census Bureau (2000) projections, the majority of children in the U.S. will be of color by 2018. This also means that when these children are ready to enter the workforce, a similar demographic is plausible. Presently, one of three children in ethnic minority groups live in poverty and are threatened by the violence in their communities.

The Black/White binary continues to be an indefinite classification. In 2007, the Department of Education produced a document outlining the procedures for data collection (Scotch, 2001). The document took up 90 pages in a report aptly named “Managing an Identity Crisis.” These statistics are an important variable for identifying

subgroups under the directives of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Parents of students in these subgroups may not share common interests in their child's education. Both the NAACP and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) oppose school vouchers and other efforts at school privatization (Scotch, 2001). In fact, "middle class Blacks leave inner city schools almost as quickly as middle class Whites do, given the opportunity to enroll their children in a better school system" (Hochschild & Shen, 2014, p. 19). What is clear from the data is that educators must prepare themselves to interact with children from a diverse, well-informed community. The old labels assigned to children may not define the school-aged population properly.

Reflecting more uncertainty are studies that examine the efficacy of NCLB. Aimed at leveling the field for all students, the law mandates schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or face sanctions. These AYP scores are determined by state-devised tests and require schools to break down student proficiency scores by racial and ethnic subgroups. Whether this model is effective in closing the achievement gap remains an open question (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). Teachers and administrators may use a disproportionate amount of fiscal and human resources to improve the scores of struggling students. Students who do poorly on the state tests may drop out (Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001). Again, the scholarship is mixed. Some ethnic minority students make gains under the mandates of accountability (Hanusheck & Raymond, 2005). Civil Rights groups support revisions to the law. Other research indicated that "it is not only a matter of race and ethnicity, immigration status . . . personal behaviors may matter just as much" (Hochschild & Shen, 2014, p. 5).

Two hotly contested proposals designed to address school improvement include choice through charter schools and voucher programs. In North Carolina, for example,

the Opportunity Scholarships provide private school vouchers to children of low income households. Forty-one percent of families in the state qualify for this subsidy which amounts to about \$4,000. School vouchers can be used to pay for tuition, transportation, equipment, and other private school expenses. Charter schools educate almost three million students, tripling enrollment in a 6-year period (USDOE, 2017). Researchers do not agree on the effectiveness of charter schools. Some posit that this model is one hope for poor ethnic minority students (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003), while others believe that charter schools openly or implicitly reinforce stratification (Wells, Lopez, Scott, & Jellison-Holme, 1993). Yet again, the mixed results documented by the literature offer no clear path to solving the school-based diversity issue.

More definitive data exists on current research surrounding one of the more consistent measures: years of schooling. In 2007, “ninety-one percent of non-Hispanic Whites, compared with eighty-three percent of Blacks and only sixty percent of Hispanics over twenty-five had a least a high school education” (Hochschild & Shen, 2014, p. 9). College educated Americans followed a similar pattern: 32% of non-Hispanic Whites, 19% of Blacks, and 13% of Hispanic students earning at least a Bachelor of Arts degree. The reasons for the disparity include a number of factors beyond race: residency, socioeconomic status, personal preference, quality of primary schooling, bias, and discrimination. Certainly, reading for comprehension is a skill that is required of students entering a 4-year college.

A longitudinal study commencing in 1998 followed roughly 25,000 kindergarten students in the United States. ECLS-K followed these students until eighth grade, assessing their literacy skills each year. Students were assessed on both word reading proficiencies and knowledge-based competencies. Data from 2008 indicate literacy

competencies in both word knowledge and comprehension have narrowed more slowly in recent years, thus the gains made in the 1970s and 1980s appear to be slipping away.

Further, “the indicators of sustained growth reveal the Black/White reading gap in reading skills was roughly half a deviation by the end of third grade and [grew] to nearly a whole standard deviation by eighth grade” (Reardon et al., 2012, p. 27).

Data mined from NCES (2015) indicated that students who “read for fun” score higher on the assessments than non-reading peers. Nine-year-old students who read “never” or “hardly ever” achieved a scale score of 208, while students who read every week or daily achieved a scale score of 226. Thirteen-year-old students who read “never” or “hardly ever” achieved a scale score of 249. Their peers who read daily or weekly achieved a scale score of 276. Seventeen-year-old students who read “never” or “hardly ever” achieved a scale score of 272, while their counterparts who read daily or weekly achieved a scale score of 302 (NCES, 2015).

NCES data indicate 53% of 9-year-old White students read for fun. This percentage has remained fairly steady since the inception of the tests in 1984. African-American students report reading less than their counterparts showing sporadic patterns of growth and decline. Beginning in 1984, 55% reported reading daily or weekly. By 2012, that number had slipped to 47%. Despite setting an almost equal benchmark in 1984 at 35% White and 34% Black, the number of daily readers dropped to 30% and 23% percent respectively. By age 17, the percentage of daily readers had declined from 31% to 22% for White readers and from 31% Black readers to 17% (NCES, 2105). These data clearly indicate that students are reading less, and this likely results in lower scale scores on standardized tests.

While the achievement gap has closed over the last decades, the gap remains

sizable and enduring (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2008). Explanations vary across the literature as researchers work to tease out explanations from a vast array of causal factors. Accounts range from discrimination in the school setting (Farkas, 2003), to teacher perceptions of students (Ferguson, 2003), to studies of Black students who refuse to act White (Ogbu, 2002). Other explanations include racial bias in testing, socioeconomic disparities in both families and communities, class disadvantages, and overall school quality.

Given the large urban population in the United States, it is fair to infer that many of the issues surrounding race and class are found in large school districts. As of 2009, “seventy-one percent of the students in the one hundred largest districts are non-Anglo and over half are poor enough to be eligible for free or reduced price lunches” (Hochschild & Shen, 2014, p. 5). In addition, 13% have an Individualized Education Plan and 14% are English Language Learners. Approximately 70% graduate from high school within 4 years; but in urban districts including Baltimore, New York City, Los Angeles and other cities, the rate hovers around 50%. The research is divided on the salience of race in policy development. Some research indicates that making improvements to the economic base might improve these statistics. Other studies suggest that Black school boards, mayors, and administrators make only marginal differences. Empirical analysis reveals that the gap continues to widen, while urban resources are stretched considerably. Educational diversity and the questions of how to balance the needs of students with state resources continue to be debated among parents and school boards and are still often adjudicated by the courts.

The pendulum continues to swing in the judicial system. In the years following *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), Jim Crow laws hampered the efforts to desegregate schools.

Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, 50 years of desegregation followed, culminating with the Civil Rights movement. Then in 2007, the Supreme Court's decision in *Parents Involved in Community Schools* invalidated voluntary race-based student assignment policies in Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Washington. The ruling raised old questions surrounding the constitutionality of race-based student assignment (Fischbach, Rhee, & Cacace, 2008). Some research indicates that school boards and legislators need to understand that "separation continues within classroom, schools and districts" (Orfield & Lee, 2007, p. 4). While adults continue to wrestle with questions of race and equity and data that affirm their anxiety, administrators, teachers, and students continue to encounter issues of race and racism within the walls of school buildings.

Having used the narratives of slave history to understand the evolution of race-based ideologies and the many challenges facing educators in the age of accountability, the discussion turns to the theoretical foundation of the study.

CRT

The purpose of this study was to examine books that support early readers to determine the representations of Black characters. The work herein is defined by using CRT, a theoretical framework which places race at the center of educational research and discourse.

Students of all ages study historical events and consider the results. The Gutenberg Press proved to be the precursor to a literate population in 1439 (Beckert, 2015). In January 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation freed approximately four million American slaves (Foner, 1998). While these events define a movement, racial bias has a more linear history. Beginning with the movement of African slaves across the

Atlantic Ocean, to the slave revolt in Haiti and the displacement of the slave population to the Virginia shores, to the codification of laws aimed at institutionalizing slavery, there is a long and sordid path to modern racism; slavery and racism have been well documented (Fredrickson, 2002).

Racism is the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races. Individual racism is typically directed person to person or person to small group. These beliefs rest on assumptions about the intelligence, predispositions, natural or innate abilities, and pathologies of cultural behaviors (Hacker, 1992).

The method used to frame the data herein is CRT. CRT emerged in law schools in the United States in response to its precursor, Critical Law Theory (CLT) and its relationship to notions of power, race, and meritocracy. CLT challenged traditional legal scholarship which focused on doctrine and policy analysis. Instead, CRT became a critique of liberalism situated in institutions including the judiciary, politics, and education. Frustrated by the slow progress of the Civil Rights Movement, Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman began to challenge the work of CLT scholars as “a social artifact that operates to recreate and legitimate American society” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1350). The earliest manifestation of CRT was the 1981 protest of Harvard law students. The boycotts arose from the refusal of the Harvard administration to hire a teacher of color to replace Derrick Bell, one of two Black professors at Harvard Law. Notable for his many contributions to racial discourses, Bell’s (1972) course textbook, *Race, Racism, and American Law*, stood as the organizational outline for opposition to the existing racial frameworks that were the legacies of the Civil Rights movement. This was the “first institutionalized expression of CRT and was one of the earliest attempts to bring scholars

together to address the law's treatment of race" (Matsuda, 1987, p. 18).

The second indicator of a growing resistance to CLT came 6 years later when participants attending the Critical Legal Studies Conference formulated concise ways in which the law constructed race. As the movement gained steam, CRT became interdisciplinary, leaning on the work of feminists, social anthropologists, historians, and sociologists. From this work came the definition of CRT.

Not a set of abstract principles but instead a collection of people struggling inside and outside legal scholarship, critical race theorists are engaged in building a movement to eliminate racial oppression, and other forms of group-based oppression. The scholars pursue individual routes, methods, and ideas.

Nonetheless, they converge around the belief that racism is endemic, not aberrational, in American society; that liberal legal ideals of neutrality and color-blindness have replicated rather than undone racism; that analysis should be informed by personal experience and contextual, historical studies; and that pragmatic and eclectic strategies should be pursued in the struggle for racial and social justice. (Matsuda, 1987, p. 22)

CRT has a number of premises, but five are recurring throughout the literature: the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992, 1996; Lawrence, 2005); counterstorytelling (Matsuda, 1989); whiteness as property (Harris, 1993); interest convergence (Bell, 1980); and woven into each, a critique of liberalism (Crenshaw, 1988). The intersectionality of liberalism into the other four dimensions offers an opportunity to transform the way academics think about the negativity in which those with power consciously and unconsciously exclude those who are marginalized or different.

Permanence of Racism: Depictions of Race

Historically prominent Enlightenment philosophers accepted the idea of White supremacy. Well-known figures including Montesquieu, Hume, and Jefferson “accepted (White supremacy) by them without them having to put forth their own arguments to justify it” (West, 1993, p. 105). Racism and the challenges it presents are well documented by CRT scholars (Bell, 1976; Crenshaw, 1989; Guinier, 1991; Matsuda, 1987, 1989; Solórzano, 1997).

Racism is deeply entrenched so that the notion of the “Self” and the “Other” or the “Black” and the “White” are binary, an encoded metaphor for defining race. Along with these labels come judgments about who is safe and who is a threat, about who should garner respect and who is deserving of contempt, and about who can be trusted and who cannot.

Critical race theorists outline their arguments regarding the permanence of racism with the claim that permanent racism has four dimensions: “It has micro and macro components, it takes on institutional and individual forms, it has conscious and unconscious elements, and it has a cumulative effect on both the individual and the group” (Lawrence, 2005, p. 87). These four elements are the foundation of long-term and ongoing subordination. In addition, these characteristics are intersectional with other forms of meritocracy, patriarchy, and gender bias.

Microaggressions

While overt racism is often well documented and widely reported by media outlets, other, subtler types of racism continue to be a part of the American social landscape. Microaggressions are refined forms of racism. These degradations are often manifested in daily interactions and undermine the well-being of the recipients

(Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Solórzano, & Parker, L (2002).

Much of the current literature on microaggressions comes from the field of psychology (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions are defined as “commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, generally unintentional which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights or insults” (Sue et al. 2008, p. 275). These aggressions can take on a variety of forms including “microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations and are typically aimed at individuals” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 272). Making assumptions about the intelligence, predisposition to criminal behavior, natural or innate abilities including musicality or athleticism, or pathologies of cultural behaviors also serve to impose a false reality on the recipients. There are also other effects that cause trauma to the recipients including invalidating the experiences of the group. According to Sue et al. (2007), these subtle forms of racism include the assumption that visible race or ethnicity set citizens apart as foreigners, a denial by Whites that they do not see race or color, statements that assert that race plays a minor role in life’s successes, and denial of one’s role in racism or the acknowledgement that race exists in perpetuity in American culture.

Macroaggressions

Larger societal themes have emerged from recent research. Macroaggressions are ideas about race that include networks of beliefs and are related to both social and personal identities and include perceptions about intellectual inferiority or lack of proper articulation. In the educational setting, this can be reflected in remarks suggesting that Black student academic achievements are the exception to the rule. Feelings of second class citizenship are widely reported by Black consumers; instances of poor or neglectful service in restaurants, grocery stores, and retail malls are well documented. The intent of criminal behavior can be manifested by avoidance of ethnic social gatherings or by

assumptions of clothing type. While the previous themes have the effect of devaluing Black citizens, often there is an assumption of White superiority in communication and cultural styles. “Black professionals report a wariness in their formal speech registers and in the way they interact with White coworkers, fearful that they will be perceived as inferior, thus sacrificing their own agency to fit-in” (Sue et al., 2008, p. 332).

Individual and Institutional Forms of Racism

Racism is the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races. Individual racism is typically directed person to person or person to small group. These beliefs and actions rest on assumptions about the intelligence, predispositions, natural or innate abilities, and pathologies of cultural behaviors.

Personal racism reflects stereotypes and attitudes about groups of people held by both the Other and the group itself (Olsson & Powell, in Thompson, 2010, p. 55). Stereotypes, insensitivity, ignorance, and social media bullying are all indicators of individualized racism. CRT scholars point out that racism is a part of the political and social landscape. While decidedly postmodernist in the approach, CRT scholars call for any critiques to become a social practice. Because schools act as a repository for students of all races and backgrounds, these institutions are often open to scrutiny, particularly in the area of equity.

The Constitution of the United States sets no mandate for federal oversight of education. States and districts generally set their own policies and regulations for accountability and student learning. While the USDOE oversees specific programs aimed at Title I funding and protecting the rights of students with disabilities and other human rights, development and implementation of policy and curriculum are left to local

administrators. While many schools are easily identifiable as such, the management of the structures and platforms of each district vary widely. States and districts also vary widely in their choices of fiscal expenditures, assessment tools, curriculum choices, equity indicators, and supports for instruction.

One manifestation of individual and institutional racism can be revealed by examining the effects of school tracking. Beginning as early as second grade, students are identified using a testing platform, “Cognitive Abilities Test.” Students are rated on seven scale scores and incorporated into special classes with names like “Horizons,” “Talent Development,” and “Advanced Placement.” “When students are tracked into higher and lower classes, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to move into a higher tier” (Kerble, 1988, p. 227). Advocates of ability grouping contend that students who are similar in their cognitive abilities are more likely to be successful. While educators believe that all students can learn regardless of race, status, or background and that schools are the levelling medium for a more equitable society, institutional structures have a profound effect on maintaining race-based biases. According to Rohwer (1971), “the ideologies of racism have permeated educational structures: policies, practices, formats, and conventions” (p. 191). Under the banners of multicultural education, cultural sensitivity training, social justice training, and numerous other mantras, the major focus has been making individuals aware of their prejudices. By raising awareness of stereotypes and assumptions about racial subgroups, some researchers and educators believe that attitudes and behaviors will change.

CRT as a critique of liberalism argues that this orientation may integrate these individuals into a society that offers only enough support to assure some success, thereby limiting their movement within the defined social structures. Detractors, and there are

many, argue that the problem-solving model fails to examine institutions for their culpability in the racial binary, thus reproducing the existing social order (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, Delgado & Thomas, 1995; Guinier, 1991; Matsuda, 1989; Williams, 1995).

Signed into law by Lyndon Johnson, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 authorized the federal government to withhold funds from schools practicing *de jure* segregation. This directive stimulated academic research. Proliferating in the 1970s, educational scholars began to cite studies that suggested that Black students were less able to become successful in school for a variety of reasons. The first survey, conducted in 1966, the *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, was both expansive and controversial. The study found,

Only minor differences between the facilities available to white students and those available to Black students. Observations on the academic achievements included the notation that while Black and White students generally entered school with the same “verbal” abilities, by the time they reached twelfth grade, the gap had widened to such an extent that Black students were unable to transform their high aspirations into successful performance because they had, relative to white students, few concrete plans and little belief in their ability to control their environment. (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 30)

In a 1971 study involving the Stanford Achievement Test, the authors found that White students were reading proficiently at a rate of 71.7%, while their Black peers were far less capable, scoring a dismal 21.8% (Rohwer, 1971).

Jensen’s (1969) controversial g factor theory states that “an individual’s IQ is largely due to heredity, including racial heritage” (p. 13). Current literature indicates that

Black and White achievements on IQ tests have a differential of 18 points. Wrote Rushton (1998), “much of the opposition to IQ testing would probably disappear if were not for the stubborn and unwelcome fact that despite extensive well-funded programs of intervention, the Black-White difference refuses to go quietly into the night” (p. 230). Implicit in this is the assumption that IQ has some relationship to learning proficiency. First, the question must be answered, what defines proficiency? That is to say that proficiency must meet two criteria: “The first is methodological; is there adequate information available about the operating characteristics of the learning task itself? The second criteria are an empirical one; does the kind of learning method selected relate to performance on school learning tasks” (Rohwer, 1971, p. 194)? After comparing levels of questioning on a variety of cognitive ability tests including *Raven Progressive Matrices*, *Stanford, Binet*, *Serial Learning*, and a dozen more, this widely cited study concluded that Black children fall below their White peers for three reasons:

First low SES Negro children come to school with less developed learning tactics than high SES white children. Second, even though the basic learning skills of low SES Negro children improve almost to the point of equality of high SES White children by the time they are into the first grade year, these skills are not quite as well-honed. Finally, it is reason to suppose that, to an even greater degree, Negro children have not adequately mastered the skills necessary to learn successfully in classroom learning conditions. (Rohwer, 1971, p. 206)

These examples are indicative of the blurred lines between institutional and individual racism. It is an easy choice to mask the failures of Black students for reasons beyond their control or through some fault of their own in data, yet the long-term effects on students can be clearly correlated with both the conscious and unconscious features of

power, privilege, and meritocracy.

Conscious and Unconscious Elements of Racism

Following the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a flurry of activity and unrest began to settle across the United States. Social historians including John Hope Franklin noted that the legislation had done little to improve the two worlds of race. “Nothing that had happened in the past 40 or 50 years had created a society in which the factor of color was not a major consideration in virtually everything Americans thought, said, or did” (in Bliwise, 1993, p. 69). The 1967 *Report of the Presidential Commission on Civil Disorders* provided no empirical evidence that race issues were abating. In fact, concrete evidence substantiates that racism had not diminished in the areas of housing, education, medical treatment, and income disparity. Also writing in 1967, sociologist Oliver Cox noted the divisive quality of individual and group efforts at legitimacy:

Two principles of racial policy seem to divide the allegiance of Negroes, the one that “Negroes should stick together” and the other that “Negroes should shift themselves individually since the individual can advance more easily than the group as a whole.” (p. 172)

These two opposing guiding principles served to become as divisive as racism itself.

One manifestation of the conscious and unconscious elements of racism described by CRT scholars is the proliferation of ethnic studies departments on college and university campuses during the decades following the Civil Rights Act; yet while Affirmative Action policies and federal subsidies were placed as incentives for university integration, scholars decried the initiatives as efforts to marginalize Black heritage and history.

While scholars debated the likelihood of Black assimilation into White society,

others posited that the responsibilities of Black students rested in their obligation to act as arbiters of their own history and to reconfigure Black heritage. “It behooves Blacks to have a new view of themselves, hence the fervor for a new discovery of their African ancestry to locate these cultural distinctions which can enable them to look into the face of any other American” (Smith, 1990, p. 43). CRT scholars suggest that the reversals in Affirmative Action, the shift from student scholarships to student loans, and the well-publicized criticisms of ethnic studies departments serve as indicators of coordinated efforts to overturn the institutional gains made in equity since the Civil Rights movement. Contrary to the idea that racism is behind us, researchers have long posited that all people have biases.

Along with ethnographers, historians, and sociologists, psychoanalysts have taken a position on the origins and manifestations of conscious and unconscious individual biases. Projection is a frequent descriptor of racism, an unconscious mental process whereby unacceptable ideas, feelings, and impulses are attributed to the external world.

An insidious feature of all human characteristics, envy seeks to destroy the good. Phantasy is bound to both the internal and external worlds. It is an entirely unconscious event.

One manifestation of phantasy is positioning and implies a constellation of object relationships, internal and external, phantasies, anxieties, and defenses to which the individual is likely to return throughout life. Because this positioning fluctuates throughout lifetimes, it offers insight into the shifting qualities of race and ethnic hatred. (Rasmussen & Salhani, 2010 p. 499)

Here, Rasmussen and Salhani (2010) formed an important distinction from their contemporary Cox regarding the divergence of individual actions and group dynamics.

Two principles of racial policy seem to divide the allegiance of Negroes, the one that “Negroes should stick together” and the other that “Negroes should shift themselves individually since the individual can advance more easily than the group as a whole.” (Cox, 1967, p. 171)

Cumulative Effects of Racism: Crime, Punishment, and the Law

West (1993), in conversation with Hooks (1990), noted that CRT is an indispensable weapon in struggle and is an indispensable weapon because it provides an understanding, an illumination of certain kinds of insights that are requisite. Ideas about how race shaped society have been examined, though not exclusively in the contexts of crime, punishment, and the law.

The DOJ publishes statistics encompassing the sex trafficking of children in the United States. Nationally, about 35% of minors who are charged with prostitution are Black. In larger cities like Oakland, California where the African-American population is 12%, the number of solicitation for sex charges against African-American minors exceeds 60% (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016). In King County Washington, 79% of the men who were charged with soliciting a prostitute were White, while 44% of their partners were African-American.

