LEARNING FROM BLACK PERSPECTIVES: A CASE FOR MAKING SPACE TO FEEL RACE IN HIGH SCHOOL U.S. HISTORY CLASSROOMS

By

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ABSTRACT

The current political trends to ban the teaching of race and racism in public schools, to eliminate Advanced Placement African American Studies classes, and to whitewash U.S. history standards, maintain hegemonic discourses, while simultaneously devaluing the teaching of Black histories and sanitizing the legacy of race and racism in U.S. society. Even more, as politicians continue to enact these harmful policies, Black voices, the people whose histories are being erased, are often omitted from these policy-making decisions. In efforts to amplify Black perspectives, using a three-article format, this dissertation investigates Black students' and their caregivers' attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in high school U.S. history classes. Drawing on findings from this study, as part of this dissertation, I also offer a new pedagogical strategy to social studies educators that could strengthen their teaching on topics that focus on race, racism, and Black histories. Data sources for this study include lesson observations, student photo-interviews and focus group interviews, caregiver interviews, news reports, and researcher memos.

This dissertation is dedicated to the Ancestors.
Thank you for your rage, for that rage led to consciousness.
Thank you for your sadness, for that grief made space for action.
Thank you for your fear, for that fear created resistance.
Thank you for your joy, for that joy cultivated futures filled with hope.

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INTRODUCTION

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has gained increased attention in recent years as politicians across the U.S. have successfully implemented legislation that prohibits the theory from being taught in PK-12 public schools (Schwartz, 2023). The recent legislative trend to ban CRT, a theory that is not taught in schools (Carter Andrews, 2021), is nothing more than a rhetorical guise by lawmakers who want to regulate how educators discuss and teach about race, racism, and the legacy of systemic inequalities in classrooms. Politicians, such as Virginia's governor Glen Youngkin, who advocate for the prohibition of CRT have argued that topics such as race or oppression are inherently divisive concepts and that they "instruct students to only view life through the lens of race and presumes that some students are consciously or unconsciously racist, sexist, or oppressive" (Executive Order No. 1, 2022, p. 1). Discourse, however, that situates racism, a system on which this country was founded, as a divisive concept is rooted in notions of white fragility aimed to center and protect white emotionalities and white discomfort (Matias et al., 2016), while simultaneously omitting the emotions or discomfort of non-white people who, beginning at a young age, experience racism.

Although legislation banning CRT does not target specific subjects or content areas, arguably, these bans have the most impact on social studies classrooms because social studies, of all subjects, is where discussions of race and racism are most likely to occur (Chandler, 2015). Given this understanding, it is not surprising that in addition to widespread bans that prohibit discussions of race and racism from public schools, politicians across the country continue to endorse revisions to U.S. social studies state standards and enforce laws (e.g., Florida's *Stop Woke Act*) that support the whitewashing of Black history education. In Virginia, for example, teachers have criticized Governor Youngkin and his Board of Education for supporting revisions

to the *Virginia and U.S. History Social Science Standards* (Virginia Department of Education, 2015) that remove language associating the effects of enslavement to current racial issues in the U.S. (Cline, 2023). In other states such as Florida, Governor DeSantis and his Board of Education blocked the Advanced Placement African American Studies class from being taught in public schools because the Governor claimed the class lacked educational value and perpetuated a woke agenda (Meckler, 2023).

Attempts to regulate what is taught in schools, particularly when considering Black history education, is not a new phenomenon. Scholars have documented how Black people have been systematically excluded from education by organizations, such as white philanthropic groups, to control the education Black children receive (Anderson, 2010; Watkins, 2001) and to control what Black children learn about Black histories (Woodson, 1933/2006). Despite these obstacles, Black people have persevered and fought to pursue an education that would empower them and equip them to challenge the many dominant narratives taught in schools that are steeped in white supremacy (Anderson, 2010; Cooper, 1930; Watkins, 2001).

Unfortunately, politicians continue to codify laws that stifle educators from having important conversations about race and racism in classrooms, while concurrently endorsing state standards that diminish and erase the histories of Black people in the U.S.; thus, it is important to recognize how the centrality of whiteness (Haviland, 2008; Leonardo, 2009; Matias et al., 2016) continues to produce school environments, reinforced by political decisions, that subject Black children to biased disciplinary policies (Skiba, 2014), unequal access to resources (Darling-Hammond, 2017), and a curriculum that often erases or misrepresents Black histories and cultures (King, 2020). Acknowledging the role of whiteness in shaping the education system not only means confronting and challenging the ways in which white supremacy is embedded within

curricula, policies, and practices but also incorporates an intentional inclusion of Black voices in conversations and policy-making decisions about education.

This study seeks to challenge the dominant narratives that have historically erased or misrepresented Black histories and cultures in social studies classrooms, to amplify Black voices and experiences, and to understand how race, racism, and Black histories are currently being taught through three distinct but connected approaches and is guided by the following overarching questions: 1) What attitudes do Black students and their caregivers have towards the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in their U.S. History classes?; 2) How do Black students and their caregivers *feel* about the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in schools?; and 3) How do teachers incorporate discussions of race and racism into their lessons on the Civil Rights Movement?

This study took place in rural and urban environments in Virginia. To begin the study, I conducted lesson observations of two high school teachers who taught U.S. history. Due to this study's focus on race and racism, specifically, I observed the teachers' instruction on the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) unit, because this period is typically located as foundational to understandings of race, varying types of racism, and democracy in this country (Banks, 2001; Journell, 2008), and because of its prevalence in K-12 U.S. history curricula (Swalwell & Pelligrino, 2015). After lesson observations, I conducted interviews with the teachers, photo-interviews and focus group interviews with the students, and individual interviews with the students' caregivers; other data sources collected in this study include researcher memos and analysis of news articles from local and national sources. I employed critical methodologies and frameworks to analyze the data, and I present the findings from this study in three distinct yet interconnected articles which, collectively, have implications for a variety of audiences.

The first article centers on the students from the rural high school and addresses the following questions: 1) How do Black students use racialized emotions in their analysis of images to understand the Civil Rights Movement?; and 2) How do Black students use racialized emotions when reflecting on the viability and necessity of the Black Lives Matter Movement? Drawing on the students' responses from the photo-interviewing activity, where they examined images that represent the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), and the focus group interviews, I found that racialized emotions significantly informed the students' historical consciousness and how they understood the permanence of antiBlackness in the present. Specifically, I found that students' interpretations of the Black emotions represented in the images informed how they made sense of the significance of the CRM and that when students engaged in conversations on the viability and necessity of the Black Lives Matter Movement, they drew heavily from Black emotions to justify their arguments. The findings from this study demonstrate how racialized emotions, learning, and academic inquiry intersect in social studies education. The findings also underscore the inextricable link between emotions and the individual; said differently, students nor teachers leave their emotions behind when they enter the school building, which emphasizes the importance of effectively and responsibly incorporating affect and emotion into education, particularly history education.

This study adds to the literature in social studies education in two distinct ways. First, this study stresses the importance of preparing pre-service teachers to not only *understand* what racialized emotions are but to *acknowledge* the various ways racialized emotions operate in U.S. society and to *value* the diverse racialized emotions that *all* students bring to social studies classrooms. Second, this study illustrates the need for social studies teachers to incorporate an analysis of racialized emotions into their instruction, particularly when teaching social

movements that center on race. I developed this article to meet the requirements of an interdisciplinary journal that focuses on research, theory, and cognition.

The second article, which moves the research conducted in the first article into practice, is designed for a practitioner audience, particularly high school-level social studies educators who seek to use anti-racist and critical social and emotional pedagogies in their teaching of the Civil Rights Movement. This article has two components: first I briefly share findings from my lesson observations of the teacher in the rural high school and responses from the students' photo-interview and focus group interviews. Building on those findings, I then describe a new strategy that educators can use with their students that guides them through a critical analysis of racialized emotions (CARE) with historical sources. The CARE strategy introduces a new approach to history education that centers on the intersections of anti-racist and social and emotional pedagogies and encompasses three components: an understanding of racialized emotions (Bonilla-Silva, 2019), a teacher self-checklist rooted in transformative social and emotional learning (TSEL, Jagers et al. 2018, 2019), and the strategy's guiding questions.

Thoughtful use of the CARE strategy has the potential to strengthen history instruction, especially instruction on Black histories and historical events that focus on race and racism. Even more, this strategy could enhance students' racial literacies and teachers' antiracist pedagogies as it creates opportunities for students and teachers to acknowledge, analyze, and critique the impact of racialized emotions on history, while simultaneously de-centering and interrogating whiteness and white emotionalities (King, 2022; Kishimoto, 2018; Matias et al., 2016) when teaching history. I end this article by providing summaries of the three thematic lesson plans I created, which use the CARE strategy, to nuance the teaching of the Civil Rights Movement. I developed this article to meet the requirements for practitioner-based social studies journals.