Peffley and Hurwitz (2007) and Aguirre and Baker (1983) noted that race is one of the characteristics over the last 50 years that has distinguished death penalty proponents from death penalty opponents. Extensive evidence suggests that the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime. In 2016, voters in three states approved laws to keep the death penalty as a constitutional amendment. With these additions, 31 states now allow judges and juries the option of sentencing defendants to death. According to the Pew research center, data on Americans who oppose the death penalty are once again on

the uptick, 49% saying that they favor the punishment. The same Pew study indicates that gender, racial, and partisan gaps remain in view of the death penalty; 57% of Whites favor death, while 29% of Blacks see execution as an acceptable punishment (Masci, 2017).

Beginning in 1926, the United States government began collecting data on prison populations. Despite this, no real research on the topic emerged until the groundbreaking study by Blumstein (1982). Comparing daily imprisonments with longer term sentences, the evidence revealed that “although high percentages of inmates were black, so were high percentages of offenders arrested by police” (Blumstein, 1982, p. 1270).

While tort reforms have been codified by the United States Supreme Court incorporating decisions designed to protect the rights of defendants, including the prohibition of racial discrimination in setting bail, in selection of the jury pool, the use of preemptory challenges, and the use of the death penalty, inequalities continue to exist. It was not until 1963 in *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), that states were required to provide counsel for all indigent defendants. This legislation spawned the modern public defender system of contract attorneys who are employed to provide counsel to defendants unable to pay for the services of a private attorney. The system is far from ideal as “many attorneys representing poor criminal defendants face excessive workloads, inadequate resources and a lack of independence” (Fairfax, 2013, p. 2321). During the early years of the 1960s, proponents of bail reform initiated the Manhattan Bail project which proposed the hypothesis that indigent defendants could be relied upon to keep their court dates if released on their own recognizance, but these reforms were short lived and less than a decade later, concern for rising crime rates nationwide led to reversions in bail setting procedures.

Critics challenged the position that the only function of bail was to assure the defendants appearance at trial. They argued that public safety was also a function of bail and that pre-trial detention should be used to protect the community for dangerous criminals. (Spohn, 1995, p. 123)

Progress has also been made in the area of jury pool selection. In *Avery v. Georgia* (1953), the Supreme court took steps aimed at restricting racial profiling in the selection of juries, eliminating the practice of placing the names of White jurors on white cards and Black jurors on yellow cards and then randomly selecting from the assembled cards. Theoretically, the use of preemptory challenges gives attorneys the right to strike potential jurors in order to achieve a fair and impartial jury. In fact, “preemptory challenges were often used to strike African American jurors from cases involving African American defendants” (Spohn, 1995, p. 125). Responding to a challenge by Swaim in 1965, the United States Supreme Court found that “the prosecutor’s use of preemptory challenges to strike all six African American jurors did not violate the equal protection clause of the Constitution” (Spohn, 1995, p. 126). It was not until 1986 that the Court rejected the exclusionary language of Swaim, yet the hope of a balanced jury remains elusive: “State and federal appellate courts have ruled that leaving one or two African Americans on the jury precludes any inference of purposeful racial discrimination on the part of the prosecutor” (Spohn, 1995, p. 150).

Research on race and the death penalty is mixed. A study completed in 1990 by the United States General Accounting office found that in 82% of the cases reviewed, the race of the victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with a capital murder or receiving the death penalty. The race of death row inmates between 1995 and 2000 included “80% of all federal capital cases recommended by the U.S. included

Blacks, while their prosecuting attorneys were 98 percent white” (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2001, para. 18). Between 1977 and 1992, 157 people were executed in 16 states. Of those, 50% were Black and 90% of those involved rape or sexual assault. Baldus, Pulaski, and Woodworth (1983) found that Blacks who killed Whites had the greatest likelihood of receiving the death penalty. The court considered the Baldus et al. study in *McCleskey v. Kemp* (1987). Sentenced to death in Georgia for robbery and murder, McKleskey claimed his sentence violated his rights under both the Eighth and the Fourteenth Amendment clauses. As previously noted, the study found that African-American defendants who were convicted of murdering Whites had the greatest likelihood of receiving the death penalty. While the court accepted the finding of the study, they rejected McKleskey’s claim that race was a factor in his conviction. Had the victim been Black, Baldus et al. concluded, McKleskey’s chances of receiving a life sentence would have been more likely. Theories offered to explain this discrepancy reveal much about the court’s inability to reconcile racial discrimination in setting bail, in the selection of the jury pool, in the use of preemptory challenges, and in the use of the death penalty.

The court system described in the seminal work *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal in 1944 no longer exists. The courts have removed many of the overt racist policies related to arrest, sentencing, and incarceration; yet the system has not provided for equality in justice. “African Americans who find themselves in the arms of the law continue to suffer discrimination in court processing and sentencing” (Spohn, 1995, p. 135).

Establishing the permanence of racism in the United States and deliberating on the liberal critiques involving microaggressions and macroaggressions, institutionalized

and individualized racism, and conscious and unconscious prejudice as well as the correlations to crime and punishment act as a sort of precursor to the dimensions of CRT that follow. These “pre-theoretical” assumptions lay the groundwork for alternative ways of knowing using counterstorytelling.

Counterstorytelling: Chronicles in Pop Culture

The purpose of this section is to provide a framework for understanding and addressing the discourses surrounding race and racism and to allow researchers and readers the ability to “legitimize and promote the voices and narratives of people of color as sources of critique of the dominant social order that purposefully devalues them” (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 116).

Antidiscrimination laws have been designed to protect individuals in ethnic minority groups from race-based inequities. CRT scholars posit that when this discrimination is present, CRT incorporates narrative as the “tie that binds,” as individual experiences (narratives) are collected and understood to demonstrate common themes “to galvanize their efforts to pose new alternatives with the intent of changing their conditions” (Stovall, 2016, p. 31). In other words, these narratives, or counterstories, contribute to the intersectional and multidimensional experiences of people of color. Counterstories take their cue from the traditions of oral histories, parables, and family stories.

Long before the written word, stories have been used by families, clans, tribes, villages, and cities to preserve realities, address customs, instill beliefs, and teach rituals. The genesis of oral history and storytelling becomes an integral part of the race narrative beginning with the publication Phyllis Wheatley’s poems in 1773 and continuing only sporadically until the publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Stowe, 1852) and *Huckleberry*

Finn (Twain, 1884). Slave narratives continued to be an important part of American history in the 19th century with writers including Richard Wright and James Baldwin challenging the notions of a white metanarrative. In fact, two slave narratives, one fiction and one nonfiction recently received both a Pulitzer (*The Underground Railroad*) by Colson Whitehead in 2016 and The Bancroft Prize (*Empire of Cotton*) by Sven Beckert in 2015. Clearly, the continuing prominence of the slave narrative in popular culture and academia and the power of the prose challenge our notions of race, spark debates, and promote reflection.

In these narratives, self-determined individuals overcome their oppressors to achieve success. Films and media presentations documenting the creation of the Black male identity lean heavily on the aggression and physical prowess of the Black athlete. Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis epitomized the proper demeanor for young Black men in the sports world in the 1940s and 1950s. These stories are interpretations of their immense popularity “playing off the stereotyped image of the moral, quiet, childlike black man” (Demas, 2004, p. 253).

As the Civil Rights movement gained steam, Black heroes, in keeping with the times, became more militant. Boxer Cassis Clay, affiliated with the Nation of Islam, defied his draft notice and became an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War. McLeod (2009) noted that this militancy is deeply rooted in sports.

Athletes and coaches often draw positive parallels between sports and war. The rhetoric of football is rife with terms such as “going on the attack,” “the blitz,” and the “long bomb” – not to mention the long tradition of college “fight” songs and militaristic marching bands. (McLeod, 2009, p. 207)

Similarly, basketball came to define certain serotypes associated with Black

males. The first touring basketball team, the Harlem Globetrotters, were both entertainers, solo and team acts, and skilled at the characteristics that define the modern game. “Unlike the slower, more horizontal and regimented style of their white counterparts, the Trotters relied on fast breaks, rapid passing, intricate dribbling, unexpected jump shots and improvised one on one challenges” (McLeod, 2009, p. 214). Julius Irving created the slam dunk, a visible manifestation of the “in your face” Black male empowerment.

These narratives and stereotypes focus on the building of community through individual and team actions. But what if the opposite is true and the narratives serve to deconstruct the cultural myths surrounding the Black hero story? What if, as Delgado (1993) wrote, they “can show us that what we believe is ridiculous, self-serving or cruel? They can show us a way out of destruction exclusion” (p. 661)?

A similar dynamic has historical roots in the modern psyche. Composite stories draw on various forms of data to recount racialized and sexualized experiences. Often, these composite characters are created by the media and social networking. The work of Bell (1987, 1992, 1996), Delgado (1995a, 1995b, 1996), Solórzano (1997), Solórzano and Ornelas (2004), and Solórzano and Yosso (2002) exemplify composite counter-narratives. The use of this counter-narrative is widely distributed through music and requires some historical background in order to contextualize the modern representation of Black males in music. In addition to sports, music “requires similarities of breath and muscle control memory and training” (McLeod, 2009, p. 206). Similarities between music and sports in African-American society have been noted in the ring shouts of slaves and associated with Black male patriarchy.

The initially slow tempo of the music, repetitious singing, which gradually

increases in tempo and in “spirit,” call and response requires some competitive hand clapping. . . . Serving as substitutes for drum playing, all rising in piercing and staccato intensity to finally reach a sudden climax. (Floyd, 1983, p. 37)

During the 1920s, the invention of new recording technologies allowed musicians to adapt a more forceful sound backed up with rhythmic dynamics and increased tempos. The string bass allowed musicians to provide a bottom note on every beat, rather than every other beat; the resulting sound was more driving, fast-paced music.

The relationship between the emerging jazz genre and baseball and basketball served to promote the interests of both music and sports. Many jazz musicians of the day including Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Count Basie, and Cab Calloway were actively involved in the financial support of fledgling Black teams. In the early years of the Harlem Globetrotters (1926), the team traveled and performed with a “jump band.” Thus, “the two activities would share the same space in African-American communities with the games and the post-game dances being held in the same venue” (McLeod, 2009, p. 214).

It was during these decades that the “battle of the bands” and “cutting” contests became a popular pastime often playing to packed houses in venues including The Cotton Club and the Alhambra Ballroom. These contests pitted bands and singers against each other, allowing the crowd to declare the winners. Musicians including Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, and Chick Webb were regular participants. Later a variation of these competitions became common in the emerging hip-hop industry as “break-dancers, Turntable DJs, and rappers would engage in fierce battles in service of personal or neighborhood pride” (McLeod, 2009, p. 209).

In the 1960s, Black musicians including George Clinton and Jimi Hendricks

incorporated personal style as a form of militancy. Afro hairstyles, headbands, and knee-high socks became composite symbols of Black male power. In the 1990s, with the increasing popularity of hip-hop and rap, musicians often wore oversized basketball jerseys, low cut jeans, and heavy gold jewelry. These images, advanced through the media, served to paint a composite of an “overtly aggressive attitude epitomized in the competitive nature of DJing and MCing events” (McLeod, 2009, p. 217). This “gangsta” hyper masculinity spilled over into violence. The verbal feud between Ice Cube and Cypress Hill resulted in well-publicized threats. More well known is the infamous clash between Tupac Shakur and Notorious BIG which resulted in their deaths and served as a violent model for settling disputes.

Whether presented as an individualized story of the oppressed hero overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds or the composite narrative of the violent and dangerous Black man, these stories illustrate the ways in which culture “marginalizes black agency, empowers normalized and hegemonic forms of whiteness, and glorifies powerful black characters so long as they are placed in racially subservient positions” (Hughhey, 2009, p. 543). This binary reinforces either high visibility or anonymity within the confines of a restrictive and reductionist paradigm which prevents consideration of other forms of existence.

These narratives and counter-narratives allow for insight into how power is used to privilege some stories over others, to consider how knowledge is produced within stories and who is privileged to tell the stories. As the stories of athletes like Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods illustrate, their almost superhuman abilities transcend ordinary athletes. Similarly, the musical talents of Michael Jackson or Kanye West are commodities unavailable to ordinary Black men. This contract helps to maintain the

White male hegemony. In addition, each of these athletes and musicians have accumulated great wealth based on their entrepreneurial spirit. Lucrative endorsements and design deals as well as shoe and clothing company contracts have spilled over into the popular culture.

Research on the Black female power structures is less abundant, particularly when examined through the lens of CRT. This discussion will attempt to situate issues regarding Black women within the context of individual representations as tools and collectively as members of an exploited gender. In addition, Black female resistance and militancy will bear scrutiny.

The spring of 1939 was an eventful season in the United States. Despite the debut of the comic strip Superman, women began to make strides in academia when Freda Wunderlich became the first female dean of a U.S. graduate school. On Easter Sunday, Marion Anderson sang at the Lincoln Memorial and Billie Holiday released her rendition of the anti-lynching song “Strange Fruit.” While very different in vocal styles, both Anderson and Holiday and their choice of tunes rendered protest to the prevailing cultural climate, yet the binary of the individual struggles of these women and the collective histrionics created by the performance of the tunes reflect the ironies of the racism freely on display.

Despite Marian Anderson’s reservations, her performance standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. represented a political platform. The national furor began when the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused to allow her to perform in Constitution Hall. Anderson, a world-renowned contra-alto was supported by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt who resigned from the DAR in protest. Sponsored by the NAACP, president Walter White chose “America” for Anderson to sing in front of

75,000 people. While this event is well documented, it may be that Anderson's own choice of the encore number spoke more eloquently of her private feelings. Singing the pseudo-spiritual "Nobody Knows the Trouble I Seen" (1939) is a statement about the institutional and communal racism she faced during the ordeal.

Nobody knows the trouble that I seen, nobody knows my sorrow. Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, Glory hallelujah. Sometimes I'm up and sometimes I'm down, Oh yes Lord. You know sometimes I'm to the ground, oh, oh yes, Lord. Still nobody knows the trouble that I seen, nobody knows my sorrow. Nobody knows the trouble that I seen, Glory Hallelujah. If you get there before I do, oh, oh yes Lord, don't forget to tell my friends I'm comin too, oh oh yes Lord. Still nobody knows the trouble that I seen, nobody knows my sorrow, nobody knows the trouble I seen, Glory Hallelujah. ("Nobody Knows the Trouble I Seen," 1939)

Because Anderson's voice and by extension her body became a part of the national discourse on racism at the very time that the world was facing the racism in Nazi Germany, it was a "critical site between objectification and agency, it also became a site of resistance if black women are to reclaim their bodies and their voices to enact what Holiday called 'personal protest against the interlocking effects of racism and sexism'" (Hobson, 2008, p. 3).

"Strange Fruit" was originally penned as a poem by New York English teacher and member of the communist party Abel Meerpole, writing under the pseudonym Lewis Allen. Horrified by a photograph of a Black man, noose around the neck in a tree, he put pen to paper and eventually shared the words with Billie Holiday. Meerpole proved to be a controversial figure. Summoned to testify before a committee investigating communism in schools in 1940, Meerpole also raised Julius and Ethel Rosenberg's

children after their execution for espionage. Billie Holiday's vocal intonations invoked the cynicism and despair Meerpole intended. The song has been added to the National Recording Registry in the Library of Congress. Contextualizing the lyrics through a CRT lens, it is not difficult to notice the double entendre embedded in the lyrics:

Southern trees bear strange fruit. Blood on the leaves and blood at the root.

Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze. Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees. Pastoral scene of the gallant south. The bulging eyes and twisted mouth. Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh. Then the sudden smell of burning flesh. Here is fruit for the crows to pluck. For the rain to gather and the wind to suck. For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop. Here is a strange and bitter crop.

(Meerpole, 1937, para. 1, 2, 3)

Hardly a sentimental tune, Holiday used these lyrics to call attention to the violence perpetrated against southern Black men. It is unlikely that male vocalists including Black male vocalists of the period would have garnered such wide spread coverage of the song. These counter-narratives demonstrate that both Anderson and Holiday were able to step outside the cultural discourses on American musical heritage and sing songs of protest rather than songs in "service of someone else" (Hobson, 2008, p. 2).

The 1950s is often homogenized in America's mind as "the good days" of *Leave it to Beaver*, *I Love Lucy*, Elvis Presley, and hot rods; however, revisionist historians are replacing the ideologies of

sobriety with intensity, regulation with spontaneous invention, collective organization with individual freedom, cultural conformity with artistic expression, and political apathy with at least the cool politics of covert cultural militancy, if

not quite the hot politics of overt political action, both bebop jazz and certain kinds of rock music laid out the basic blueprint for the cultural revolutions of the post- World War II avant-garde. (Bertrand, 2004, p. 71)

While women in the 1950s were advocating for equality, the research documenting these efforts is lacking. Certainly, sociologist Margaret Mead, existentialist philosopher and writer Simone de Beauvoir, women's rights activist Betty Friedan, and gender researcher Mirra Komarovsky operated within the confines of academia and "much of the political unrest that emerged in the 1960s was about a struggle to destabilize the military-industrial complex can be attributed to their insights and theories" (Tarrant, 2005, p. 335).

With the new decade came a new wave of resistance as the barriers between men and women and Black and White continued to be challenged and streamlined through cultural venues. Historical accounts of the 1960s often involve some mention of the "counter-culture." This reaction to the homogeneity of the previous decade is well reflected in the music of the time, Scholars point to the collective culture of the hippie movement as well as the individual revolutionary. The number of Black men drafted to fight in the Vietnam war and the number of White men who were granted deferments became a hot button issue for the burgeoning counter cultures. The Nation of Islam, Black Panther Party, the SNCC, hippies, and yippies began to draw on the rhetoric of Black leaders. The resulting moral authority was reflected in the music of the day. Grace Slick, of Jefferson Airplane, appearing in blackface on "The Smothers Brothers Show," "was emblematic of a larger tendency in 1960s rock; white musicians casting themselves as political revolutionaries by enacting a romanticized version of African-American identity" (Burke, 2010, p. 63). In opposition to this is the work of Nina Simone, a

musician who was “as equally invested in social activism as she was in musical experimentation . . . she worked to generate a kind of aesthetic ‘protest music’ of a different order from that traditionally associated with black female musicians of the 1960s” (Moore, 2012, p. 178). No discussion of Simone and her legacy would be complete without the mention of her influential recording, “Mississippi Goddam,” written in 1963 in response to the murder of four young Black girls at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham Alabama. The dark lyrics and fierce vocals call out racism as an individual acceptance of Jim Crow as well as a collective social chaos.

Across her long and dynamic career, Nina Simone’s performances of “Mississippi Goddam” would highlight the ways that the artist utilized different kinds of surplus representational and metanarrative tactics to bring biting socio-political as well as cultural critiques to complicate the utility of the Black female singing voice in America. (Burke, 2010, p. 183)

Many provocative male and female rap musicians use the misogynistic lyrics and images in videos to consistently portray Black women in a sexual nature. CRT is committed to the reclamation of a balanced and fair representation of the Black woman’s voice, history, performance strategies, and ways of knowing. Just as Marian Anderson, Billie Holiday, and Nina Simone used their voices to create a public identity associated with challenging the public discourse related to Black issues and Black women in particular, what is to be made from the overtly sexual nature of modern rap music?

According to White (2003), the “good womanhood/bad womanhood dichotomy functions as a means of responding to the historical subjugation of black female bodies through the discourses of slavery, colonialism, Western science and religion” (p. 36). In response to this, Black women have engaged in the construction of “good” to gain respect

and acceptance among males, Black and White, and as a protection:

In other words, black women need to perform or mimic some degree of white femininity to gain patriarchal protection. Research on black women's migration patterns notes that fear of rape or sexual violence was a significant factor in their decision to flee to the north and the west after the end of slavery. (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 247).

In this way, Black women have been able to perform to their gender specifications as representative of the purity and goodness of their race. According to Reid-Brinkley (2008), this is a form of resistance since it "serves to destabilize the racist notions surrounding black people" (p. 246).

On the other hand, the "bad" women depicted in modern hip-hop videos "are co-opting themselves to the highest bidders, creating video environments characterized by crime, greed, lust, addiction and a new brand of male dominance that knocks Black 'queens' squarely off their pedestals and into a bedrock of promiscuity" (Hikes in Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 236). The framework of CRT and the discourses on the "collective" challenges scholars to "pay particularly close attention to the representation of Black women in rap lyrics and videos as it is taken to be relevant to their individual experience, but also more importantly to their 'social allegiance' to Black women's discursive communities" (Fiske in Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 247). Thus, the women who dance seductively, often scantily clad, violate the boundaries of this social allegiance. On the other hand, for many in the Black community, rap's domination by Black men and the sexual nature of the lyrics and videos portrays Black women as "loose and immoral, yet manipulative in her ability to use her sexually alluring nature in order to exploit men" (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, p. 249). The power binary here is described by Foucault (1972):

“There is no escaping from power, that it is always ready-present, constituting that very thing which one attempts to counter it with” (p. 82). Despite the binary of resistance, it is crucial to think about the dichotomy of Black feminist discourses that are so influential to modern culture, yet another manifestation of Black female stereotypes lies within the family structure.

Modern American mothers are often referred to with a number of descriptors: “soccer-mom,” “single-mother,” and “working-mother.” Each of these terms suggest mothers who are dedicated to their families; yet one descriptor stands alone in its negative connotation, the “welfare-mother.” Embedded in the notion of the welfare mother are powerful ideologies of race, class, and gender that blame the poor for their own poverty; portray women, particularly Black women, as inadequate mothers; and view nontraditional family forms as pathological (Springer, 2002).

In 1996, President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in an effort to uphold the nation’s moral order and to revamp the “pathology” of dependence on the government. The repeal of the 60-year-old “Aid to Dependent Families,” a public assistance entitlement, was significant. The replacement legislation relies on funding from state-controlled block grants. The new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), caps the aid at 60 months over the recipient’s lifetime and requires that 50% of all single parent families participate in work activities. The text of the draft “repeatedly extols work, family, personal responsibility and self-sufficiency, . . . encapsulating the idea that traditional welfare has debilitating effects on the moral fiber of the family” (Huda, 2001, p. 344).

Additionally, the grant structure offers bonuses to states that demonstrate reductions in single parent births and abortions. This moral tenor perpetuates the

collective opinion of the welfare family as “images of, lazy, promiscuous, breeding, black single mothers” (Huda, 2001, p. 347). The 104th Congress went further, blaming the escalating violence in the Black community on single mothers. “The likelihood that a young black man will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single families” (Huda, 2001, p. 348). While very nearly equal numbers of Black and White women and a growing number of Hispanic women populate the welfare rolls, the public face of the welfare queen is Black (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001).

How is it then that Black women, who appear to have the political and economic odds stacked against them, seek out resistance maneuvers? Welfare mothers are able to mobilize a discourse of resistance by formulating and adhering to a set of defining principles using their children to form positive ideas and separating themselves from “bad” welfare mothers. These discursive strategies “simultaneously challenged the dominant discursive practices and accommodated them” (McCormack, 2005, p. 666). McCormack (2005) made note of five qualities that identify “good” welfare mothers. Good mothers put their children first, spend time with their children, provide for their children, keep their children out of trouble, and keep their children safe (McCormack, 2005).

The ongoing debates between women who work and women who stay home share a common characteristic. Both sets of mothers believe that their choices are made in consideration of the child’s interest (Lawson-Bush, 2004). While poor women also prioritize this idea, they often have fewer choices. Often, they are restricted by the work requirements of TANF legislation and must rely on outside agencies for childcare. Others choose to send their children to live with relatives who reside in more affluent

school districts. Universally, the good mothers put the well-being of their children above their own needs and desires.

Spending time with children is another sign of a good mother according to McCormack (2005). These mothers often have low paying jobs that are subject to working in shifts. If the shift hours change, they are often forced to resign or find childcare. Leaving their children with others, even relatives, is “more fundamental to these mothers than the role of worker to their purpose and sense of self” (McCormack, 2005, p. 667). For this group of women, resisting the identity of the “welfare-mother” in face means embracing the identity of the self-sacrificing, child-defined mother so valued by legislators.

Like many parents, welfare mothers have a strong need to provide for their children. “Beyond the need for food and clothing, they fear that if the children do not have at least some of the trappings of modern culture, the children might resort to illegal activities to gain these items” (McCormack, 2005, p. 679). Shoes, hairstyles, and clothing can become important representations of the desire to fit in with middle class children.

Poor mothers also express a need to spend their time disciplining their children and instilling the values they find important in order to keep them safe. Often, these mothers are conflicted as they are forced to leave their children to work in factories, as maids, or in the childcare field. Often, the work requirements of TANF limit the options for single working mothers who are required to work, while two parent families allow for one partner to remain home as the primary caregiver for children (McCormack, 2005).

According to McCormack (2005), poor mothers also find affirmation in keeping their children out of trouble. Often, the mothers grew up in poverty and were vulnerable

to abuse as a result of “doubling up [housing], living near drug dealers, and spending time in homeless shelters” (McCormack, 2005, p. 674). Clearly, the mothers in McCormack’s study associated much of their identity as mothers from their children.

Without the economic resources, these mothers still adhere to

powerful ideologies of race, class, and gender [which] underlie the image of the welfare mother, and while these respondents are able to partially counter the negative effects of this particular construct, they do so in ways that reinforce the dominant logic. These women simultaneously resist and support a system of stratified reproduction. The resistance can be seen in the ways in which this particular group of women created a space in which they could define themselves as good citizens. For their own survival and that of their children, women receiving public assistance must create this safe space. (McCormack, 2005, p. 676).

CRT methodology challenges educators to examine stories of privilege and to distort the dominant narrative by “developing theories of social transformation wherein knowledge is generated specifically for the purpose of addressing and ameliorating conditions of oppression, of poverty, of deprivation” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36). Resistance to the power structure begins with resistance to both the individual and the collective. The multi-dimensional nature of CRT lends itself to storytelling to legitimize the experiences of those who are speaking. These stories lend credence to the belief that self-knowledge is powerful and allows the teller to name their experiences. Alternately, it allows for a critical examination of the myths and stories powerful groups use to justify racial subordination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

This section aims to demonstrate the balances and the ironies of social issues

embedded in dominant liberal critiques. The meta narratives of White privilege often blame the individual for their inability to function within the power structure yet create the very structures that are often designed to deny access to achievement. Without the powerful record labels, Black artists would be unable to reach wide audiences. Black athletes play for White coaches and owners. Without the welfare mother, the discourse of “pulling oneself up by the bootstraps” would lose its power. Without the collective “welfare mother,” the existence of poverty would necessitate a reconfiguration of the narrative of composite stories (Huda, 2001).

Politics and the Judiciary

In this section the legal legacies of the Civil Rights Movement and the changes in political discourses are examined through the lens of Bell’s (1976) interest convergence theory, a subcategory of CRT. “Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the legal academy in response to growing dissatisfaction with Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and its inability to adequately address race and racism in its critique of U.S. jurisprudence” (Hill, 2009 p. 1).

Interest-convergence theory is a liberal critique that considers the motivating factors for laws and social policies “established to eradicate racial discrimination, or provide remedies for racial injustice on the basis of merit and Colorblindness” (Donnor, 2008, p. 58). This theory is premised on the history of racial groups’ interactions with the legal system and informed this research by considering that judicial relief from racism occurs infrequently and ineffectually. Bell (2004) described this phenomenon as,

The absence of overt racial discrimination of a character that shocks the public imagination, the Fourteenth Amendment, standing alone, will not authorize judicial relief providing an effective remedy for Blacks where the remedy sought

threatens the superior societal status of middle and upper class whites. It follows that the availability of Fourteenth Amendment protections in racial cases is not actually determined by the character of harm suffered by Blacks or the quantum liability against whites. Rather racial remedies are the outward manifestations of unspoken and perhaps unconscious judicial conclusions that remedies, if granted, will secure or advance societal interests deemed important by the upper class. Racial injustice or its appearance may from time to time, be counted among the interests deemed important by the courts and society's policymakers. (p. 646)

Bell (2004), first among the academics to put forth this oppositional theory, utilized the interest-convergence to describe the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling:

The *Brown* decision represented an unstated understanding that the legally-sanctioned segregation no longer furthered and in fact was now harmful to the interest of these whites who make policy for the country. . . . The greater receptivity of the court to the plaintiff's arguments in *Brown* can't be explained . . . by the evidentiary record in the school cases of the harm done to Blacks by segregated schools. That evidence was controverted by experts for the states. Until *Brown*, Black claims that segregated public schools were inferior had been met by orders requiring merely that facilities be made equal. Courts had been unwilling to substitute their judgments for those of the legislature as to the wisdom of school segregation policies. The decision in *Brown* to break with its long-held position on these issues despite the language of the opinion, can't be understood without some consideration of the decision's impact on interest other than those of long-suffering Black children and their parents. *Brown*, while

taking from whites the benefits of segregation . . . has proved a greater value to whites than Blacks. Certainly, it has been a great blessing to whites in policy-making positions able to benefit from the economic and political advances at home and abroad that followed the abandonment of apartheid in our national law. (pp. 639-640)

Bell (1987) further asserted that the choice of public schools as the vehicle for change was an intentional one because it “represented a far more compelling symbol than segregated railroad cars, restaurants, or public restrooms” (p. 229).

Bell’s (1987) theory of interest convergence, that is to say that external factors influenced the Brown decision including political and economic considerations, is supported by other researchers. Dudziak (2012) obtained previously classified documents from the files of the Supreme Court and discovered that the case was more a matter of national interest than an attempt to right past wrongs:

In the years following World War II, racial discrimination in the United States received increasing attention from other countries. Newspapers throughout the world carried stories about discrimination against non-white visiting foreign dignitaries as well against American blacks. At a time when the U.S. hoped to reshape the postwar world in its own image, the international attention given to racial segregation was troublesome and embarrassing. The focus of American foreign policy was to promote democracy and “contain” communism. However, the international focus on US racial problems meant that the image of American democracy was tarnished. The apparent contradictions between American political ideology and practice led to particular foreign policy difficulties with countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. U.S. government officials realized

that their ability to sell democracy to the Third world was seriously hampered by continuing racial injustice at home. (p. 182)

Rebounding from the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust, many Americans had no taste for perceptions that they might in any way share a discriminatory ideology with European Nazis.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously ruled against the city of Topeka, Kansas, issuing an order to desegregate the schools, effectively ending the precedent of separate but equal set by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Although *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) was codified in 1954, it took over a decade and a series of lawsuits for the justice's intent to become a reality for many Black students.

The *Brown* decision had far reaching consequences for 17 states including Alabama, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. In four additional states, laws permitting segregated schools were repealed: Kansas, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Arizona; yet

a more hidden, but just as important repercussion of the decision would be its impact on community planning, politics, and redevelopment which up to this time had been just as completely tied to the legal strictures of segregation as had the southern schools. (White, 1994, p. 15)

The Supreme Court focused its efforts on these states, and no suits were filed challenging the natural outgrowth of population patterns in northern states. Taking cues from the northern states, the planners, legislators, and jurists found they could easily comply with the court order and keep much of the segregationist policies intact.

Most of the active efforts to block the federal courts were undertaken by local school officials because they possessed the most direct powers to manage the public schools, assign pupils, manipulate attendance zones, build new buildings and otherwise control the racial makeup of classrooms. (White, 1994, pp. 17-18). Just as school boards could make these changes, cities could change their size through annexation and mergers, thus altering the attendance zones.

The local governments, even more than the states had at their disposal a large arsenal of powers that could be interposed between the courts and the schools to create segregated neighborhoods, enforce well-defined color barriers, isolate black populations, relocate integrated schools, and otherwise forestall court-ordered desegregation. (White, 1994, p. 18)

These claims make up the majority of plaintiff complaints heard by the United States Supreme Court beginning in 1954. A review of lawsuits remanded to the Supreme Court offers insight into the nature of the laws and the issues surrounding segregation. In the aftermath of *Brown*, both states and individuals entered complaints adjudicated by the Supreme Court of the United States. These suits fall into two general categories: race-based gerrymandering and suits against school districts.

Voting rights have been closely intertwined with race since the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 which provides that no state may deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the Fifteenth Amendment followed in 1870, granting African-American men the right to vote. The Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson during the height of the Civil Rights movement and amended five times by Congress to become more inclusive. The act ordered a nationwide prohibition against the denial of the right to

vote based on literacy tests, eliminated poll taxes, and regulated the manipulation of voting districts and other structural changes aimed at preventing newly registered Black voters from exercising their rights under the Fifteenth Amendment. In the years since the law, a number of cases have been adjudicated with mixed results, yet these three pieces of legislation have often been a quagmire for the courts as states face the

problem that while race-conscious remedial redistricting may avert litigation over a . . . violation, it simultaneously opens the door to a lawsuit in which the remedial plan may be challenged as an unconstitutional racial classification under the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection clause. (Wong, 2015, p. 1660)

Redistricting allocates voters to electoral districts. Because a significant number of members of both legislative bodies are elected from single-member districts, these elected officials and their respective parties shape the political outcomes that effect the constituency. Additionally, these same legislative bodies have the initial authority to draw and control their districts; however, few legal rules regulate the redistricting of partisan lines.

The reappointment revolution of the 1960s established the constitutional principle of one person, one vote which today generally requires that electoral districts have equal populations, but the equipopulation requirement does little to curb partisan gerrymandering. Moreover, while the Supreme Court has refused to rule out the possibility that egregious gerrymanders might themselves violate the Constitution, it has rejected every claim that has come before it in the past 25 years.

Next, the timeline of cases that involve school and race questions is compared with the cases of alleged violations of the Voting Rights Act. These data will become significant as the ambiguous nature of the law informs which schools qualify for federal

Title I funding. In the 75 years since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), 86 cases challenging some aspect of the original ruling have been adjudicated by the United States Supreme Court.

CRT scholars acknowledge the efforts of individuals and legislators to gerrymander districts and perpetuate segregation through redistricting (Bell, 1987, 2004; Dudziak, 2012; White, 1994; Wong, 2015). These data illustrate the reliance of state and local districts on the court system to define the boundaries of voting districts and, by default, school districts.

One case that illustrates the deep ties between politics and education is *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), decided by the Supreme Court. Barbara Grutter, a White Michigan native brought suit against the University of Michigan Law School, alleging that the admissions policy was unconstitutional. In a 5-4 ruling, the Court sided with the university, taking into account the subjective nature of the admissions committee in selecting future cohorts. As the court's opinion indicated, "For reasons set out below, today we endorse Justice Powell's view that student body diversity is a compelling state interest and that can justify the use of race in student body admissions" (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003). In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that the use of affirmative action in school admission is constitutional if it treats race as one of a myriad of factors for admission with its purpose aimed at diversity; however, the policy would be unconstitutional if race was the only factor used for admission into the highly competitive law school. While test scores and class placement were important, these factors were not determinative. This landmark case upheld the affirmative action admission policy of the University of Michigan Law School, a state-funded institution. It was praised by many activists as an affirmation of their work to achieve Black advancement; yet Bell (2004),

who has for many years disputed the motives behind the *Brown* decision, noted parallels between the two cases: “When [Justice O’Connor] perceived in the Michigan Law School’s admission program an affirmative action plan that minimizes the importance of race while offering maximum protection to whites and those aspects of society with which she identifies, she supported it” (p. 149). Affirmative action plans remain a hot button issue in higher education and a central component of CRT scholarship.

A second case serves as an illustration of the mechanization of the college selection process. In *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003), the Supreme Court ruled that the University of Michigan’s College of Literature, Science and the Arts admission policy was too narrowly defined and as such was discriminatory. Students were granted admission based on a point system that allowed significant gains along the number line for students who were from Michigan and specifically from underrepresented areas. These areas included the northern most counties of the state where the Black population was significantly lower than the southern urban areas. Students were also awarded additional points if a parent was an alumnus of the university, where Black students have been historically underrepresented. Finally, students were awarded points based on the quality of their high school, including the rigor of the curriculum as reflected by the number of Advanced Placement courses available. These four potential forms of discrimination failed to consider students as individuals.

Together these cases are representative of the efforts of colleges and universities to diversify their incoming classes as well as the indirect influences of political interests in state-funded institutions which are often perceived as liberal and left-leaning, serving the interests of the majority. Interest convergence, since its inception over 30 years ago, has become a part of the liberal critique in legal circles but has also come to be influential

in doctrinal scholarship including implications in religious subordination, employee relations, poverty, domestic violence, and educational reforms.

The Constitution of the United States does not mandate education, rather these responsibilities fall to the states under the Tenth Amendment. In what is regarded as a significant piece of legislation passed since the Civil War, Title Six of the 1964 Civil Rights Act forbids discrimination in the use of federal funds, provided that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance; yet as efforts began to unravel freedom of choice plans, particularly in the south, both legislative and judicial consensus began to challenge the new law. When the Department of Health, Education and Welfare began enforcement practices, demonstrations broke out in cities in both the north and the south. As a result, political support for the initiative began to erode.

While legislators and courts seemed to recognize the segregation of southern Black pupils and teachers as a product of past and present political actions and thus subject to legislative direction, they often contended that racial isolation in northern communities was unrelated to public policies and institutional

arrangements and hence not subject to federal regulation. (Showell, 1976, p. 404)

Northern segregation was a result of housing patterns they reasoned, rather than institutionalized racism, and the resulting school segregation was “socially acceptable” (Showell, 1976, p. 404). Both the courts and the state legislatures in the south, where dual schools were common, began to take steps to forestall integration. Some of these direct tactics included those related to school construction, educational administration, and attendance as well as indirect methods including redevelopment, city planning, urban

renewal, and the enforcement of codes (Showell, 1976). The inclusion of the legal literature is essential to this study because it adheres to the methodologies and intellectual structures of CRT and specifically interest convergence theory. These prerequisites force researchers to ask questions including “Who receives what?” “Who is left out of the formula?” “How or why are certain people included or excluded?” “Is this a historical pattern or a new phenomenon?”

Ideologies: Whiteness as Property and Blackness as Status in Multicultural Education

The discussion in this section examines the correlation of White and Black agency represented as a liberal critique of the systems of Multicultural Education. No discussion of race and racism would be complete without grappling with the question of race as an ideology. According to CRT professor Daniel Solórzano (1997), race is a socially constructed category, an ideology designed to differentiate racial groups and to show the superiority or dominance of one race over another. While ideologies can be difficult to identify and explain, they have five shared components: “ideologies are forms of social thoughts, are networks of beliefs, can be justified or explained by those who embrace them, are deeply entrenched in the construction of both social and personal identities, and are tied to action and social practice” (Shelby, 2003, p. 159). Liberal racial ideologies are closely tied to social practices; complex and sometimes subtle ensembles of social symbols, codes, norms, and expectations; and these structure social conduct between and within the so-called races (Shelby, 2003). “CRT becomes an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction- deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 41). Race

continues to be a powerful and inescapable force that organizes both schools and the at-large society. Often conversations about race are in turn defensive and polarizing and lead to protective speech. CRT scholars acknowledge that race and attitudes about it are far more pervasive than individual racism, reasserting the idea that race only becomes important when it serves the interests of the dominant group (Crenshaw, 1989; Williams, 2004). Williams (2004) described this default narrative as a contributor to the current discourses of race in the classroom. Individualism, Williams (2004) posited, trumps all other social forces. “The individual with the proper attitude, force of will and moral fiber, can become successful” (Williams, 2004, p. 165). This “hero” story is well documented by research and reflected in the specific narratives that recount an individual’s experiences with various forms of racism.

An abundance of studies indicates that beginning in childhood, we are inundated with images that convey racial inequality (Blee, 2002; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Quillian, 2008). These images are transmitted through our personal observations and the media. Contradicting this narrative, we are also told that we should judge individuals by the quality of their character rather than the color of their skin. Ethnographic research surveys have revealed much about explicit forms of racism. In fact, there is an influential body of literature on implicit prejudices (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Kane, 1992; Rudman, 2004); that is to say that even those who claim colorblindness “tend to associate whites with mostly positive traits and blacks with mostly negative traits” (Quillian, 2008, p. 7). Additionally, these associations can affect our consciousness about our own perceptions. Moving beyond the overt manifestations of racism, other researchers have found a second layer of nearly unconscious association between race and identity. Implicit stereotypes, often identified

as implicit cognitions, is a term from memory research “referring to of past socializations or experiences that effect current thought and behavior without conscious awareness” (Quillian, 2008, p. 8). Like other forms of institutional racism, racist literature has deep historical roots.

It was not until the middle of the 18th century that books for children began to move beyond religious instruction or instructional texts. Some of the firsts included Mary Cooper’s (1744) *Tom Thumb’s Pretty Songbook* (Attar, 2016) and *A Pretty Little Pocket-book Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly* (Newbery, 1744). In much the same way merchandizing accompanies modern book publishing, this book was accompanied by a pincushion, one side black (for bad deeds) and the other side red (for good deeds). The second remarkable feature of the book was its commercial success. This small book prompted a dynamic growth in the publishing industry in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cincinnati, and San Francisco (American Antiquarian Society, 1787, para. 2).

Race continued to be visible in later books and merchandise. Bernstein (2011) observed “many nineteenth century white children especially, but not exclusively girls, read books about slavery and then used dolls to act out scenes of racialized violence and forced labor” (p. 160). Dolls were sold two ways, white china and black rubber, thus creating opportunities for violent play. “Through these performances, nineteenth century white children played at violence precisely as abolition, emancipation and then freedom were eroding American white supremacy” (Bernstein, 2011, p 163).

Modern children’s literature is far from the violence and overt racism cited above, yet negative images persist. Even minimal differences in language

exacerbates the dichotomous nature of cultural extrapolations of race, racism, and

anti-racism available through the media, to include children's literature, schools, and any number and of combinations of social institutions intended for children, to transform, transgress, reject, and re-vision race and racism. (Rogers & Christian, 2007, p. 40)

Studies involving children's literature are a relatively recent addition to the field of education. Beginning in the 1970s, universities and teacher colleges added "Kiddie Lit" to lists of required courses for prospective teachers. These survey classes were often aimed at helping preservice teachers build a classroom library and a working knowledge of current titles.

As a nascent field, researchers faced many challenges; foremost was the difficulty in agreeing on a working definition of children's literature. In a rather grim prognostication, Hade and Edmonson (2003) noted that the increasing commodification of the children's literature market is preventing children from "the opportunity to live love and dream through a variety of texts and choices imbued with rich language, art, drama, and imagination" (p. 142).

Certainly, this audience is no more well defined than the adult audience's publishers target. Children are Black and White, privileged and underprivileged, and immigrant and native and live in traditional and nontraditional families. While this is not an exhaustive list of the readers, it suggests that the literature itself must be varied and culturally appropriate. By 1976, the canon had refined the accepted definition to include specific components.

Children's' books are usually shorter, they tend to favor an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incidents rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the

story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism . . . children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive, language is child-oriented; plots are of a distinctive order; probability is often discarded; and one could go on endlessly talking of magic, fantasy, simplicity and adventure. (McDowell, 1973, pp. 141-142)

Also in 1976, in a survey of the current literature, Margaret Gibson was the first to identify five approaches to multicultural education. A decade later, multicultural educational literature began to emerge as a contested feature of children's literature. In an effort to refine the previously accepted definition, scholars including Sleeter and Grant (1987) identified five approaches to multicultural education, four differing from the features identified by Gibson. Notable among their findings is the idea that the only common element in all of the literature is the focus on education of people of color, including Blacks. "A major goal of multicultural education, as stated by specialists in the field is to reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality" (Banks, 1995, p. 3). Gay (2010) observed that the gap between theory and practice remained wide, practice she suggests lags far behind theory. Many researchers agree that to close the gap, institutional changes must be made including both teaching practice and improvements to curriculum (Banks, 1991; Boyle-Baise, 1999).

By the 1990s, researchers further refined the specific dimensions of multicultural education. It is within this definition that this paper attempts to contribute to the discourses surrounding race, children's literature, and teaching. Banks (1991) identified five interrelated components that define multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an

empowering school culture and social structure.