While the first article demonstrates how racialized emotions inform students' historical consciousness and the second article provides a practical strategy that social studies educators can use to incorporate racialized emotions into their instruction, the third article reminds us of the importance of teaching about race, racism, and Black histories in history classrooms. Focusing on the caregivers' emotions with learning Black histories and engaging in discussions of race and racism in their PK-12 schooling experiences, coupled with how the caregivers discuss race, racism, and Black histories with their own children, this article addresses the following research questions: 1) What are Black caregivers' beliefs and attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in PK-12 public schools?; 2) Why do they have these beliefs and attitudes?; 3) Do Black caregivers discuss race, racism, and Black histories with their children; if so, why, and how? In addition to the interviews with the caregivers, outside sources (e.g., politicians' discourse, legislation) were important to examine the impact the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in public schools; thus, I also analyzed current news sources that covered: legislation that banned the teaching of race and racism, legislation that banned the teaching of Advanced Placement African American Studies, and stories about revisions to the history standards in Virginia.

Using Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado, 1989; Harris, 1993) as a theoretical framework and composite counterstorytelling methodology (Cook & Bryan, 2021; Cook & Dixson, 2013) to analyze the data, I found that *how*, and *if*, educators teach about race, racism, and Black histories can emotionally and affectively impact the ways Black children understand Black histories, how they relate to history, and how they see themselves within society. Presented through a composite counternarrative (Cook & Bryan, 2021), findings from this study produce many implications for social studies teacher educators and anyone committed

to anti-racist education, such as 1) Reexamining *who we* center in our research and *why*; 2) Reconsidering *how* we include these voices in our research; and 3) Ensuring that when we encourage our pre-service teachers to include Black community perspectives, and the perspectives of other Communities of Color, into our instruction that they do so in humanizing ways that consider their emotions. This article was developed to meet the requirements of journals that focus on using creative qualitative methods to disseminate information.

U.S. history is a story that could not exist without an understanding of the complex and oftentimes contentious histories of Black people. A long, non-essentializing story that begins before Black people arrived at Comfort Pointe (Hannah-Jones, 2021), Black histories embody Black resistance, Black intellectualism, and Black futurity (King, 2020) which produced a variety of *feelings* that may have caused Black people to *feel emotions* such as joy and happiness. Equally so, our histories are informed by individual, violent acts of antiBlackness and systemic antiBlack policies which also produced a variety of *feelings* that may have caused Black people to *feel* emotions such as fear and sadness. But when policymakers enact legislation that eradicates the teaching of race and racism in schools, inclusive of antiBlackness, without considering the perspectives of Black people, Black children are at risk of experiencing racism and *feeling* race within society, without learning about how the intersections of race, emotions, power, and oppression have shaped U.S. history. Similarly, when policymakers endorse U.S. history curricula that erase and diminish Black histories, Black children may begin to *feel* as though their histories are irrelevant.

By highlighting Black perspectives, together, these three articles aim to increase our understandings of how Black students draw from racialized emotions to understand the past, offers practical strategies to educators on how they can use racialized emotions in their

instruction, and demonstrates the emotional and affective consequences, for Black children, when Black histories, race, and racism are omitted from history instruction.

Positioning Myself in the Work

This study is deeply personal. I conducted this study in Virginia, a place where I have traced my maternal ancestral roots as far back as the 1800s to the Tuckahoe Plantation in Manakin County where my family was enslaved. In 1840, my maternal grandmother Mary Mitchell was impregnated by the plantation owner and bore a son. Thomas Mitchell, Mary's son, had 15 children and Ellen Mitchell, one of his daughters, is the matriarch of my branch of the family. While many stories have been passed down through the years, one story that I hold close to my heart is about Ellen Mitchell who, with four other Black community members, founded the church that I attend today. More than just a place of worship, this church uplifted the Black Tuckahoe community as it served as a night school for Black working adults, a place to register Black voters, and a carpool transportation hub for Black people who feared discrimination from public transportation. On July 18, 1923, local members of the Ku Klux Klan burned this church down. Despite this horrific attempt to instill fear in the church's Black members, eventually, they rebuilt the church where it still stands today. I tell this story and provide a brief overview of my family ancestry to not only illustrate my connections to Virginia but to show how whiteness is always, violently, haunting Black people. A haunting that we would never know about if it was not for the stories told by Black people.

In this dissertation, whether told by Black children or Black adults, stories play a significant role in how the participants shared their experiences. Conversely, as politicians in Virginia enact legislation that bans Black histories and endorse curricula that sanitize U.S. history, they, too, are creating stories that illustrate their commitment to constructing antiBlack

revisionist narratives. As I reflect on my familial stories, I am reminded that amid antiBlackness my Ancestors had choices; they could have done nothing and accepted the status quo, or they could have done something and pursued better for themselves and future generations.

Building on my Ancestors 'choices to do something, I write this dissertation as an act of resistance, and I situate this dissertation as an opportunity for us to learn from the brilliance of how Black students understand the past, to provide pedagogical approaches that can humanize the teaching of Black histories, and to gain insight from the wisdom of Black caregivers on the complexities, necessities, and delicacies of teaching race, racism, and Black histories to Black children.