Content integration “deals with the extent to which teachers use examples, data and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations and theories in their subject area or disciplines” (Banks, 1991, p. 5). Often relegated to social studies and English language arts, multicultural integration is often associated with connecting lessons with celebrations or individuals associated with movements. Teaching students about racism beyond the idea of the happy gentle slaves, created by Ulrich Phillips in 1918, came of age in the 1960s with the rise of ethnic studies. No content integration can be complete until an understanding of privilege replaces the theme of tolerance as a topic for study in the classroom. Tolerance, wrote Grenby and Reynolds (2011), is “attributed to cultural majorities which maintain self-serving hierarchies favoring those who exercise tolerance, that is themselves, over those who are the objects of tolerance” (p. 264).

Banks (1991) identified knowledge construction as the second component of multicultural education. It is “the procedure[s] by which social, behavioral, and natural scientists create knowledge and how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways knowledge is constructed within it” (Banks, 1991, p. 5). Multi-cultural education paradigms are challenged by the work of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Grenby and Reynolds (2011) who took issue with the ideology of tolerance over privilege. With the rise of CRT in the 1960 and 1970s, a new framework began to take shape in educational settings for understanding and addressing the discourses surrounding race and racism in the school setting. Specifically, CRT allows researchers and school personnel the ability to

Name and discuss the pervasive reality daily reality of racism, which

disadvantages people of color, it exposes and deconstructs seemingly colorblind or race-neutral policies and practices, which entrench the disparate treatment of non-White persons, (it) legitimizes and promotes the voices and narratives of people of color as sources of critique of the dominant social order the purposefully devalues them, (it) revisits civil-rights law and liberalism to address their instability to dismantle and expunge discriminatory sociopolitical relationships and changes and improves challenges to race-neutral and multicultural movements in education, which have made white student's behavior the norm. (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 16)

Banks (1991) posited that the prejudice reduction dimension is designed to help students develop more democratic attitudes, values, and behaviors (Clark & Clark, 1963; Katz, 1993). While much progress has been made in the last 50 years, teachers often believe that young children have little awareness of racial differences. These misconceptions cannot be addressed without examining prejudices: Bank's fourth dimension. "A growing body of research suggests that responsive, early relationships shape the architecture of the brain, form the foundation of healthy social and emotional development, and foster language development" (Norris, Horm, & McMullen, 2015, p. 84). The shared social bonds formed during read-aloud time for young children has been well documented (Kantos, 1986). Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) found that children as young as three are skilled at "manipulating racial and ethnic concepts and distinctions...and concealing their knowledge and behaviors from adult notice" (p. 167). These behaviors reveal the use of racial discourses observed by children. Although the overt displays of racism have been replaced with a Laissez Faire racism (Bobo, Kluegel, & Smith, 1996), each generation of children "comes of age in framework of systemic

racism” (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001, p. 31).

The institutionalized nature of race prevailed in a significant way well into the Jim Crow decades. In a series of studies conducted between 1939 and 1950, E. L. Horowitz (1936) and R. E. Horowitz (1939) found that nursery school children were aware of racial differences. A second study, also conducted in 1939, found that both Black and White children showed a White bias to pictures and objects (Clark & Clark, 1939). Clark and Clark (1939) gave wide visibility to the self-rejection paradigm that informed the canon until the 1980s. Self-rejection theory describes the tendency to consciously or unconsciously affirm the feelings of negativity through self-fulfilling plots. This tendency may be the source of the “blame the victim” discourses often associated with race and poverty.

The self-rejection paradigm was not seriously challenged until the 1980s and 1990s. More recent studies have made a useful distinction between personal and group identities (Banks, 1984; Spencer, Swanson, & Cunningham, 1991). These researchers offer evidence that young Black children have the ability to express high self-esteem and a White bias at the same time.

It is important to realize that these exposures come from a rapid increase and access to technology. These “21st Century Students,” as Ladson-Billings (2013) termed them, are “heavily connected, believe that multi-tasking is the most efficient work method, believe in social justice, but are less sanguine about social welfare, and see themselves as consumers rather than students” (p. 107).

Banks (1993) posited that each of the five dimensions of multicultural education share similarities. Certainly, the equity pedagogy proves his statement. Beginning with the resistance movements of the 1960s, educators, along with many other Americans,

became aware of the deep divides separating racial and economic privilege and poverty. The Great Society that Lyndon B. Johnson modeled after the New Deal began to level the playing field, particularly the “War on Poverty.” With programs aimed at school readiness, free lunches, and Title 1 funding, schools began to benefit from new systems. The theories and research developed during this decade helped to explain the challenges faced by low-income citizens. Cultural deprivation became a dominant paradigm that guided the formulation of programs and pedagogies for low-income populations during the 1960s (Banks, 2009; Bereiter & Englemann, 1967; Berneis, 1965; Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965; Crow, Murray, & Smythe, 1966; Reissman, 1962). This paradigm of cultural deprivation became institutionalized and remnants of it remain and are reflected in school culture. “Cultural deprivation theorists believe the school must help low-income students to overcome the defects that result from their early family and community experiences” (Banks, 2009, p. 29). Thus, low-income students come to school with defects to be filled rather than with strengths to be nurtured. When this theory emerged, it was a liberal, forward thinking ideology and was supported by many eminent educators led by the work of Allison Davis and supported by Benjamin Bloom and Erik Erikson. Several seminal works were published and commonly used in teacher preparation classes including *Education in the Depressed Areas*, edited by Columbia professor Harry Passow (1963) and with contributors including leading social scientists David P. Ausubel, Kenneth B. Clark, and Robert J. Havighurst. Other universities used Frank Reissman’s *The Culturally Deprived Child* as a coursework reading in teacher preparation classes. Each of these texts, includes language similar to these words written by Reissman (1965): “The term ‘culturally deprived’ refers to these aspects of middle-class culture-such as education, books and formal language from which these groups have not benefitted” (p.

13). Bloom et al. (1965) published the highly influential book *Compensatory Education for Cultural Education*. As Banks (2009) pointed out, this ideology rests in the assumption that the only culture available to students is White culture.

Research in the 1970s and 1980s became critical of the cultural deprivation paradigm, pointing out that the programs resulting from this theory exacerbated institutionalized racism. The central criticism suggested that the victim was to blame for their circumstances. This exemplar is still a part of the cultural-racial landscape today. Supporters of the new cultural difference theory suggest that poor school experiences are to blame for the school failure of low-income students. In fact, these students have a rich ethnic heritage, and it is the culture of the school that causes conflict (Brown, Tanner-Smith, Chase, Lesane-Brown, & Ezell, 2007). Researchers developed lists of cultural characteristics designed to help teachers become more aware of ethnic students (Hale-Benson, 1982). For example,

The Afro-American Child is:

- Highly affective
- Uses language requiring a wide use of many coined interjections (sometimes profanity)
- Expresses herself or himself through considerable body language
- Relies on words that depend upon context for meaning and that have little meaning in themselves
- Prefers using expressions that have several connotations
- Adopts a systematic use of nuances of intonation and body language such as eye movement and positioning

- Prefers oral-aural modalities for learning communication
- Is highly sensitive to other's nonverbal cues
- Seeks to be people oriented
- Is sociocentric
- Uses internal cues for problem solving
- Feels highly empathetic
- Like spontaneity
- Adapts rapidly to novel stimuli. (Hale, 1981, p. 38)

Heath (1983) dealt more directly with language and it's used in her extended study of North Carolina families in a textile town. As an ethnographer, Heath documented detailed cases in which teachers taught students to use ethnographic methods to link the "personalized, contextualized orally expressed knowledge of the home with the depersonalized, decontextualized, primarily written knowledge of the classroom" (p. 321). This work documents the culture of one small town, the Black community, the White community, and the school community. The failures of the children in her study are directly linked to the school's failure to recognize the discontinuities between home and school, "resulting in not a disadvantaged child but a misunderstood child" (Heath, 1983, p. 324).

Empowering school culture completes Banks's (1991) fifth element of research-based discourses in multicultural education. Institutional reform and modifying cultural perceptions are key to the success of this reform dynamic. Banks (1991) described this empowerment as "the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups will experience

educational quality and cultural empowerment” (p. 6). Since the development of CRT in the 1960s and the multicultural research that followed, many challenges to past racial ideologies have been put forth. In order to be successful as a “knower,” teachers must become aware of the two common narrative schemata: first that “privilege awareness is represented as supplying greater understanding or insight to white children; and second, that the ideal outcome is for children of different ethnicities or cultures to be assimilated into whiteness” (Grenby & Reynolds, 2011, p. 164).

Multicultural theorists suggest that educators move away from the texts of victimization to a new paradigm of open discussions of racial oppression, privilege, and the everyday realities of racism. In addressing the power structures of race embedded in texts, Banfield (1979) asserted that

In a racist society children’s trade books and textbooks must be viewed as one of the most effective tools of oppression employed by a dominant majority against powerless minorities. The effectiveness of the educational institutions in socializing students to accept racist values guarantees that there will be an ever-renewing supply of persons from which the creators, editors and publishers or materials which espouse these ideas will be drawn. This has important implications, both for the methodology and criteria employed in analyzing such materials and to counteract their damaging effects on all children. (p. 23)

Countering negative images is essential to helping students untangle the confusing descriptions they receive. Children are quick to recognize unfair practices but must learn that “people can create positive change by working together. . . . Through activism activities, children build the confidence and skills who assert as adults, ‘I have the responsibility to deal with it, I know how to deal with it’” (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. 77).

An influential opportunity to deconstruct racism and White privilege in schools is through literacy education. Combining Bank's dimension of knowledge construction with an analysis of current picture books may be useful in decoding the complexities of race and privilege.

Literacy combines a set of complex, hierarchal skills. At its simplest, it is a "combination of word-reading skills and knowledge based literacy competencies" (Reardon et al., 2012, p. 18). Early readers must master letters and sounds, sight words, contextual word comprehension, literal differencing, and extrapolation. As readers become more efficient, knowledge-based competencies become important. At this level, students must evaluate by demonstrating an understanding of the author's style of cueing the reader; they must recognize the problem and make connections between the narrative and real-life experiences; and readers must also evaluate nonfiction texts by comparing and contrasting and understanding the effects of expository and biographical materials. Finally, readers at this level must understand nuanced syntax situated in domain-specific texts. These comprehension skills allow the reader to draw inferences and conclusions from complex texts to compare and evaluate the effectiveness of texts and to interpret and integrate ideas and information, particularly information from discrepant sources. It is within this context that this study examines the ways in which race and privilege are represented to young readers. What might be done to reverse this current trend and set young readers on a course to reading mastery?

Data indicate that while Black students have made gains in reading, many of those gains were made in the 1970s and 1980s. Since that time, the achievement gap has narrowed. Further, the indicators of sustained growth reveal the "black/white reading gap in reading skills was roughly half a deviation by the end of third grade and [grew] to

nearly a whole standard deviation by eighth grade” (Reardon et al., 2012, p. 27). This gap continues to widen as students progress in their academic career so that by the time poor Black students enter high school, their literacy skills lag behind their wealthier White peers by 5 years.

It has been established herein that young children begin to develop an awareness of difference in skin color, hair, and facial features as young as 3 years old. By providing books with positive cultural images, parents, teachers, and caregivers can encourage positive racial identity and prepare them to face stereotypes with a greater understanding. Using read aloud books encourages children to learn social roles including “acknowledgement and respect of diverse cultures” (Hall, 2008, p. 81). One key way to successfully teaching these objectives is to create an environment that reflects diversity.

Certainly, diversity has not been a feature of children’s literature. Studying over 5,000 trade books published in 1962, 1963, and 1964, Larrick (1965) uncovered the following statistics:

Of the 5206 children’s trade books launched by the sixty-three publishers in the three-year period, only 349 included one or more Negroes, and average of 6.7%. Among the four publishers with the largest lists of children books, the percentage of books with Negroes is one third lower than this average, these four firms (Doubleday, Franklin-Watts, MacMillan and Harper and Row), published 866 books in the three-year period and only 4.2 percent have a Negroe in text or illustration. Eight publishers produced only all white books. (p. 64)

Larrick’s (1965) study was replicated in a 1979 survey of children’s literature published between 1973 and 1975. Researchers at Harvard University examined books from 58 publishers, all members of the Children’s Book Council. These businesses

distributed a total of 4,775 books during the period under scrutiny. Of these, 689, or just over 14% included a Black character either in the text or in an illustration. Chall et al. (1979) found a greater representation of Black biographies, with the majority “being about sports figures and popular entertainers. Of the nearly 700 books with Blacks, 79 were biographies and of those 50 dealt with sports figures and entertainers” (p. 531). As a legacy of the Civil Rights movement, the Children’s Defense Fund actively seeks to counter this trend by selecting “Liberation literature” for the summer curriculum used in the Freedom Schools in 25 states.

Freedom Schools, created by the Children’s Defense Fund, is a 6-week summer program aimed at preventing summer losses in reading. The Children’s Defense Fund is a private, nonprofit, child-advocacy organization founded in 1973 in Washington, D.C. by Marian Wright Edelman. Using “Liberation literature,” the program objectives are aligned with CRT:

- Celebrate the strengths of the Black family as a cultural institution and vehicle for survival
- Bear witness to Black people’s determined struggle for freedom, equality and dignity
- Nurture the souls of Black children by reflecting back to them, both visually and verbally, the beauty and competencies we as adults see in them
- Situates itself, through its language and its content, within African-American literary and cultural contexts
- Honor the tradition of story as a way of teaching and as a way of knowing.

(Bishop, 1997, p. 273)

Freedom schools implement a curriculum centered on African-American culture. The core of the program is the Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC) including books that fit the “Liberation literature” paradigm. The lessons focus on self, family, community, country, and world. “In African-American culture, a commitment to social connectedness, which includes an awareness of social bonds and responsibilities transcends individual privilege” (Jackson & Boutte, 2009, p. 114). This approach has successfully incorporated counter-narratives by selecting books with themes that include “I Can Make a Difference in Myself, My Family, My Community, My Country, and My World with Hope, Education, and Action” (Bishop, 2017).

In a program evaluation conducted at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Taylor and Cinisomo (2015) examined the IRC program’s effect on the reading performance of enrolled students. This study assessed the Freedom School sites located in Charlotte, North Carolina beginning in 2009 and ending in 2015. Results from the Basic Reading Inventory (Johns, 2008) measured student independent and frustration reading scores equivalent to a corresponding grade level using a pretest and a posttest. Almost all participants qualified for free and reduced lunches (96%) and over half were African-American, almost equally distributed between gender. The results indicate that, on average, scholars (Freedom School term) improved at least two full grades between the pretest and the posttest.

Scholars at Level III (grades 6-8) showed the most improvement with a mean improvement of 2.73. Very similar growth was measured in Level II scholars with a mean difference between pretest and posttest of 2.53. The youngest group, Level I scholars improved by a mean difference of 1.99. Further, 90% of the participants in the Charlotte study grew at least two grades over the six-week

period. (Taylor & Cinisomo, 2015, p. 15)

The Freedom School project is an example of using authentic texts to legitimize and validate the counterstories of the realities of modern Black children. As Banks (2009) suggested, the Freedom Schools use of Afro-centric literature builds a construction of knowledge that creates educational discourses focusing on “implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives and biases” (p. 5).

Beginning in 2002, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison began tracking data on race in children’s literature. These books, both those with ethnically diverse characters and written by ethnically diverse authors, indicate that less than 12% of the books reviewed in 2016 were about African-Americans. The data are consistent over the course of the study; while the number of books published is rising, the percentage of varied ethnic representations is very small.

Table 2

Publishing Statistics on Children's Books about People of Color

| Year | Books Reviewed | African-American Authors | About African-Americans |
|------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2016 | 3,400 | 93 | 286 |
| 2015 | 3,400 | 108 | 270 |
| 2014 | 3,500 | 85 | 181 |
| 2013 | 3,200 | 68 | 93 |
| 2012 | 3,600 | 68 | 119 |
| 2011 | 3,400 | 79 | 123 |
| 2010 | 3,400 | 102 | 156 |
| 2009 | 3,000 | 83 | 157 |
| 2008 | 3,000 | 83 | 172 |
| 2007 | 3,000 | 77 | 150 |
| 2006 | 3,000 | 87 | 153 |
| 2005 | 2,800 | 75 | 149 |
| 2004 | 2,800 | 99 | 143 |
| 2003 | 3,200 | 79 | 171 |
| 2002 | 3,150 | 69 | 166 |

Note. Documented by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin.

Horning (2017) noted that while each year brings amazing multicultural books,

“there aren’t enough of them” (para. 4). The more books there are, especially books created by authors and illustrators of color, the more opportunities librarians, teachers, parents, and other adults have of finding outstanding books for young readers and listeners that reflect dimensions of their lives (Horning, 2017). In the survey of the 2016 titles, Horning noted that “in picture books featuring humans as principle characters, the default is still to Whiteness . . . we can also say that a definite trend is to make some main character’s brown-skinned with no identifiable culture or cultural content to the stories” (para. 5).

Conversations about race in literature often revolve around diversity, multicultural education, and culturally relevant teaching. Little notice is given to teaching issues surrounding race and racism. Educators who think of their practice as multicultural often do not “have to interrogate the ways that white people are beneficiaries of cultural inequalities” (Rogers & Mosley, 2006, p. 465). As White people often profess colorblindness, it is more likely that they have yet to consider the privileges that the color of their skin offers (Whiteness as property). CRT scholars cite the relationship of racism and property as evidence of deep, institutionalized racism. Slavery became a part of the political landscape in Virginia almost as soon as slaves began arriving, codified by “Men who expressed a commitment to liberty and justice and could uphold the repression of black African-Americans” (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 15). CRT legal scholars argue that the laws enacted served as an enduring foundation for the notion of Whiteness and the associated privileges. U.S. history and the legacies of jurisprudence have reified Whiteness as a property interest. These property rights function on three levels: “the right of possession, the right to use, and the right of disposition” (Harris, 1993, p. 472).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) wrote that these forms of property rights remain

an integral part of school culture in the United States. Schools, they assert, have been resegregated via rigorous curriculum, advanced placement classes, talent development pools, and other educational inequities. The selection and admission requirements to these programs assure that Black applicants are less likely to meet the designs of the admission criteria and thus more likely to fail to meet the standards.

Because of its forensic and polarized nature, the current acrimonious debate about the extent to which histories and cultures of women and people of color should be incorporated into the studies of Western civilization in the nation's schools, colleges and universities has complicated the quest for sound definitions and clear disciplinary boundaries within the field. (Banks, 1991, p. 4)

Complete agreement surrounding the definitions and practices of multicultural education continue to be malleable. Children's literature plays an important role in the development of cultural sensitivity and lays the groundwork for future social identities (Banks, 2009; Cross, 1991; Horowitz, 1936, 1939; Katz, 1993). For this to be a successful effort, educators must survey the literature for authenticity and ask, "Who's lived experience is represented?" "How can we position readers to become aware of characters' accorded consciousness and motivation rather than as representation of mainstream ideologies and stereotypes?" "How does teacher schema effect what they choose to teach and the unspoken ideologies harbored about race in classrooms?" "How do the ongoing struggles with power and privilege weave into the narrative of teaching and learning?"

Relevant to this study is the background material on race and slavery. It is a history that began with a manifestation unlike slavery in the American south. For an understanding of early bondage, the work of Schidel (2010) offered insight into the

Transatlantic slave trade during the Roman Empire. Unlike antebellum slavery, ancient slave societies were a cog in the capitalistic wheel of budding civilizations, “never dominating market production in quantitative terms but creating vital pockets of development” (Schidel, 2010, p. 17).

As slave-based capitalism expanded, the opening of early trade routes exposed travelers to people very different than their neighbors. The discoveries of unknown continents and populations opened a floodgate of social and intellectual questions that created, defined, and reified differences between peoples. The work of Perez (2005) documented the beginning of slavery as an exploitive tool of capitalist notions in pre-inquisitorial Spain: “The idea of tolerance in medieval Spain was a *de facto* tolerance, suffered rather than desired” (p. 13). While Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived and worked in the same city, Al Andalus was segregated by religion and, by default, race. In his account, Perez made note of the ways in which religious segregation precluded economic stratification with the end result being a codification of laws during the Council of Lateran (1215) creating new regulations that sought to limit contacts between Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Mixed marriages were banned; Jews were forbidden to employ Christians; Christians and Jews could not share meals; and Christian mothers could not employ Jewish wet nurses. The Council also proposed that Jews and Muslims wear an identifying sign (Perez, 2005).

The notion of “blood purity” is the result of these laws and is explained in the work of Kagan and Dyer (2013). Using extant autobiographical works of prisoners of the Inquisition and the political and social reverberations of race and racism to illustrate the growing disparity between Jews, Christian, and Muslims lends insight into the personal lives of the persecuted and the social, economic, and cultural realities of the age. This

“blood purity” would become a central component in the rise of African slavery following the conclusion of the Inquisition (Kagan & Dyer, 2013).

Historians George Frederickson, Biron Davis, Sven Beckert, and William Riddell provided insight into the development of both the Transatlantic and the Trans-Saharan slave routes during the 15th century. The slave trade underwent a radical change during this period as Black African slaves became commodified as laborers in Europe and Asia and later in the Americas.

War capitalism relied on the capacity of rich and powerful Europeans to divide the world into an “inside” and an “outside.” The “inside” encompassed the laws, institutions, and customs of the mother-country where state-enforced order rules. The “outside” by contrast, was characterized by imperial domination, the expropriation of vast territories, decimation of indigenous peoples, theft of their resources, enslavement and the domination of vast tracts of land by private capitalists with little effective oversight by distant European states. (Beckert, 2015, p. 38)

It was also during this time that skin color became a marker of difference, as dark-skinned Africans were captured and installed wholesale into seaside ports for shipment to markets across the continents. This wholesale mixing of distinctive tribes is likely the beginnings of race classification. “Negroes souls are as black as their skins . . . their intelligence appeared inferior to that which had been admired in elephants” (Davis, 1968, p. 468). Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, and Dutch traders “paid African rulers to go on a hunt for labor, exchanging captives for the products of Indian weavers” (Beckert, 2015, p. 35). Often, primary sources are useful in gaining perspectives into the accepted language of racism.

In the study of the condition of the Negro Slave, the French possessions in America are of great importance. The laws specially passed concerning slave trade and the Negro slave were generically known as the “Le Code Noir,” the “Black Code.” (Riddell, 1925, p. 321)

Along the gold coast of Africa, more than eight million slaves were transported to the Americas in the three centuries after 1500.

The Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, coincided with the Scientific Revolution. During the 17th century, new philosophical and intellectual movements began to dominate thought in Europe and the colonies. These evolving paradigms help to develop a timeline for the gradual institutionalization of race in modern society. Hume, Voltaire, Kant, and de Gobineau used their considerable influence to “develop their religious convictions amid the contingencies of antebellum life, whatever irony may have attended their beliefs about race or their hopes for the Union” (Noll, 2002, p. 151). These examples of early racial classifications are based on both physical and intellectual differences with European intellect and prowess defining the apex of the scale. Still other thinkers refined these racial classifications, narrowing indigenous Europeans into categories including Nordic or Mediterranean. Primary source material including the work of Blumenbach, Morton, Agassiz, and Darwin bring forth the notions of racial classification based on scientific reasoning. Among others, these four highly regarded intellectuals were responsible for bringing the idea of race and classification to a wider audience. For this, the work of Wallis is responsible for the connections between the ideas of a racial taxonomy and the commodification of the Black body in its earliest representations. During the antebellum decades, Blacks had come to be situated between White Europeans and monkeys. Using this pseudo-science,

phrenologists and taxonomists used the images to develop what we now see as familiar stereotypes: “the popular images built on the scientific ones and enhanced or exaggerated distortions of the black body” (Wallis, 1996, p. 105). Nonetheless, many historians and anthropologists agree that the effort to build a taxonomy of race coincides with the birth of the modern era: a period of scientific inquiry, expanding global trade routes, secular ideas, and humanism. In addition, this new taxonomy helped to define the reconfiguration of the shift in the nature of forced labor in the colonies of the United States.

For insight into the economic motivation behind this constructed taxonomy of forced labor the primary sources of Thomas Jefferson and later William Riddell represent a growing rationalization for slavery.

Records of plantation owners in the Caribbean and in the colonies of Virginia and Maryland reveal the fact that Africans were initially considered a civilized and docile people who had knowledge of and experience with tropical cultivation.

They were accustomed to discipline, one of the hallmarks of civilized behavior, as well as working cooperatively in groups. They knew how to grow corn, tobacco, sugar cane, and cotton in their native lands; these crops were unknown in Europe.

And many Africans had knowledge of metal work, carpentry, cattle-keeping, brick-making, weaving, leather tanning, and many other skills. Colonists soon realized that without Africans, their enterprises would fail. (Smedley, 2007, p. 4)

The value of the cotton-based economy and the necessary labor required to sustain southern plantations, northern factories and shipping interests, and the European thirst for the finished fabric is the focus of Becker’s (2015) “Empire of Cotton.” This prize-winning study offers a cautionary tale of capitalistic exploitation and cronyism.

Violence and coercion, in turn are as adaptive as the capitalism they enable, and they continue to play an important role in the empire of cotton to this day. Cotton growers are still forced to grow the crop; workers are still held as virtual prisoners in factories. Moreover, the fruits of their activities continue to be distributed in radically unequal ways, with cotton growers in Benin, for example, making a dollar a day or less, while the owners of cotton growing businesses in the United States have collectively received government subsidies of more than \$35 billion between 1995 and 2010. (Beckert, 2015, p. 442)

For reference material pertaining to the war years and Reconstruction, Eric Foner is a widely respected and referenced scholar on the subject. His work allowed for the contextualization of the early challenges of a newly free citizenry and the now clear markers of early racism institutionalized through state-sanctioned political and legal maneuvering. “The war inspired a shift from antebellum anti-institutionalism, which saw the purification of the individual as the route to social change, to a state-centered vision in which political power could be harnessed to social betterment” (Foner, 1998, p. 99). Emancipation would long remain a model of social change, a touchstone for movements demanding other forms of liberation.

While much of the early work on Jim Crow is centered in the origins of the character and the lasting legacies created by the character, more contemporary writers have connected the work of the Supreme Court during the Progressive era to these stereotypes. For this insight, the work of Brian Schmidt is useful. The Supreme Courts created laws that were “a fitting legal symbol for a southern society in motion, losing its roots in the solid earth of feudal agricultural arrangements that kept Blacks in their place without the need for a legal structure specifically enforcing racial separation” (Schmidt,

1982, p. 463). In addition, the influential work of Staley Elkins and his theories of closed plantation societies inform the forward momentum of early Black stereotypes.

For the plantation to operate efficiently and profitably, and with a force of laborers not all of whom are fully broken to plantation discipline. The necessity of training them to work long hours and give unquestioning obedience to their masters and overseers superseded every other consideration. (Elkins 1959, p. 48)

To gain an understanding of the state's efforts to repress Blacks through social control with the use of violence and the penal system, the work of Massey and Myers (1989) provided insight into the connections between modern practices of incarceration and those of the past.

Repressive social control of Blacks in the south changed between 1882 and 1935. But the evolution of race relations in the south may be a unique social phenomenon that had implications not only for the relationships among mechanisms of social control but also for the more basic relationship between social control and punishment. (Massey & Myers, 1989, p. 484)

The documents from the NAACP provided primary sources for the activities and judicial organizing efforts surrounding the challenges to school segregation in the 1950s. Following this legislation, as the court furthered their demands for compliance, the work of Simon Hall was helpful in connecting the ideologies established in the 1960s with the practices taken on by opponents of busing in the 1970s. Also important is his work on the legacies of this effort.

The Civil Rights/ Black Power movement's championing of African-American identity and group-based rights, and the new left's emphasis on authenticity as a basis for political organizing, augured a wider emergence of political and cultural

mobilizations during the 1960s and 1970s that were rooted in identity. (Hall, 2008, p. 671)

These social movements provided new models for grass-roots organization and gave voices to the disenfranchised.

The value of the lessons of grass-roots activism, protest politics, and legal maneuverings of the previous decades are replaced in the 1980s with conservative politics, a focus on individual wealth and career status, and questions of class. Many historians and social scientists posit that manifestations of racism have continued to evolve (Lowy, 1991).

Race in the Age of Accountability

Current trends in race and disparity in the United States are represented in the primary resources of the Kaiser Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation reports. These data, when disseminated, indicate the differences between the gains made in income; and educational proficiencies are based on race and social class. Data from recent studies on disparity in reading growth along the lines of race and poverty were obtained through sources found in the ECLS-K prepared and reported by Reardon et al. (2012).

Data regarding school vouchers and charter school information from www.publiccharters.org provided useful information. Researchers do not agree on the effectiveness of charter schools. Some posit that this model is one possible solution for poor ethnic minority students (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003), while others believe that charter schools openly or implicitly reinforce stratification.

Reflecting more uncertainty are studies that examine the efficacy of NCLB. Aimed at leveling the field for all students, the law mandates schools make AYP or face

sanctions. These scores are determined by state-devised tests and require school to break down student proficiency scores by racial and ethnic subgroups. Whether this model is effective in closing the achievement gap remains an open question (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). Teachers and administrators may use a disproportionate amount of fiscal and human resources to improve the scores of struggling students. Students who do poorly on the state tests may drop out (Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001). Again, the scholarship provided is a mixed bag. Some ethnic minority students make gains under the mandates of accountability (Hanusheck & Raymond, 2005), yet some researchers indicate that “it is not only a matter of race and ethnicity, or immigration status . . . personal behaviors may matter just as much” (Hochschild & Shen, 2014, p. 5).

Given the large urban population in the United States, it is fair to infer that many of the issues surrounding race and class are found in large school districts. As of 2009, “seventy-one percent of the students in the one hundred largest districts are non-Anglo and over half are poor enough to be eligible for free or reduced price lunches” (Hochschild, & Shen, 2014, p. 5). In addition, 13% have an Individualized Education Plan and 14% are English Language Learners. About 70% graduate from high school within 4 years; but in other districts including Baltimore, New York City, Los Angeles, and other cities, the rate hovers around 50%. The research is divided on the salience of race in policy development. Some research indicates that making improvements to the economic base might improve these statistics. Other studies suggest that Black school boards, mayors, and administrators make only marginal differences (Hochschild & Shen, 2014). Empirical analysis reveals that the gap continues to widen while urban resources are stretched considerably.

In the years following *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), Jim Crow laws hampered the

efforts to desegregate schools. Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, 50 years of desegregation followed. Then in 2007, the Supreme Court's decision in *Parents Involved in Community Schools* invalidated voluntary race-based student assignment policies in Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Washington. The ruling raised old questions surrounding the constitutionality of race-based student assignment (Fischbach et al., 2008). Some research indicates that school boards and legislators "Need to continually acknowledge the vast, interlocking structural barriers to equal opportunity . . . including discrimination and government policy [and] segregated neighborhoods" (Ogletree & Eaton, 2007, p. 298) or that separation continues within classroom, schools, and districts (Orfield & Lee, 2007).

Understanding the framework that informs the current discourses about race and racism will enhance an understanding of the representations of race so educators may engage in teaching well to transform students. Using CRT as a methodological framework allows researchers to use the stories of history and trends in pop culture to illuminate issues of race in United States society.

CRT began as a response to the work of legal scholars in the decades following the Civil Rights movement. Initially labeled CLT, scholars began to question traditional legal scholarship which focuses on doctrine and policy analysis. Founding professors Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman began to challenge the work of CLT scholars as "a social artifact that operates to recreate and legitimate American society" (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 1350). Bell's (1972) course textbook *Race, Racism, and American Law* stood as the organizational outline for opposition to the existing racial frameworks that were the legacies of the Civil Rights movement. This text is recognized as the first institutionalized expression of CRT and was one of the earliest attempts to bring scholars

together to address the law's treatment of race. Bell (1976) began to formulate his oppositional discourse when he wrote,

The great crusade to desegregate the public schools has faltered. There is increasing opposition to desegregation at both local and national levels (not all of which can now be simply condemned as "racist"), while the once vigorous support of the courts is on the decline. New barriers have arisen-inflation makes the attainment of racial balance more expensive, the growth of the black population in urban areas renders it more difficult, an increasing number of social sciences studies question the validity of its educational assumptions. (p. 471)

Bell (1987) urged civil rights attorneys to put aside their single-minded pursuit of racial balance and to use the legal system to bring about equality in the educational systems. As Bell (1976) developed CRT, he came to believe in interest convergence; that is the idea that Whites will only accept efforts at equality in U.S. cultural, social, and educational systems if their own privileges are not threatened.

The availability of the Fourteenth amendment protection in racial cases may not actually be determined by the character of harm suffered by blacks or the quantum of liability proved against whites. Racial remedies may instead be the outlawed manifestations of unspoken and perhaps subconscious judicial conclusion that the remedies, if granted, will secure, advance, or at least not harm societal interests deemed important by middle and upper class whites. Racial justice- or its appearance- may, from time to time, be counted among the interests deemed important by the courts and by society's policymakers. (Bell, 1980, p. 523)

Bell's (2004) theory of interest convergence, that is to say the external factors

influenced the *Brown* decision including political and economic considerations, is supported by other researchers.

As the work of Bell gained recognition, other legal scholars followed suit: Charles Lawrence, Lani Guinier, Richard Delgado, and Mari Matsuda created a body of work challenging traditional narratives about race including education. “Most black children attend public schools that are both racially isolated and inferior. Demographic patterns, white flight, and the inability of the courts to effect the necessary degree of social reform render further progress implementing *Brown* almost impossible” (Bell, 2004, p. 518).

Lawrence (2005) explored the questions of the ways constitutional theory accounts for the impact of racial prejudices. Specifically, Lawrence (2005) asked,

How does racism affect the way we create community and make decisions about who we are and the laws that govern our behavior? How should what we understand about our society’s racism shape the meaning we give and the role we assign the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment? (p. 1360)

Lawrence (2005) issued a challenge to think about duty as a responsibility of citizenship, and an opportunity to consider the disenfranchised using the lens of CRT. The call to action for legislators, educators, and parents is “dishonored when there is a failure to talk honestly about race, it excludes poor black and brown children from the circle of care that defines the scope of that duty” (Lawrence, 2005, p. 1360).

Lawrence (2005) also confronted the current discourses about race in schools by asking readers to acknowledge fear. Lawrence (2005) believed that

These fears originate in cultural beliefs about blacks; in parents’ accurate observation that less is given to and expected from children in segregated Black schools; in parents’ concerns that their children will be losers in a competitive,

market driven world; and in parents' experiences of loneliness and alienation in the responsibility of raising children. (p. 1361).

Lawrence (2005) used his own narrative to challenge parents and educators to face their fears surrounding race, asking readers to consider how individual belief systems contribute to the whole:

We have an internalized set of beliefs about African-Americans that has its origin in racist ideology. . . . We are all frightened to some degree of things and people we do not know, but racism involves a particularly invidious form of fear of the other. None of us wants to think of himself as capable of this kind of thinking . . . our natural inclination is to deny these beliefs and thus deny the fear of blackness. (p. 1370)

Finally, Lawrence (2005) issued a call to action, demanding that the reader acknowledge that all are racists, sharing a common history and culture where racism was and is paramount. "This shared experience shapes ideas, attitudes and beliefs that attach significance to an individual's race and induce negative feelings and opinions" (Lawrence, 2005, p. 1371). Despite this, Lawrence (2005) also believed that we are unaware of our racism and share a commitment to equality. Lawrence (2005) posited that if we "were able to talk openly about our fears of blackness we might find ways to confront and alleviate them. Yet these are 'Forbidden Conversations'" (p. 1371).

Guinier's (2013) work included examinations of the public's role in defining the law and the relationship between democracy and the law. Guinier's (2013) groundbreaking work in "demosprudence" promoted the tenets of CRT by emphasizing "the role of informal democratic mobilizations and wide-ranging social movements that serve to make formal institutions, including those that regulate legal culture more democratic" (p.

442). The Supreme Court cases examined later in the study offer a legal perspective aimed at illustrating the ways in which citizens are active participants in the formation of legal doctrine. Guinier (2013) suggested that the Justices also play an important role in the dialogue of the law and politics by “expanding the audience for their opinions to include those unlearned in the law” (p. 443).

This sort of inclusive democracy is an integral part of CRT. Guinier (1994) took up this perspective in her historiographical account of the ways in which the Voting Rights Act has been conceptualized over time. Describing the first set of cases litigated between 1966 and 1982, Guinier (1994) found the courts willing to acknowledge the “formally fair” principle of individual votes. The cases that followed, named the “second generation cases,” take up questions that are interpreted as “the right to cast a meaningful vote or as the right to elect a candidate of the ethnic minority groups choice” (Guinier, 1991, p. 1424).

As Guinier (2008) continued to develop her ideas about law and demosprudence as a social movement, she wrote that the public’s “preoccupation with elections—especially in a winner take all environment, does not achieve the robust democratic accountability it promises” (p. 2). In fact, the very foundation of representative democracy has been turned wrong side out; it “too often serves to convert political office into a form of hereditary privilege” (Guinier, 2008, p. 2). Rather than this matrix, Guinier (2008) suggested a move toward

collective efficacy as an alternative metric of democratic accountability where mobilized citizens hold their representatives accountable to a political or public agenda. . . . Shifting the metric of success from the quality of (representative) services to the quality of (representative/citizen) relationships and facilitate (ing)

the development of citizens who actively help to make, rather than consume democracy. (p. 4)

Like his CRT contemporaries, Richard Delgado began his career as a legal scholar and over time became an advocate of storytelling, a critical component of CRT. Delgado (1996) stressed the importance of understanding differences through storytelling: “In particular, reading the autobiographies of contemporary African-Americans and other people of color can provide unique insights in to the way racism works and can enable the reader to see the world through another’s eyes” (p. 14). Autobiographies offer the writer a dual way of seeing, often as a victim or a marginalized person, and then as others see him in their reaction to the story he tells. Delgado (1996) posited that storytelling offers two opportunities: one for the writer to “lend an outside edge that many have found instructive and fascinating. Secondly, it assists the cause of social transformation because it helps majority race readers to understand how they are different from us and the same” (p. 99). First published in 1995, *The Rodrigo Chronicles* (Delgado, 1995b) tackled topics including Economics of Politics and Race; Care, Competition, and the Redemptive Tragedy of Race; Neutrality and Stasis in Antidiscrimination Law; Civitas, Civil Wrongs and the Politics of Denial; Intersections, Essences and the Dilemma of Social Reform; Race, Democracy, and the State; Black Crime, White Fears on the Social Construction of Threat; and Cultural Power: Law Reviews and the Attack on Narrative Jurisprudence. In this work, Delgado (1995b) moved the reader into narrative and counter-narratives as a tool that illustrates the permanence of racism. The *Chronicles*, a fictional account of conversation between a graduate student and his mentor professor aim to open dialogues of alternate perspectives of matter surrounding race and racism. These stories offer the “possibility that in some

circumstances, doctrinal critique might engage its object more effectively when these narrative aspects are emphasized, that is when the critique (or object doctrine) is offered unabashedly as a story” (Hayman & Levit, 1996, p. 401).

Delgado is also responsible in part for the notion that race and racism are largely unconscious and a permanent part of our society. Delgado (1995a) wrote, “Legal and cultural decisions are made against a background of assumptions, interpretations implied exceptions, things everyone in our culture understands but that seldom, if ever, get expressed explicitly” (p. 63). Rather, this structural racism is so embedded that White people often do not recognize it.

White over black domination is a concerted system. Racism derives its efficacy from its insidiousness. Many whites don’t realize this. They equate racism with shocking acts such as lynching or cross burnings. Most white folks, even ones of good will perceive much less racism in the world than there actually is...this concerted quality of racism enhances its malevolent efficacy making it an ever present force even for those of us with high professional status and wealth.

(Delgado, 1995a, pp. 76-77)

While Delgado is responsible for recognizing the duality and interdisciplinary nature of CRT, his colleague takes the notion of a binary story outside the walls of academe and into the cultural sphere. Matsuda (1989) posited that this method of storytelling “mediates between different ways of knowing in order to determine what is just and what is true” (p. 2321). Like Bell (1987), Matsuda (1989) believed that the legal system and the procedures for remedy are intentionally stacked against minorities. Her observations of the dichotomy in the law are clear and compelling, namely the refusal to recognize the competing values of liberty and equality at stake in the case of hate speech.

She described legal protections for racism including “the limits of doctrinal imagination on creating first amendment exceptions for free speech, and the refusal to view the protection of racist speech as a state action” (Matsuda, 1989, p. 2375).

Matsuda (1987) recognized that Black culture is an indispensable part of CRT. Creativity has been used as a “survival tactic.” She wrote, “For the legal theorist, the relevance of Black artists fighting to establish progressive language and music is that the fight over the body and soul of American law is part of the same struggle” (Matsuda, 1987, p. 5). The law, as critical scholars recognize, consists of language, ideals, and structures that have material and moral consequences. Less well-known scholars also contributed to the discussions of CRT dimensions. Essential to understanding the ways in which counterstories and stereotypes are represented in pop culture, the work of McLeod (2009) was invaluable. McCormack (2005) offered insight in to the power structures, the barriers to equality, and the resistance discourses created by Black women in response to the Black male patriarchy. For making the historical connections to Black women’s resistance through music, the research of Hobson (2008) places a lens on oppositional Black women in music was useful. The music of the 1960s was instrumental in defining challenges to the existing power structures. Philip Burke and E. F. White offered perspectives in understanding how modern music has taken its cue from the past. For evaluations on the judiciary, gerrymandering, and the legal cases, the works of Bell (1987, 1996; Schmidt (1982), Tate (1997), White (1994), and Shelby (2003) were foundational.

The interdisciplinary nature of CRT scholarship soon led to a number of researchers who focused their work on and the aggressions associated with race: Daniel Solórzano, Tara Yosso, and Derald Sue. While overt racism is often well documented

and widely reported by media outlets, other subtler types of racism continue to be a part of the American social landscape. Microaggressions are refined forms of racism. These degradations are often manifested in daily interactions and undermine the well-being of the recipients (Yosso et al., 2002).

Much of the current literature on microaggressions comes from the field of psychology (Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008). Microaggressions are defined by these scholars as commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, generally unintentional which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights or insults (Sue et al., 2007, p. 275).

CRT is closely associated with the postmodern theories surrounding liberalism and how it is situated in society, law, and education. For background in postmodernity, the work of Crenshaw (1988, 1989), Foucault (1972), and Rogers and Christian (2007) offered perspectives on the discourses of power and privilege.

The development of the human brain and the connections between reading (Hasson, 1999; Hughes-Hassel & Rodge, 2007), brain development (Katz, 1993; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001), and self and other awareness (Guss, Norris, Horm, Monroe & Wolfe, 2013) were crucial to this study since they are the foundation of the manifestation of sensitivity to differences in skin color, hair texture, and the shape of facial features.

Vital to an understanding of early development of racial ideas and children perceptions of race were the works of Cross (1991) and Katz (1993). NCES offered primary data on the current status of reading and the correlation to scale scores on standardized testing. While the achievement gap has closed over the last decades, the gap remains sizable and enduring (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2008). Explanations vary across the literature as researchers work to tease out explanations from a vast array of causal

factors. Accounts range from discrimination in the school setting (Farkas, 2003), to teacher perceptions of students (Ferguson, 2003), to studies that reproach Black students who refuse to “act White” (Ogbu, 2002). Other explanations include racial bias in testing, (Jencks, 1998), socioeconomic disparities in both families and communities (Magnuson & Votruba-Drzal, 2009), class disadvantages (), and overall school quality (Hanusheck & Raymond, 2005)

To understand early racial representations and the connections between reading and play, the work of Bernstein (2011) and Greene (1980) offered insight into the ways in which children, past and present, form ideas about race and Otherness. Racial awareness, preferences, and self-identification remained constant between the two studies, suggesting that children as young as three are mindful of racial differences (Bernstein, 2011; Greene, 1980). As early as 1936, E. L. Horowitz developed the “Horowitz Face Test,” a cardboard rectangle with eight male faces: four Black and four White. Questions included “Show me all those you like” and “Show me those you want to be in your class at school.” This study informed much of social science for many years following its publication. In a follow-up study in 1939, Horowitz studied nursery school children by showing them pictures of White and Black children asking, “Is this you?” This is an example of early work by researchers in the development of group identification. By 1950, Clark and Clark (1939) developed and administered a “coloring test” to determine attitudes about Black children. Their results found that the test subjects suffered from a “tremendous burden of feelings of inadequacy and inferiority which seem to become integrated into the personality” (Clark & Clark, 1963, p. 350). These children, concluded Clark and Clark, needed intense mental hygiene to understand their race.

For current research on group identity, the work of Spencer et al. (1991) provided

insight into ethnic minority identities. Spencer et al. identified three ethnic minority group identities: an outcome-oriented perspective, a focus process which eliminates contextual evidences, and characteristics that are preconceived by empirical studies that bypass psychological theoretical frameworks.

The importance of language cannot be overlooked. For connections between language and race, the works of Rogers and Christian (2007) and ethnographer Heath (1983) were consulted. Even minimal differences in language

exacerbates the dichotomous nature of cultural extrapolations of race, racism, and anti-racism are available through the media, to include children's literature, schools and any number and of combinations of social institutions intended for children, to transform, transgress, reject, and re-vision race and racism. (Rogers & Christian, 2007, p. 40)

As the nascent ideologies surrounding racial perceptions and group identities continued to evolve, so did the canon of children's literature. Early work in the field indicated that the responsibility of defining the parameters lay with the publishers. "Any line which is drawn to confine children's' books to their own special corner is an artificial one . . . the only practical definition of a children's book today . . . is one which appears on the children's list of a publisher" (Hunt, 1999, p. 57). By 1976, the standards were refined to include specific components.

Children's books are usually shorter, they tend to favor an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism . . . children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive, language is child-oriented; plots are of a

distinctive order; probability is often discarded; and one could go on endlessly talking of magic, fantasy, simplicity and adventure. (McDowell, 1973, pp. 141-142)

The institutional aspects of racism are integral to this study. Connecting the CRT methodology to the practice of reading establishes the rationale for examining the ways in which race is represented in children's literature; thus, it was necessary to carefully survey aspects of multicultural education under which discussions of race occur. In 1976, in a survey of the current literature, Gibson (1976) identified five approaches to multicultural education. A decade later, multicultural educational literature began to emerge as a contested feature of children's literature (Gibson, 1976). In an effort to refine the previously accepted definition, scholars including Sleeter and Grant (1987) identified five approaches to multicultural education, four differing from the features identified by Gibson (in Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Gay (2010) observed that the gap between theory and practice is wide. Practice, she suggested, lags far behind theory (Gay, 2010). Many researchers agree that to close the gap, institutional changes must be made including teaching practice and improvements to curriculum (Baker, 1983; Banks, 1991; Bennett, 1990).

By the 1990s, researchers further refined the specific dimensions of multicultural education. It is within this definition that this paper attempts to contribute to the discourses surrounding race, children's literature, and teaching. Banks (1991) identified five components of interrelated dimensions that define multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. This work is supported by Grenby and Reynolds (2011) who acknowledged the hierarchies of cultural and racial

majorities and the efforts by members of this majority to protect their positions by teaching tolerance rather than a matrix of White privilege. CRT scholars including Bell (1976), Crenshaw (1989), Delgado and Stefancic, (2000), Delgado and Bernal (2002), DuBois (1953), Fischbach et al. (2008), Guinier (1991), Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), Rogers and Mosley (2006), and Williams (2004) supported the notion that institutional racial ideologies hamper Black students' school experiences. Ladson-Billings (1998) summed up the features of racialized practices, chiding educators to

Name and discuss the pervasive reality daily reality of racism, which disadvantages people of color . . . expose[s] and deconstruct[s] seemingly colorblind or race-neutral policies and practices, which entrench the disparate treatment of non-White persons, legitimize[s] and promote[s] the voices and narratives of people of color as sources of critique of the dominant social order the purposefully devalues them, revisit[s] civil-rights law and liberalism to address their instability to dismantle and expunge discriminatory sociopolitical relationships and change[s] and improve[s] challenges to race-neutral and multicultural movements in education, which have made white student's behavior the norm. (p. 16)

Since the development of CRT in the 1960s and the multicultural research that that followed, many challenges to past racial ideologies have been put forth. In order to be successful as a "knower," teachers must

become aware of two common narrative schemata, first that "alterity" is represented as supplying greater understanding or insight to White children; and second that the ideal outcome is for characters of different ethnicities or cultures to be assimilated into Whiteness. (Grenby & Reynolds, 2011, p. 164)

To support the study, it was necessary to understand the ways in which prejudice can be reduced by helping students develop more democratic attitudes, values, and behavior. The work of Banks (1984, 1991, 1993, 2009) and his colleagues draws attention to research aimed at improving social bonds between children. Beginning as young as three, children have perceptions of race (Clark & Clark, 1963). Katz (1993) and Cross (1991) provided similar taxonomies of racial sensitivity. Ladson-Billings (2013) reminded teachers to “remain sensitive to all students who, as 21st century students, are aware of social justice but less sanguine about social welfare” (p. 107). Norris et al. (2015) provided a foundation for understanding the early relationships through brain development. Studies documenting children’s social bonds during read-aloud is well supported by Kantos (1986), and Heath (1983). Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) reminded readers that children are complex social beings and are able to undertake racial constructs, negotiations, and exclusions only reinforcing power, privilege, and control. These frameworks fit into the theory of Lassies Faire racism described by Bobo et al. (1996) as “persistent negative stereotyping” (p. 1).

For studies on cultural deprivation and research focused on the development of teacher preparation in multicultural education, the foundational work of Davis (Davis, Gardner, & Gardner, 1941) was critical. Davis, ahead of his time in noting the institutionalization of racial ideas observed in *Children of Bondage* (Davis & Dollard, 1940), the first of three works considering race and class,

The goals of white collar or professional occupations and of middle class states which are at the end of the school route, are not made to appear valuable, near or certain for the lower class child. He learns from family and teachers that the chances for a person in his lower class position to finish high school and college,

and to become socially mobile through education, are so slight in view of the economic position and classways of his family, that they scarcely exist. (p. 286)

Hale-Benson (1982) acknowledged the language barriers of White teachers and offered suggestions for a curriculum situated around these differences.

For insight into the ideology of cultural difference theory which entered mainstream research efforts into the canon in the 1980s, the early work of Hale (1981) provided insight into an evolving taxonomy of culture-based labels. Her list of “Afro-American” children’s features appears to be static and contentious. “Black people transform every cultural mode they interact with: language, music, religion, art, dance, problem solving, sports, writing or any other form of expression” (Hale, 1981, p. 37). Hale went on to describe this as “soulfulness” and wrote that conflict ensues when “Black children are evaluated from an Anglo framework” (p. 37). For research in localized dialects and its effects, the work of Heath (1983) documenting the languages spoken by Black and White families in North Carolina was helpful in understanding the ways in which colloquialisms frame attitudes about members of a community. Heath used these data to raise awareness of differences in language in the school and community. To complete this section on multicultural education, the works of Banks (1991, 1993, 1995, 2009); Bennett (1990); and Bishop (1997) were consulted.

Just as the story of slavery framed the earlier discussions, it was necessary to contextualize current understandings with early research in the emerging field of children’s literature. In her groundbreaking 1965 work, Larrick did not mince words when she described her extensive survey of children’s books published in 1962, 1963, and 1964. She wrote that they are as “white as the segregated zoo of Golden Press” (Larrick, 1965, p. 64). Chall et al. (1979) replicated this study in 1970 at Harvard. While

they found small improvements in racial representations, Black characters were often heroes of sports and entertainment or victims who overcame obstacles to become successful. Historical fiction tends to place Blacks in the narrative as secondary characters (Chall et al., 1979). For information on the Freedom School and the IRC, the results of the program evaluation conducted at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte provided strong support for the discourses surrounding counterstories as educational narrative (Taylor & Cinisomo, 2015) and knowledge construction (Banks, 2009). Blacks are severely underrepresented in children's literature; and when Black characters are a part of the narrative, they are depicted with little separation between them, that is to say their facial features and clothing are similar. Horning (2017) provided current data on books about and by people of color (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007).

The Study: Directed Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to arrive at a working definition of picture books, research by several scholars was consulted. These definitions include books in which the illustrations play the dominant role (Nodleman, 1988). Other researchers place more emphasis on the relationships between the verbal and visual texts (Schwarcz & Schwarcz, 1991). Still, others differentiate between picture books and illustrated books (Stewig, 1995). Like all other forms of print, picture books have evolved over time and have come to present more complex characters, plots, and topics (Keifer, 2011). Modern books "include self-referential text, cynical or sarcastic tone, and antiauthoritarian text" (Martinez & Harmon, 2012, p. 325). As Miller (1986) and Sims (1997) documented, the period from 1965 to 1979 recorded both qualitative and quantitative improvements in the depiction of Blacks in literature directed at young children. "Not only did numerous authors both Black and White begin to include at least some Black characters in their books, but a growing cadre

of Black authors . . . began to create realistic and culturally conscious portrayals of Afro-Americans” (Clark, Lennon, & Morris, 1993, p. 229). During the following decades, these gains faltered under a more conservative zeitgeist.

Central to the study is the work of Pescosolido, Grauerholz, and Milkie (1997). This intricate study comparing racial identity representations in *Little Golden Books* and Caldecott Award books over decades served as the model for formulating the categories used in the book summaries. In addition, the perspective of the interactions between cultural markers and publisher reactions to these markers deepened the understanding of the complexities of race, “gatekeepers,” and children’s books. The patterns uncovered were directly linked to social conflict. “In the most unsettled period of US race relations (1950s and 1960s), contested power relations left a void in cultural imagery as social relations were disturbed and unclear” (Pescosolido et al., 1997, p. 462). This is an accurate description of the current cultural climate: unstable and at odds racially, economically, and politically.

The work of Rogers and Christian (2007) framed the questions that informed the analysis of the books. Using semiotic tools to identify racial literacy offered insight into the complex ways readers make meaning from racial references in texts. These lists were necessary to the formulation of the analysis tables used in the study (Rogers & Christian, 2007).

Conclusion

Many excellent histories of slavery, its effects on capitalism, and the emergence of a slave-based economy exist and provide an important framework for understanding the modern perceptions of race and racism. In addition, the legacies of racial discrimination are well documented in research and in law. Current data on race and

education are important contributions as they formed the very basis for this study of racial representations in contemporary children's literature. CRT is often criticized as a cultural movement rather than a hard and fast epistemological standard; yet CRT, in its short life, has challenged much of the rhetoric surrounding race and education. In undertaking this survey, CRT will inform a foundational understanding of the relationships of power, privilege, and meritocracy. Despite the abundance of investigations of multicultural education, there is limited research on racial representations in modern children's literature. Therefore, this study, aimed to survey and document race-based portrayals. This study meets a need for greater understanding of the texts teachers use in their classroom. It stands as a call to action for a greater number of books that meet the criteria of "Liberation" literature. In Chapter 3, the design of the research is described, including the samples, measures, and methods which work together to address the research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The researcher completed the study by analyzing early literature to determine the representations of Black characters and to consider the ways in which these representations contribute to the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings.

This research sought to locate and evaluate the racial themes and patterns in children's early books by asking what themes in early children's literature emerge as relevant in the representations of people of color; what differences in themes are found in early children's literature in books located in a school library, community public library, and retail bookstores; and what do the emergent themes demonstrate in the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings? While other ethnic minority students also encounter race-based distortions, omissions, and stereotypes, this study focused on representations of Black and African-American characters in picture books. The historical construction of race and the challenges faced by ongoing racism, both conscious and unconscious, are unique to Black students.

Theoretical Framework

This study was framed by CRT which questions authority: the exercise of social power by elites, groups, or institutions that result in inequality. These inequalities may be manifested in text structures by reducing racism to an emotion or feeling, thereby delegitimizing its permanence by demeaning the Other through representations of White privilege, by distancing the Other through historicizing racism, or by communicating racialized ideas amid a group dynamic. CRT established the theoretical justification of the study because it is a widely accepted research philosophy.

Design of the Study

Recent scholarly work focuses on the frequency of representations of ethnic minority groups in children's literature as society has become more aware of racial inequalities in schooling. Many of the older studies relied on quantitative data which produced a limited understanding of the way in which children of color are represented, leaving a gap in the assessment of children's literature. The methodology of this study was a qualitative approach that included DCA. The researcher used this process to complete a step-by-step examination of the content in early children's literature to unearth patterns and thematic content.

The method used to conduct this study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is exploratory and is used to gain an understanding of underlying purposes, opinions, or motivations. It provides insight into the problem or facilitates ideas. It is "an avowed humanistic and social justice commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual. . . . From this principle flow the radical and liberal politics of action held by critical race theory and cultural studies researchers" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. viii). Because the data collected required interpretation, a Directed Qualitative Content Analysis is an appropriate instrument for measurement. Directed Qualitative Content Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourses that view language as a form of social practice situated within the framework of an established theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Like other empirical data, content analysis "examines data, printed matter, images, or sounds-texts- in order to understand what they mean to people, what they enable or prevent, and what the information conveyed by them does" (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 1). The study did not include human participants, rendering it unobtrusive research. By using texts unknown to the researcher,

the likelihood of researcher bias was reduced.

The Settings

In order to further assure the reliability of the data, this researcher chose six settings: two retail outlets, two community libraries, and two elementary school media centers. Retail Outlet 1 is located adjacent to a large shopping mall in the largest city in North Carolina. The store is located in a high-wealth area; the average household income is approximately \$120,000. The company operates 632 brick and mortar 632 stores in the United States and yearly sales in 2016 were \$4.1 billion.

Retail Outlet 2 is an internet-based site with book sales nearing \$10 billion a year, making it the most widely used bookseller in the United States as of 2014.

Community Library 1 is located in a high-wealth area of the largest city in North Carolina. This branch is part of a larger system supported by the county. The library has a number of child-centered reading programs. In 2016, attendance logs indicated that approximately 337,000 students in kindergarten through third grades participated in these programs. Total participation in the summer reading challenge program topped 400,000 children. In the same year, over 6 million items were borrowed from the library. The branch used in this study has approximately 6,000 titles in the children's picture book area.

Community Library 2 is located in a small town in the piedmont region of North Carolina. The library has a number of programs aimed at young readers as well. The children's collection contains approximately 4,000 titles.

School 1 is located in a small city near a large research area and military base in the Piedmont of North Carolina. The student population is approximately 675. The school receives Title I funding based on the number of students who receive free and

reduced lunch. The school operates on a traditional calendar and is open to all students in the designated neighborhood zone. Approximately 4% of the students are identified as gifted. The school's composite score in English language arts on end-of-grade tests was 64% proficient (2015). Approximately 30% of the students are Black. The media center contains approximately 13,000 titles.

School 2 is located in a small city located near a large research area and military base in the Piedmont of North Carolina. It is the largest kindergarten through fifth grade school in the county with a student population of approximately 700. The school operates on a year-round calendar with staggered dates rather than the traditional 188-day schedule. Acceptance to the school is by lottery; and approximately 50% of the students are identified as gifted, the largest population in the county. The school also has the highest scores on a recent end-of-grade test, a composite score of 87% of the students scoring proficient or higher on the English language arts section (2015). Ninety-three percent of the students are White. The media center contains approximately 17,000 titles.

Data Collection and Instruments

A number of catalogs of recently issued children's books are available to researchers. *The New York Times* publishes a weekly directory of best-selling books as well as an annual list of notable books. The *American Library Association* circulates new inventory, although these lists follow no regular publication schedule and are categorized by theme or topic. *Publisher's Weekly* issues similar directories, also organized by theme or topic. Finally, *Goodreads*, in addition to weekly lists, offers visitors to the website titles that have been recently published or are in press. The size of the catalog (over 10 million) and the number of visits (20 million in 2012) makes this the most highly visible and widely used publication of the four. Thus, for this study, a recent list of children's

books slated to be published or in current release from these sources was used to collect data. In order to gain access to these books, the researcher visited school media centers, community public libraries, and retail booksellers.

The coding instrument was designed by the researcher using the lists of the forms and functions of racial disparity compiled by Rogers and Christian (2007). The categories were chosen to fit within the paradigm of CRT and the existing research indicating that race is a social construct, is deeply embedded in society, and is institutionalized. Finally, Martinez and Harmon's (2012) content analysis format provided a framework for the coding instrument constructed to conduct the study.

Table 3

The Coding Instrument (pre-pilot study)

| Book Title | Main character | Emotion | White | Historical | Group |
|--|---------------------|------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Author | Race/Gender** | or feeling | privilege | distancing | dynamic |
| Publisher | secondary character | | | | |
| Race/Gender of author* | Race/Gender*** | | | | |
| Genre | | | | | |
| Summary and photographs of selected texts | | | | | |
| * WF (White female), BF (Black female), BM (Black male), WM (White male) | | | | | |
| ** WF (White female), BF (Black female), BM (Black male), WM (White male) | | | | | |
| *** WF (White female), BF (Black female), BM (Black male), WM (White male) | | | | | |

Procedures

Each book was chosen, read, and summarized, permitting the analysis to be systematic and allowing the researcher to examine both the verbal and visual texts. In addition, each step in the collection and analysis was identical, assuring that the coding instrument represents the objectives of the study to determine the frequency and the manner in which children of color are symbolized in picture books.

Step one of the research involved eliminating books with no human characters.

Next, using the model offered by Pescosolido et al. (1997), each book was summarized making note of the geographical and temporal locations of the characters, their occupational roles, and the time period. Any conflict between characters of different races was noted. In addition, the presence and race of adults was documented. Because racism is often disguised as an emotion or feeling, though demonstrations of White privilege, distanced through the lens of history, or embedded in a group dynamic, the summary made note of the latent content including interracial contact, the centrality of the Black character(s), brief or sustained interactions and the nature of the interaction: intimate (brief or sustained) or egalitarian (occupational or social). To target historical distancing, the summary included notations of both Africans and African-Americans, folk tales, fantasy characters, social or temporal locations that are difficult to pinpoint, and political issues. Next, the researcher made note of the title, author, and publisher of each book. Having summarized the texts, a page-by-page analysis allowed the researcher to code the racial representation of the characters including verbal and visual texts.

Data Analysis

The data were collected in three phases. Phase one involved picture walks to determine whether the book is fictional, contained both verbal and visual texts, and included at least one human character. Next, the data from the selected books were assembled into the table above containing the book title, author information including race and gender, the publisher, the genre, character information containing race and gender, publication and author information. Using the summaries to categorize the representation of race, the researcher then made note of characters' emotions or feelings, representations of White privilege, historicizing racism, and communicating racialized ideas amid a group dynamic. This systematic collection of data allowed the researcher to

uncover patterns and/or thematic content to prove or disprove the research question in three settings: public community libraries, school media centers, and retail outlets.

Managing Data

In order to test the validity of the research, a pilot study utilizing six books was conducted to evaluate the feasibility and reliability of the coding instrument. In addition, the pilot study was intended to improve upon the study design. Books published between 2015 and 2017 were the intended subject of the study. This was for two reasons. First, this will closely resemble the current trends in publishing. Second, these books are likely to represent the current social norms. Books cycle in and out of the market quickly as evidenced by weekly publications reflecting best seller lists. As a result, using the current books available offered data into the extent of racial representations and misrepresentations in the children's book market. Member checks were used throughout the study in order to validate the findings and to check the possible biases of the researcher.

Role of the Researcher

This study was designed to examine the racial representations of characters in children's books; however, the researcher recognized her duty to maintain credibility and integrity in order to protect the validity and ensure the reliability of the study. The books were unfamiliar to the researcher. By choosing unfamiliar books, the study gained validity since the researcher had no prior knowledge or preconceived notions regarding the characters, the plot, the setting, the publisher, or the author.

Verification of Validity and Reliability

In order to maximize the validity of the findings, the researcher undertook a pilot study. The selected books published between 2015 and 2017 were previously unknown

to the researcher. The pilot study was an opportunity to test the fieldwork procedures, the data collection instrument, and the plan for analysis. Finally, the pilot study assessed the reliability of the coding instrument as it was used over time. The pilot study allowed for the refinement of the research coding instrument beyond the initial categories of group dynamics, race-based emotion, historical objectification of Black characters, and White privilege to a more nuanced set of categories. The revised coding instrument was expanded to include the following subcategories:

1. Group dynamics included characters represented as members of a social group bound together by common experiences, background, or ideologies. These characters may be part of the dominant group, those who hold power; or the subordinate group, those who may be labeled as defective, substandard, or incapable. Other functions of the group dynamic category included Blacks escaping current living conditions to pursue a better life, family structures that are nontraditional; that is to say families that are not represented as including two parents, one male, and one female.
2. Race-based emotions are used to mediate the experiences of those who encounter prejudice and react to systems of oppression. The subcategories were expanded to include instances of shame, hurt, anger, disgust, fear, grief, loyalty, and compassion.
3. Historical distancing elevates the past to a privileged position by using existing stereotypes and modern knowledge without acknowledging counterstories, resulting in prejudice by affirming notions of ancestral representations of Black experiences. The extended categories included speech patterns and the use of dialect, romanticized depictions of Black life,

Black characters who are faced with a need to change, and depictions of historic injustices rather than a problem-solution model offered in many picture books.

4. White privilege includes the benefits of membership in the dominant group.

This category was further developed to include illustrations of Black children and adults depicted with similar traits: eye shape and color, skin color, and the size and shape of the nose and mouth. The tally also included notations of the placement on the page of black characters, an accounting of the number of Black authors and illustrators represented, a count of Black characters (15% or less was used as the benchmark since that is the approximate percentage of the Black population in the United States), and a tally of books with no Black characters. The pilot study validated the quality, rigor, and trustworthiness of the research in order to increase the level of confidence in the findings.

A second fundamental method for maintaining validity required the researcher to remain reflexive at all times. Reflexivity is “the awareness that all knowledge is affected by the social conditions under which it is produced” (Hesse, Bieber, & Leavy, 2011, p. 38).

Member Checks

To further verify the validity of the study, the researcher used member checks in order to more fully understand the problem and report the findings. Member checks offered the opportunity to correct errors and wrestle with the challenges regarding the interpretations made by the researcher. In addition, information or perspectives overlooked were brought to light. Member checks were performed by colleagues and peers situated in the workplace of the researcher. These insights offered feedback during

the study as well as upon completion of the data collection to ensure that the analysis was consistent and explanatory (Gonzales, 2004). Finally, the member check allowed the researcher to discuss alternative perspectives and discover previously undetected patterns and themes.

Category Construction

The table included the author's name, gender, and race and the name of the publishers. Including these data enabled the researcher to look for patterns that might provide clues to the racial representations of the characters in the book. Including the race of the author was an important consideration since, according to CRT scholars, Black authors, like their White counterparts, are well-qualified representatives of their culture (Delgado, 1993). After the pilot study was completed, the researcher discovered that in one location, the school's collection contained no new picture books. The researcher worked with the librarian to locate titles that contained at least one Black character. The selections assembled represented publications dated as early as 1988.

Triangulation

The research triangulated three coordinates: CRT, Directed Qualitative Content Analysis, and the selection of multiple sites to conduct the research. Each coordinate acted as a dependent variable. Each organizational point converged around the research questions: to examine books available to early readers across three settings—public school libraries, public community libraries, and retail bookstores; to determine the representations of people of color; and to consider the ways in which these representations contribute to the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings.

First, the methodological construct of CRT formed the basis of the hypothesis that

racism is a social construction, embedded in society. Often, those with privilege and opportunity are unaware of these inequalities. On the other hand, there are well-documented instances of intentional racism. Next, using the Content Analysis Method allowed the researcher to systematically examine picture books to uncover examples of racism represented as an emotion or feeling, by representations of White privilege, by distancing racism through historical filters, or by communicating racialized ideas as a group dynamic. Finally, collecting the data from multiple sites was representative of the picture books available to children. These dependent variables were not influenced by the other two categories and as such did not detract from the methodological or theoretical constructs of the study.

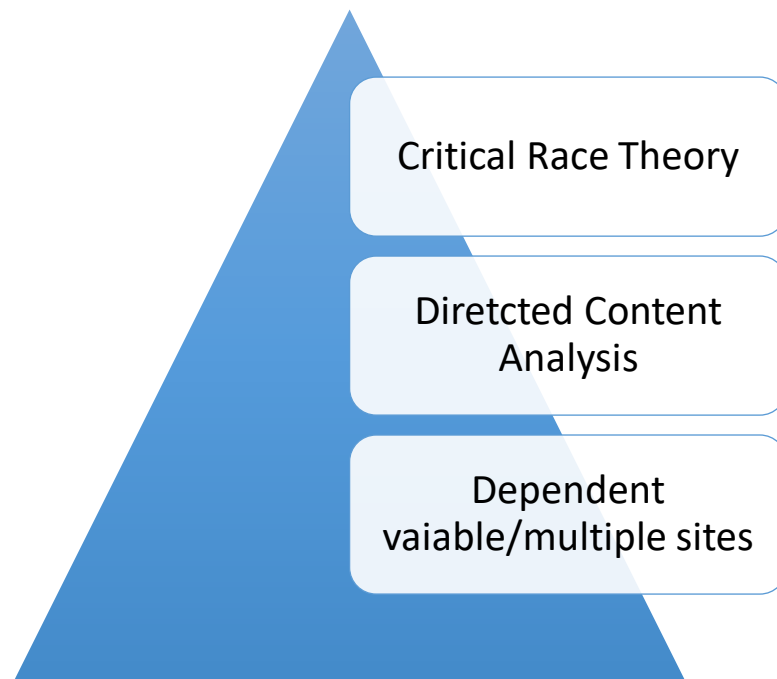


Figure 3. Triangulation.

Limitations of the Study

One of the central themes of CRT is the idea that both neutrality and objectivity are impossible. Even if researchers could be completely objective, that objectivity would be a detractor from the experiences of Blacks in this and all studies. White academics should make no claim to have experienced the effects of racism. The investigator's knowledge about race and racism is limited to research and should not detract from the experiences of the Other. By exposing the ideologies and manifestations of racism, the researcher hoped to bring an awareness of the importance of stories and experiences to the attention of the reader. Every effort was made by the researcher to remain neutral and objective.

Delimitations of the Study

There are many school media centers and public libraries located in North Carolina. A delimitation of the study was the ability of the researcher to conveniently reach these venues. In order to achieve diversity in the choice of settings, the research was undertaken in both rural and urban sites, and in both high-wealth retail areas and rural bookstores.

Conclusion

This study sought to shed light on the access to appropriate literature available to students and how the representations of race are presented visually and through text. These texts, accessible through media centers, public community libraries, and retail bookstores constitute a part of the culture. The researcher included CRT to frame the study using DCA to collect data in early picture books. In Chapter 4 the findings are analyzed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Race continues to be a significant factor in dialogue surrounding inequities and has become a descriptor for the economic and social decay facing segments of U.S. society. Rarely do individuals openly admit to racial bias; yet schools, legal systems, and pop culture reflect the ongoing and often unsteady gains in race-based equity. The incongruity between individual and systemic biases and the tensions between the majority and ethnic minority stakeholders are regularly headline news. While other ethnic minority students also struggle with reading, this study focused on representations of Black characters in picture books. The historical construction of race and the challenges of ongoing racism, both conscious and unconscious, are unique to Black students.

Commencing in 1998, a longitudinal study followed roughly 25,000 kindergarten students in the United States. ECLS-K tracked these students from the first year of their schooling until eighth grade, assessing their literacy skills each year. Students were assessed on both word reading proficiencies and knowledge-based competencies. The concluding data from 2008 indicated literacy competencies in both word knowledge and comprehension had narrowed more slowly in recent years, thus the gains made in the 1970s and 1980s appear to be slipping away (NCES, 2015, 2016; Reardon et al., 2012; UNDOE, 2017). This research sought to expose and overturn these realities by questioning the racial themes and patterns in children's early books by considering the following questions.

Research Question 1. What themes in early children's literature emerge as relevant in the representations of Black characters?

Research Question 2. What differences in themes are found in early children's literature in books located in two school libraries, community public libraries, and retail bookstores?

Research Question 3. What do the emergent themes demonstrate in the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings?

Data Analysis Strategy

The purpose of this study was to examine books available to early readers across three settings (public school libraries, public community libraries, and retail bookstores) to determine the representations of Blacks and to consider the ways in which these representations contribute to the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings. Existing studies deal with early literature quantitatively, reporting the number of books published by black authors or the number of black characters in picture books. No known comprehensive study deals with the representation of race in early books.

The literature review offered the researcher evidence of the ways in which racism is institutionalized in modern society in the United States. These manifestations of racial inequality guided the categorical creation of the coding instrument. The pilot study allowed for the refinement of the research coding instrument beyond the initial categories of group dynamics, race-based emotion, historical objectification of Black characters, and White privilege to a more nuanced set of categories. The revised coding instrument was expanded to include the following subcategories:

1. Group dynamics included characters represented as members of a social group bound together by common experiences, background, or ideologies. These characters may be part of the dominant group, those who hold power; or the

subordinate group, those who may be labeled as defective, substandard, or incapable. Other functions of the group dynamic category included Blacks characters who escaped current living conditions to pursue a better life and family structures that are nontraditional; that is to say families that are not represented as including two parents: one male and one female.

2. Race-based emotions are used to mediate the experiences of those who encounter prejudice and react to systems of oppression. The subcategories were expanded to include instances of shame, hurt, anger, disgust, fear, grief, loyalty, and compassion.
3. Historical distancing elevates the past to a privileged position by using existing stereotypes and modern knowledge without acknowledging counterstories, resulting in prejudice by affirming notions of ancestral representations of Black experiences. The extended categories included speech patterns and the use of dialect, romanticized depictions of Black life, Black characters who are faced with a need to change, and depictions of historic injustices rather than a problem-solution model offered in many picture books.
4. White privilege includes the benefits of membership in the dominant group. This category was further developed to include illustrations of Black children and adults depicted with similar traits: eye shape and color, skin color, and the size and shape of the nose and mouth. The tally also included notations of the placement on the page of black characters, an accounting of the number of Black authors and illustrators represented, a count of Black characters (15% or less was used as the benchmark since that is the approximate percentage of the

Black population in the United States), and a tally of books with no Black characters. This chapter presents the data presented in table form by location and category, followed by a discussion of the emergent themes found in each dataset. The next section addresses the differences in the emergent themes found in each location: school media centers, community public libraries, and retail outlets. Finally, a summary of the emergent themes spanning five locations is considered as contributors to the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings.

Findings: School Media Center 1

In School 1, a scarcity of books published in the date range of 2015-2017 was discovered. The selections assembled represented publications dated as early as 1988. The researcher coded 22 books: 15 fictions and seven folktales. After completing the coding, it was discovered that the school had suffered the loss of the collection during a hurricane in 2011. As a result, the books in the collection were donated from a variety of sources. Because of this, the data were determined to be outliers and not used in the final calculations or discussions.

Findings: School Media Center 2

The researcher was unable to locate titles in School 2 to meet the criteria of books published between 2015 and 2017. Five of the 22 books coded were published in 2014. No instances of race-based emotion or historical distancing were noted at School 2. Only one nonfiction title was located for coding.

Table 4

School 2: White Privilege

| | Fiction (21 books) | Nonfiction (one book) |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Characters with similar physical features | 3 | 1 |
| Spatial dynamics | 3 | 0 |
| Black Author | 0 | 0 |
| Black Illustrator | 0 | 0 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black children | 6 | 0 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black adults (when adults are represented) | 4 | 0 |
| No Black characters (children or adults when White children or adults are represented) | 12 | 0 |

Themes: School 2

The more modern collection in School 2 allowed the researcher to locate a larger number of books within the targeted publication dates of 2015-2017. Five of the 22 books coded were published in 2014. Seventeen of the titles were published between 2015-2017. The collection contains approximately 17,000 titles. No instances of race-based emotion or historical distancing were noted at School 2. Only one nonfiction title was located for coding. No folktales were located. One book offered a Black girl as the main character. This book, set in Africa, was also coded for idealizing a way of life since the mother and daughter walked all day every day to collect water for the family without hardship. There were no Black authors or illustrators represented in this data set. Fifteen of the books had no Black characters, and four had less than 15% of characters portrayed as a Black adult or child. The recent titles uncover themes that may be directly tied to the

absence of Black authors and illustrators represented in the collection. Only one of the titles contained a Black main character. When Black characters were portrayed in the remaining seven books, they were often placed on the page away from the central character, near the top of the page or far to the left and right. Because there were so few Black characters and many of the coding categories were not useful, the researcher was unable to place any Black characters into the coding scheme of race-based emotions or historical distancing.

Differences in Themes between School 1 and School 2

School 1 is a more ethnically diverse school, receives funding from the Title I program, and has a much older collection. School 2 does not receive Title I funding, requires a lottery for entrance, uses a year-round schedule, and has a majority of White students. The collections are vastly different; School 1's collection contains many folktales. The newer collection at School 2 was less diverse in its representations of Black characters. Based on the 44 books coded, the researcher noted that there are currently significantly fewer Black authors and illustrators writing and representing Black characters. When Black characters are represented, they are often removed from the center of the page. The lack of historical books reflects a failure in presenting the stories of history. Many of the older books contained instances of emotion based on race. While the folktales coded used illustrations that depicted characters in menial jobs, they often ended with a lesson in courage or cleverness. Similar lessons were offered in the books from the Jim Crow era: The virtues of frugality, resilience, and courage as well as the value of education and learning are made clear to the reader. While similar lessons are encrypted in the books in School 2, the absence of Black characters may negate their value to Black readers.

Findings: Community Library 1

This library is located in a large metropolitan area of North Carolina. The collection has approximately 6,000 children's books. No nonfiction books were located. Twenty-two selected books fell within the publication range of 2015-2017.

Table 5

Community Library 1: Group Dynamics

| | Fiction (22 books) |
|---|--------------------|
| Black main character(s) | 8 |
| Traditional two parent families (when families are represented) | 5 |
| Blacks escape to a better way of life | 0 |
| Blacks depicted in substandard roles | 6 |

Table 6

Community Library 1: Race-Based Emotion

| | Fiction (22 books) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Shame/hurt | 0 |
| Black character angered | 1 |
| Disgust/fear | 2 |
| Grief | 2 |
| Loyalty | 0 |
| Compassion | 2 |

Table 7

Community Library 1: Historical Depictions of Black Characters

| | |
|---|---|
| Speech patterns and dialectical dialogue | 0 |
| Simplistic or romantic depictions of Black life | 1 |
| Black characters faced with a need to change | 0 |
| Historic injustices | 1 |

Table 8

Community Library 1: White Privilege

| | Fiction (22 books) |
|---|--------------------|
| Characters with similar physical features | 6 |
| Spatial dynamics | 5 |
| Black author | 0 |
| Black illustrator | 0 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black children | 7 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black adults (when adults are represented) | 5 |
| No Black characters (children or adults, when White children or adults are represented) | 10 |

Themes: Community Library 1

Community Library 1 houses approximately 6,000 titles in the picture book collection. The researcher was able to find many current titles that fit within the publication dates of 2015-2017. Twenty-two books were coded all fictional. No folktales were noted. Eight of the books offered a Black child as the main character, and none of these children lived in a traditional two-parent home when parents were included as characters. Four minor Black characters were noted having jobs that do not require a college degree: retail sales, park vendor, street musician, and automobile mechanic. Only one Black character exhibits anger, a character who lives in a noisy home and is seeking quiet. In two books, the Black main character exhibits behavior that elicits disgust: one has a terrible cold and very runny nose and one teases her pet. Two other instances of negative emotion involve a White character's grief. Two Black characters display

compassion, one toward a character from history and another toward her noisy family. None of the books coded were written or illustrated by Black men or women. One book dealt with history: A Black child visiting the White House encounters Abraham Lincoln who asks her about the progress toward equality. This book was coded for inaccurate depictions of history by idealizing the setting and the dialogue. Seven books have Black children who are minor characters; and in five of those, the characters are represented in the background or near the left or right margins of the page. Six of the books portray characters with similar physical features. Few Black adults are included as minor characters; five books have more than 15% of the adults depicted with dark skin. Finally, nine books have no Black characters represented.

Themes noted in this collection include an absence of historical depictions of Black experiences as well as a lack of folktales in which characters learn a lesson or gain wisdom. Black families were portrayed as nontraditional, with children living in single-parent homes, with extended family, or in a home with two mothers, both White. Black parents who were employed were portrayed in jobs that are considered blue collar occupations. Fewer instances of race-based emotions were exhibited. Spatial placement of minor Black characters was noted.

Findings: Community Library 2

Community Library 2 is located in a small village in the piedmont region of North Carolina. The collection contains approximately 4,500 titles in the children's section. Twenty-two books were coded, all published between 2015-2017. Twenty books were coded as fiction and two as nonfiction.

Table 9

Community Library 2: Group Dynamics

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Black main character(s) | 3 | 3 |
| Traditional two-parent family | 3 | 2 |
| Blacks escape to a better way of life | 0 | 3 |
| Blacks depicted in substandard roles | 0 | 3 |

Table 10

Community Library 2: Race-Based Emotion

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Shame/hurt | 2 | 0 |
| Anger | 1 | 0 |
| Disgust/fear | 0 | 2 |
| Grief | 0 | 3 |
| Loyalty | 0 | 3 |
| Compassion | 0 | 3 |

Table 11

Community Library 2: Historical Depictions of Black Characters

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Speech patterns and dialectical dialogue | 0 | 0 |
| Simplistic or romantic depictions of Black life | 1 | 1 |
| Black characters faced with a need to change | 3 | 2 |
| Historic injustices | 2 | 2 |

Table 12

Community Library 2: White Privilege

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| Characters with similar physical features | 5 | 0 |
| Spatial dynamics | 3 | 0 |
| Black author | 3 | 2 |
| Black illustrator | 3 | 2 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black children | 6 | 0 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black adults | 4 | 0 |
| No Black characters | 13 | 0 |

Themes: Community Library 2

Community Library 2 is located in a small village in the piedmont area of North Carolina. Twenty-two books were coded, all published between 2015-2017. Twenty books were coded as fiction and two as nonfiction. No folktales were noted. Five fiction books had Black main characters, while one nonfiction title was a compilation of photographs of refugees from around the world and one book was a biography of Harriet Tubman. In this collection, 16 books contained families; five of those families were Black and none lived in a traditional two-parent home. Five books were written and illustrated by Black men and women. Five books depicted historical events and characters who are facing a challenge: escaping slavery, a blended family, the Great Migration, or interracial adoption. Thirteen examples of emotions were coded; and five of those stories included Black characters who experience shame, anger, fear, and grief. Fewer instances of spatial dynamics were noted; characters in these books tended to share the center of the page. Three books were noted for spatial dynamics. Six books depicted Black children and four depicted Black adults. Twelve books had no Black characters.

Differences in Themes: Community Library 1 and Community Library 2

Community Library 2 contains a collection of books with themes that include an absence of traditional two parent Black families holding jobs that require a college degree. Few Black main characters displayed a range of emotions including shame, anger, fear, and grief. These characters were also faced with challenges to their way of life and the need to improve their circumstances. A small number of Black authors and illustrators are represented in the coding.

Community Library 1 is part of a large urban system, yet no Black authors or illustrators were coded in the data set. The smaller library offered more options to the patrons in terms of diversity of authors and illustrators. Both locations' collections included books that portray characters as having similar physical features: Skin color; hair; and the shape of eyes, noses, and mouths were very similar. In addition, these minor characters often occupied space on the borders of the pages, near the top, bottom, or to the left and right of the central action. No folktales were available for coding, and the messages that are contained in these stories offer life lessons. While many of the stories contained examples of resilience, courage, friendship, and patience, the lessons were often conveyed by White characters.

Findings: Retail Outlet 1

Retail Outlet 1 is located adjacent to a large shopping mall in the largest city in North Carolina. The store is located in a high-wealth area; the average household income is approximately \$120,000. The company operates 632 brick and mortar stores in the United States. Recent available sales figures from 2016 indicate purchases of \$4.1 billion. Local data were not provided to the researcher. Twenty-two books were coded, 20 fictions and two nonfictions. No race-based emotion was noted in this section.

Table 13

Retail Outlet 1: Group Dynamics

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Black main characters | 3 | 1 (multiple biographies) |
| Traditional two parent families (where families are represented) | 2 | |
| Blacks escape to a better way of life | 0 | 1 |
| Blacks depicted in substandard roles | 0 | 0 |

Table 14

Retail Outlet 1: Historical Depictions of Black Characters

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Speech patterns and dialectical dialogue | 0 | 0 |
| Simplistic or romantic depictions of Black life | 0 | 0 |
| Black characters faced with a need to change | 0 | 1 |
| Historic injustices | 0 | 1 |

Table 15

Retail Outlet 1: White Privilege

| | Fiction (20 books) | Nonfiction (two books) |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| Characters with similar physical features | 10 | 0 |
| Spatial dynamics | 4 | |
| Black author | 0 | 0 |
| Black illustrator | 0 | 0 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black children | 5 | 1 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black adults (when adults are represented) | 6 | 1 |
| No Black characters (children or adults, when White children and adults are represented) | 9 | 0 |

Themes: Retail Outlet 1

Retail Outlet 1 is located in a large urban area in the piedmont area of North Carolina. Twenty-two books were selected for coding in the store. All the selected books fell within the publication dates of 2015-2017. Twenty books were coded as fiction, and two books were coded as nonfiction. No folktales were noted. No examples of race-based emotion were noted or coded. Four books contained Black main characters. Family dynamics were noted in 10 books, one of these was a Black nontraditional family. None of the books were written or illustrated by Black writers or artists. Less than 15% of minor characters, children or adults, were Black. One nonfiction selection, a collection of biographies of 13 women, contained sketches of five Black women including Oprah Winfrey, Ruby Bridges, Harriet Tubman, Florence Joyner, and Claudette Colvin. The placement of minor Black characters on the pages was noted in four books and these characters were drawn with similar features.

Retail Outlet 1 revealed themes of spatial dynamics and few Black main characters. In addition, only one Black nontraditional family was represented. Few minor characters were Black, and those few were portrayed with similar physical features. Emotion was not noted in any of the texts. No Black authors or illustrators were noted.

Findings: Retail Outlet 2

Retail Outlet 2 is an internet-based site with sales of books nearing \$10 billion a year, making it a widely used bookseller in the United States as of 2014. Twenty-two books were coded: 13 were fiction, and nine were nonfiction.

Table 16

Retail Outlet 2: Group Dynamics

| | Fiction (13 books) | Nonfiction (nine books) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Black main characters(s) | 3 | 2 |
| Traditional two parent family | 0 | 0 |
| Blacks escape to a better way of life | 3 | 1 |
| Blacks depicted in substandard roles | 2 | 1 |

Table 17

Retail Outlet 2: Race-Based Emotion

| | Fiction (13 books) | Nonfiction (nine books) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Shame/hurt | 5 | 2 |
| Black character angered | 0 | 3 |
| Disgust/fear | 0 | 0 |
| Grief | 0 | 2 |
| Loyalty | 0 | 1 |
| Compassion | 0 | 1 |

Table 18

Retail Outlet 2: Historical Depictions of Black Characters

| | Fiction (13 books) | Nonfiction (nine books) |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Speech patterns and dialectical dialogue | 0 | 0 |
| Simplistic or romantic depictions of Black life | 2 | 2 |
| Black characters faced with a need to change | 3 | 1 |
| Historic injustices | 0 | 5 |

Table 19

Retail Outlet 2: White Privilege

| | Fiction (13 books) | Nonfiction (nine books) |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Characters with similar physical features | 4 | 1 |
| Spatial dynamics | 0 | 0 |
| Black author | 0 | 0 |
| Black illustrator | 2 | 2 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black children | 5 | 3 |
| Less than 15% of the characters are Black adults (when adults are represented) | 4 | 5 |
| No Black characters (children or adults, when White children and adults are represented) | 9 | 4 |

Themes: Retail Outlet 2

Retail Outlet 2 is the largest online bookseller in the United States. Twenty-two books were coded, and all fell within the publication dates of 2015-2017. Nine books were coded as nonfiction and 13 as fiction. No folktales were noted. Five books had Black main characters. There were no Black authors and four Black illustrators. This location offered readers the largest selection of nonfiction based on historic characters or incidents. These included George Washington's slave Hercules; the story of Mary Garber, a White woman who was the first sportswriter to cover Black baseball teams; the story of Sarah Roberts, the first case presented to the United States Supreme Court challenging segregated schools; the story of Lonnie Johnson, a Black inventor; and the biography of Lillian Allen and her struggle for the right to vote. Because these Black characters faced injustices and were motivated by a need to change the status quo, the

incidents of race-based emotion were higher than in other locations; a total of 14 were coded with seven of these dealing with shame or hurt. In addition, because there are a greater number of books dealing with Black issues, the number of Black children and adults represented was higher than other locations; 17 books had more than 15% of Black characters. Six families were represented, and one of those was a traditional two-parent family. The other book with a Black family depicted a single-parent home. Fewer Black characters were depicted in the margins of the illustrations.

Differences in Themes in Retail Outlet 1 and Retail Outlet 2

The selection of books in these two locations was substantial. In addition, the books available for coding were more recently published. This allowed the researcher more latitude in the selection of books. In order to eliminate researcher bias, these selections were cross-referenced with Goodreads, a website that lists the most current publications of early books. This allowed the researcher the opportunity to choose the most recently published books. The common themes noted in this dataset included an absence of folktales. Alternately, the researcher found increased numbers of historic nonfiction titles and biographies representing Black experiences. Perhaps as a result, the researcher noted higher instances of race-based emotions as these characters confronted racial injustices and expressed their feelings in the texts. Similarly, two of the Black characters from the books were depicted in substandard roles: picking cotton and in shackles. Few Black families were represented; and only one of those, a story from history, depicted a traditional two-parent family.

The data represented in these tables are the result of coding a total of 132 books. The researcher chose to represent the data in table form in order to maintain reliability and validity in reporting the coding. In the following chapter, the implications for

practice, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research are discussed as they pertain to the research questions and methodology.

Table 20

Summary of Findings Across Five Locations

| | Fiction | Nonfiction |
|--|---------|------------|
| Black main character (s) | 18 | 6 |
| Traditional two parent family | 9 | 2 |
| Blacks escape to a better way of life | 3 | 5 |
| Blacks depicted in substandard role (s) | 8 | 4 |
| shame/ hurt | 5 | 2 |
| Black character angered | 3 | 3 |
| disgust/fear | 3 | 0 |
| Loyalty | 0 | 4 |
| Compassion | 2 | 4 |
| Speech patterns or dialect | 0 | 0 |
| Simplistic or romantics depictions | 4 | 3 |
| Black character faced with a need to change | 6 | 4 |
| Historic injustices | 3 | 5 |
| Characters with similar physical features | 28 | 2 |
| Spatial dynamics | 15 | 0 |
| Black author | 3 | 2 |
| Black illustrator | 5 | 4 |
| Less than 15% of characters are Black children | 30 | 3 |
| Less than 15% of characters are Black adults | 28 | 5 |
| No Black characters | 53 | 5 |

The final table represents a compilation of the data across five locations. These numbers indicate that Black main characters are in less than 20% of the books surveyed. When Black characters are represented, it is often with physical features that are similar including the shape of the nose, eyes, and mouth. Most significantly, Black characters are less frequently represented: In 55 books, no Black characters were incorporated into the text. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that young Black readers have far less access to texts in which they are able to find characters who look like them. Children are complex social beings and are able to undertake racial constructs, negotiations, and exclusions

which only reinforcing power, privilege, and control. The data indicate that there is limited access to texts that are representative of their backgrounds.

Finally, as similar studies have shown, both Black authors and illustrators continue to be underrepresented in the publishing industry. These few authors and illustrators tend to work together to create books that contain Black characters and represent a handful of active participants currently in circulation. By excluding Black authors and illustrators from the pool of published work, their voices are excluded from the narratives, sending a subtle message to children that only White voices have value and power.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter includes a restatement of the problem, the purpose of the study, a review of the methodology, and an interpretation of the findings based on the research questions. The researcher concludes by considering the implications for professional practice and by making suggestions for further study.

The researcher coded a total of 132 books. Several dominant themes emerged as a result of this study of representations of Black characters in early children's books. CRT describes racism as "a system of privileges that works to the advantages of Whites and to the detriment of people of color" (Matsuda, 1987, p. 51). It has been previously documented that the number of Black illustrators and authors lags far behind their White peers. The results of this study aligned with that research. Another important component of CRT is counterstorytelling. By excluding Black authors and illustrators from the pool of published work, their voices are excluded from the narratives, sending a subtle message to children that only White voices have value and power.

The data from retail outlets were the only two sources of negative emotions. Because these are the most recently published books, the correlation between current social resistance movements and these portrayals of shame, hurt, anger, and fear may have some validity.

The advantages of Whiteness may be reflected in the absence of folktales. The number of multicultural titles published in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s seems to have disappeared. As noted in Chapter 2, folktales have played an important part in teaching diversity. "A major goal of multicultural education, as stated by specialists in the field is to reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from

diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality” (Banks, 1995, p. 3). While the dialogue may have been offensive, the lessons offered by characters who were located outside time and place were universal.

White children can easily find books that feature characters that look like them, allowing these readers to make more connections to the texts. Black children have fewer choices when trying to locate books that portray faces that are similar to theirs. These characters, except for skin tone, are interchangeable with the White characters. Even when Black characters were depicted, they often have the same features as the White characters with the exception of hair texture and style. When Black readers are able to locate books with characters that look like them, these characters may be placed within the illustrations so that they are smaller and less significant to the story.

Black families are rarely represented as traditional two-parent units. While some books were coded for nontraditional families, the message is clear: Many Black families are single parents who struggle with menial jobs. These subtle suggestions tend to normalize this dynamic. No books were located that indicated a Black middle-class family; thus, Black readers may begin to ask whether they and their families have the ability to fit into a White world, thereby questioning their value or making assumptions about the idea that it is better to be White.

Finally, using the stories of history to deconstruct racism was rarely noted. Characters who face discrimination and make efforts to change their circumstances are often filled with emotions including anger, fear, and shame. Also, these characters understand that to overcome these emotions, momentous obstacles must be overcome. While equality is a powerful feature in modern society and so directly tied to our identities, young Black readers are likely to feel these emotions when faced with

inequality; thus, as White readers associate equality with positive emotions, Blacks associate inequality with negative emotions. Scholars have examined children's books over many decades, but it was not until the Civil Rights movement began that scholarship began to focus on equality and human rights (Chukhray, 2010, p. 10). Researchers regularly focus on students to observe bias and racial stereotypes. This limits the consideration of words and social concepts.

The Problem

Race continues to be a momentous factor in dialogs surrounding inequities and has become a descriptor for the economic and social decay facing segments of U.S. society.

It seems that it (racism) has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphoric life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before. (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48)

Rarely do individuals openly admit to racial bias; yet schools, legal systems, and pop culture reflect the ongoing and often unsteady gains in race-based equity. The incongruity between individual and systemic biases and the tensions between the majority and ethnic minority stakeholders are regularly headline news.

A complex and sometimes contradictory set of ideologies about modern racism “reflects individual perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and ideological constructs with social structural arrangements that have been created historically, but that demonstrate taken-for-granted arrangements, conscious practice, and active decision making on the part of powerful and strategically located social actors” (Lowy, 1991, p. 543). These taken-for-granted arrangements continue to present challenges in schools for administrators,

teachers, and students facing increasing accountability for their work.

The Purpose

Educational leaders are aware that changes are necessary in schools if the needs of children are going to be met and student achievement improved. Reading is a key component to school success; teachers and facilitators work to support students who can decode texts fluently and think critically in order to advocate for themselves and others. Countless educational resources exist, all aiming to train teachers to effectively reach students through professional development and curriculum and instructional strategies; yet many students fail to reach the reading goals measured by state-mandated assessments. Often, these students live in poverty in large urban districts and are part of the ethnic minority (USDOE, 2017). Black students report reading less than their White counterparts, showing sporadic patterns of growth and decline. Scholars have studied the reading habits of Black adolescent males (Deane, 1989; Heath, 1983; Husband, 2012), the race-based achievement gap in reading (Banks, 1993; Nisbett, 2011), and the responsibilities of the publishing industry (Richardson, 1974); yet in a review of the existing scholarship, no recent research has considered the correlation between the decline in time spent reading and the availability of books that represent the ethnic minority.

This study sought to shed light on the access to the early literature available to students and how the representations of Black characters are presented visually and through text. In addition, this research aims to help educators become aware of the institutionalization of race-based advantages and disadvantages students encounter. This awareness is intended as an opportunity for teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, and university professors to become more mindful of the literature available

to the students they teach and to the ways in which the characters in these books are represented.

The Methodology

The institutional aspects of racism are integral to this study. CRT challenges educators to examine stories of privilege and to distort the dominant narrative by “developing theories of social transformation wherein knowledge is generated specifically for the purpose of addressing and ameliorating conditions of oppression, of poverty, of deprivation” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36). Resistance to the power structure begins with resistance by both the individual and the collective. The multi-dimensional nature of CRT lends itself to storytelling to legitimize the experiences of those who are speaking. These stories lend credence to the belief that self-knowledge is powerful and allows the teller to name their experiences. Alternately, it allows for a critical examination of the myths and stories powerful groups use to justify racial subordination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

Interpretations of Findings

Research Question 1. What themes in early children’s literature emerge as relevant in the representations of Black characters?

Several relevant themes emerged as a result of this study. As noted in previous studies, Black authors and illustrators continue to be underrepresented; five Black authors and illustrators were discovered after coding 122 books.

Black characters tend to be burdened by their circumstances and are faced with a need to change in order to be considered successful in a race conscious society. In most cases, these characters are depicted in a stance of emotional responses to their circumstances, with anger and fear being the most common. This is particularly true of

the biographical books dealing with Black main characters.

Black families are often depicted in nontraditional families, either as members of a single mother home or as a member of an extended family. This is a manifestation of Black female stereotypes situated within the family structure (Hobson, 2008).

The spatial placement of Black characters on the page was notable as well; most minor Black characters are positioned away from the center of the page. In addition, the features of the Black characters are often very similar; most have the same shape mouth, eyes, and nose and these features are the same as the corresponding White characters. The only variation is the hairstyle.

The researcher was unable to find any current titles in School 1. This shed an unintended light on the absence of folktales in more recent publications.

Research Question 2. What differences in themes are found in early children's literature in books located in a school library, community public library, and retail bookstores?

The researcher found consistency among these themes in each of the five locations. An important component of CRT is counterstorytelling. By excluding Black authors and illustrators from the pool of published work, their voices are eliminated from the narratives, sending a subtle message to children that only White voices have value and power (Bell, 1992).

In volume, the retail locations offered a larger selection of books, yet few books dealing with history were located. These titles were often biographies that elevated the events of the past to a privileged position with respect to existing knowledge and roles without acknowledging counterstories. In addition, the retail locations were the most likely to depict Black characters' reaction to their circumstances with negative emotions

including shame or hurt.

Black families are rarely represented as traditional two-parent units. While some books were coded for nontraditional families, the message is clear: Many Black families have single parents who struggle with menial jobs. These subtle suggestions tend to normalize this dynamic. No books were located that indicated a Black middle-class family of any structure, thus Black readers may begin to ask whether they and their families have the ability to fit into a White world, thereby questioning their value or making assumptions about the idea that it is better to be White. Without the welfare mother, the discourse of “pulling oneself up by the bootstraps” would lose its power. Without the collective welfare mother, the existence of poverty would necessitate a reconfiguration of the narrative of composite stories (Huda, 2001).

Research Question 3. What do the emergent themes demonstrate in the ongoing institutionalization of racial understandings and misunderstandings?

Both the original coding instrument and the revised coding instrument contained the author’s name, gender, and race and the name of the publishers. Including these data enabled the researcher to determine the ethnicity of the authors and illustrators. Including the race of the author was an important consideration since according to CRT scholars; Black authors, like their White counterparts, are well-qualified representatives of their culture (Delgado, 1993).

The meta narratives of White privilege often blames the individual for their inability to function within the power structure yet creates the very structures that are often designed to deny access to achievement. Using the stories of history to deconstruct racism was rarely noted. Characters who face discrimination and make efforts to change their circumstances are often filled with emotions including anger, fear, and shame

(Springer, 2002).

Also, these characters understand that to overcome these emotions, momentous obstacles must be overcome. While equality is a powerful feature in modern society and so directly tied to our identities, young Black readers are likely to feel these emotions when faced with inequality; thus, as White readers associate equality with positive emotions, Blacks associate inequality with negative emotions.

Racism is deeply entrenched so that the notion of the “Self” and the “Other” or the “Black” and the “White” are binary, an encoded metaphor for defining race. Along with these labels come judgments about who is safe and who is a threat, about who should garner respect and who is deserving of contempt, and about who can be trusted and who cannot (Crenshaw, 1988). This idea continues to be institutionalized through picture books. Racial attitudes are formed early in life and characters in books help young readers to formulate and adhere to race-based social codes.

Finally, the absence of new folktales indicates that fewer young readers will have access to the lessons embedded in these stories. The major focus of this sort of literature is cultural sensitivity training, social justice training, and numerous other mantras. Multicultural education seeks to make individuals aware of their prejudices. The loss of the stories, which often counter the meta narrative, means a loss of awareness of stereotypes and the formation of new assumptions about racial subgroups.

The depth and breadth of race and racism are complex and often contentious: It is a topic in politics; it is brought into sharp relief in questions of power and privilege; it announces itself in our culture; and it dictates much of the work of educators.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was not to suggest that diversity in various collections

of books is the solution to the gaps in Black/White reading scores. These disparities are multifaceted and linked to a variety of causes. Rather, the intention of this researcher was to explore the representation of Black characters in children books and to uncover emergent themes. The question of the manifestations of these themes is left for other researchers.

Existing studies deal with early literature quantitatively, reporting the number of books published by Black authors or the number of Black characters in picture books (Horning, 2017; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Larrick, 1965). Other studies examine genre. Chall et al. (1979) found a greater representation of Black biographies, with the majority “being about sports figures and popular entertainers” (p. 531). As Miller (1986) and Sims (1997) documented, the period from 1965-1979 recorded both qualitative and quantitative improvements in the depiction of Blacks in literature directed at young children. “Not only did numerous authors both Black and White begin to include at least some Black characters in their books, but a growing cadre of Black authors. . . . Began to create realistic and culturally conscious portrayals of Afro-Americans” (Clark et al., 1993, p. 229). During the following decades, this and other studies confirmed that these gains faltered under a more conservative zeitgeist as Black families are presently underrepresented.

The data revealed little in the way of revisionist history or counterstories that might “legitimize and promote the voices and narratives of people of color as sources of critique of the dominant social order that purposefully devalues them” (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 116). CRT scholars posit that when this discrimination is present, CRT incorporates narrative as the “tie that binds,” as individual experiences (narratives) are collected and understood to demonstrate common themes “to galvanize their efforts to

pose new alternatives with the intent of changing their conditions” (Stovall, 2016, p. 31). In other words, these narratives, or counterstories, contribute to the intersectional and multidimensional experiences of people of color. Counterstories take their cue from the traditions of oral histories, parables, and family stories. The loss of these stories and storytellers serve to perpetuate White privilege and undermine efforts at more balanced literature for young readers. No content integration can be complete until an understanding of privilege replaces the theme of tolerance as a topic for study in the classroom.

Initially, CRT “failed to penetrate the salience of racism in schooling . . . and to summon scholars in the politics of education to critical analysis of race as an issue in public schools” (Anderson, 1990, p. 38). As more scholars and educators recognize the correlation between success in schooling and the material resources available to ethnic minority students, CRT has become a part of educational discourse.

While some might argue that poor children, regardless of race, do worse in school and that the high proportion of African-American poor contributes to their dismal school performance, we argue the cause of their poverty in conjunction with the condition of their schools and schooling is institutional racism. (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 55)

This study examined racial representations in early children’s literature to determine how Blacks are represented and to consider if these representations constitute a continuation of institutionalized racism.

Today many scholars in the field of education consider themselves critical races theorists who use CRT’s ideas to understand issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, affirmative action, high stakes testing, controversies over

curriculum and history, bilingual and multicultural education, and alternative and charter schools. (Delgado, 1996, p. 7)

Modern American mothers are often referred to with a number of descriptors: “soccer-mom,” “single-mother,” and “working-mother.” Each of these terms suggest mothers who are dedicated to their families; yet one descriptor stands alone in its negative connotation, the welfare-mother. Embedded in the notion of the welfare mother are powerful ideologies of race, class, and gender that blame the poor for their own poverty; portray poor women, particularly poor Black women, as inadequate mothers; and view nontraditional family forms as pathological (Springer, 2002).

Because the family structure in the data indicates no middle class Black families and mostly single-mother families, the message to the reader is clear: Black family structure is different than the normalized ideas of White families. Recognizing this hidden code can help educators and academics more fully understand and incorporate change through research and writing and in practice. These transformative applications can help to raise consciousness and reconsider the ways in which teachers advocate for students (Blee, 2002; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Quillian, 2008).

From the analysis, it is clear that White children continue to have access to a greater number of books in which the characters look like them (Horning, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Larrick, 1965). By frequently encountering characters who are similar, these students are able to connect with the texts, become more motivated to read, and find joy within the pages of a book. A subtler message is offered to Black children; that is that their lives are not as important or that Whiteness is preferable to Blackness. While this racism may not be intentional or even conscious, it is a reminder that inequality still exists (Quillian, 2008). What can teachers, professors, and educational leaders do to

challenge the status quo? By becoming aware of the differences in the depictions of Black characters, educators can make thoughtful choices in selecting books for school collections (Deane, 1989; Delgado, 1989). When these books are located, school personnel should contact Fountas and Pinnell and Scholastic Publishing and request that the books be added to the Lexile level database. Writing grants to add to the school collections and displaying these texts for students to see can encourage young readers to explore a variety of alternative stories. Students can advocate as well by writing to publishers asking for more balanced selections or to Black authors thanking them and encouraging their continued efforts. Teachers can engage in action research to note the changes in reading behaviors when children are offered a more diverse selection of literature. Finally, adults can use personal purchasing power to support smaller, independent presses that often employ more diverse authors and illustrators (Taylor & Cinisomo, 2015). Teachers and students can seek out and use both social media and computer-based book search applications to add to the list of texts that represent Black characters and their experiences.

As educators, we must be thoughtful in our choices of mentor texts and classroom libraries to make sure Black characters are well represented (Banks, 1993, 1995).

Limitations

One of the central themes of CRT is the idea that both neutrality and objectivity are impossible. Even if researchers could be completely objective, that objectivity would be a detractor from the experiences of Blacks in this and all studies. White academics should make no claim to have experienced the effects of racism. The investigator's knowledge about race and racism is limited to research and personal experiences and should not detract from the experiences of the Other. By exposing the ideologies and

manifestations of racism, the researcher attempted to bring an awareness of the importance of stories and events to the attention of the reader. Every precaution was taken to ensure that the study was completed in an objective and neutral manner.

It was understood that there are many school media centers and public libraries located in North Carolina. A delimitation of the study was the ability of the researcher to conveniently reach these venues. In order to achieve diversity in the choice of settings, the research was undertaken in both rural and urban sites, in both high-wealth retail areas and rural bookstores.

During the coding research, member checks were used in order to maintain the validity of this study and to maintain an awareness of preconceived notions formed while undertaking the study. While other ethnic minority students also struggle with reading, this study focused on representations of Black characters in picture books. The historical construction of race and the challenges of ongoing racism, both conscious and unconscious, are unique to Black students.

Recommendations for Further Study

The research conducted during this study has resulted in some useful observations regarding the thematic content of recently published books for early readers. It has also uncovered areas that need additional study. These include considerations of the ways in which textual representation of Blacks and Whites effect the socialization of children and what possible consequences are linked to these representations and misrepresentations. Second, educators should ask how professional development can help to facilitate an awareness of and responses to the roles of Black characters in early reading books. Finally, what role can librarians and booksellers play in publisher's choices about what literature is chosen for publication and what books are left out?

Reflection

As the previous chapter illustrates, the exercise of social power by elites, groups, or institutions results in inequality.

Racism is engrained in the fabric and systems of American society. The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is prevalent in the dominant culture. This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining the dominant culture. (UCLA School of Public Affairs, 2009, para. 3)

This power arrangement is normalized by using text structures including group dynamics and colorblindness, creating the Other through neglecting historical counterstories, and romanticizing racism and unspoken White privileges including underrepresentation of Black authors and illustrators and Black characters in early children's books; however, systemic social changes appear to be underway. This researcher is encouraged by recent public acknowledgements of power and privilege: men over women, and White over Black. These current challenges to the myth of meritocracy are well documented and frequently headline news. Pressing questions about hidden systems of advantage challenge us to raise the collective consciousness and to decide if we use our unearned privileges and positions of power to facilitate change and reconstruct the current systems of oppression.

CRT scholarship is interdisciplinary, including feminism (Crenshaw, 1988, 1989), politics and identity (Crenshaw, 1991), law and the judiciary (Guinier, 1991, 1994, 2008, 2013), and education (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2005, 2013); yet despite this diversity in scholarship, CRT embodies common themes including an assumption that racism is deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and psychologically. This work questions authority and its manifestations in the production of children's literature.

Conclusion

This discussion of race, identity, power structures, and education has attempted to create and promote thought and discussions surrounding the genealogies of racial oppressions and the place of these race-based notions in early children's books. As educators charged with balancing the scale of equality and fair practice, many questions remain: Who determines what counts as knowledge? Who represents and who is represented? What stories will be remembered? Whose voices will be heard? Such questions go to the heart of children's literature and how the history of race is interpreted, validated, and reconstructed.

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