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ARTICLE ONE: #BLACKEMOTIONSMATTERTOO: HOW BLACK STUDENTS USED RACIALIZED EMOTIONS TO UNDERSTAND THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

As I gathered my recorder and placed all my belongings in my bag after finishing my focus group interviews, Ralph, one of the students who participated in the study, tapped me on my shoulder and said:

> Excuse me, Ms. Jones. I really enjoyed that conversation. I enjoyed hearing the other perspectives about racism, and I really enjoyed sharing my own experiences with racism and how it made me feel. With all that is going on, I wish we had more conversations and I hope for a better future.

Ralph's hope for a better future immediately made me think about Sam Cooke's iconic song *A Change is Gonna Come.* Released in 1964, many consider this song to be the "unofficial anthem" (Tate, 2020) of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement because it highlights the despair, anger, and frustration that many Black people felt concerning the constant antiBlackness they experienced. Stylistically, *A Change is Gonna Come* was written in a way that at the beginning of each verse, Cooke emphasized a hardship but at the end of each verse he extended a tone of hope by singing—"It's been a long, a long time comin, but I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will." The diverse and complicated feelings and emotions represented in *A Change is Gonna Come* resonates with the varied feelings and emotions shared by Ralph and his classmates during a recent study I conducted that examined Black students' attitudes on the teaching and learning of race and racism in their history classes and their experiences with antiBlackness, as explained in more detail later in this article.

During our time together, the students discussed *racialized emotions,* which are the emotions produced when we *feel* race within a society that is built on racial hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Valoyes-Chávez, & Darragh, 2022), to understand the past and engage in a complex

conversation about the viability of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. As the students discussed how they understood the CRM, it became very clear that Black emotionalities impacted their historical consciousness and how they connected the past to the present, which sits in tension with curricula on the CRM that does not focus on the emotions of Black people (Jones, 2022). Even more, preparing pre-service teachers with strategies on how to effectively and equitably incorporate emotions into social studies instruction remains underexplored (Sheppard et al., 2015), which limits opportunities for teachers to effectively include emotions in their instruction. The lack of training and strategies provided to teachers on how to incorporate emotions into instruction is exacerbated when we consider how students, as demonstrated in this study, draw from racialized emotions to understand the past and present.

The purpose of this article, then, which draws from a larger project that analyzed Black students' and their caregivers' attitudes towards the learning and teaching of race and racism in their eleventh-grade U.S. history classes in both an urban and rural school district, is to examine how students in the rural high school drew on racialized emotions to understand the CRM and to discuss the viability and necessity of the BLM movement. As the larger study centered on an examination of race and racism, I focused on the CRM because this period is typically located as foundational to understandings of race, varying types of racism, and democracy in this country (Banks, 2001; Journell, 2008). Additionally, the CRM is one of the few U.S. historical events that both center on race and is commonly taught in U.S. public schools (Rodriguez & Vickery, 2020). The research questions that guided this study are:

1) How do Black students use racialized emotions in their analysis of images to understand the Civil Rights Movement?

2) How do Black students use racialized emotions when discussing the viability and necessity of the Black Lives Matter Movement?

Learning from how these students drew from their Black emotionalities to understand the CRM and to engage in discussion on the viability of the BLM movement not only amplifies Black students and their voices in social studies research but emphasizes how students' racialized emotions inform their historical consciousness (King, 2020; Seixas, 2017), and highlights the importance of strengthening pre- and in-service teachers' understandings of racialized emotions.

Literature Review

This non-exhaustive but comprehensive literature review draws from two well-researched topics in the field: facilitating controversial issues through discussion and teaching social movements, with a specific focus on the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movements. I want to make clear that I am not arguing that the BLM movement is a controversial issue, nor do I agree with labels that place historical events into binaries (i.e., difficult histories); in other research I have argued that using binaries to label historical events has the potential to erase the perspectives of historically marginalized groups and has the potential to distort how educators teach about the past (Jones, 2023). In this paper, however, I frame the BLM movement as a "controversial" issue because the students in this study presented two views about whether a movement specific to Black lives mattering was necessary which, according to definitions in the literature on controversial topics, could make the BLM movement a controversial issue.

Scholars have described controversial issues as either being "open" or "closed/settled" (Hess, 2009; McAvoy & Hess, 2013). Hess (2009) maintained that open controversial issues are

those that have more than one point of view and that they produce authentic questions about public policies that generate multiple competing answers. Similarly, Hand (2008) argued that issues are controversial topics if two rational views exist. Within a U.S. context, an example of an open controversial issue is requiring background checks before purchasing guns. Closed or settled controversial issues are those where there is a general "agreed-upon answer" (McAvoy & Hess, 2013, p. 38) within society. An example of a closed controversial issue, within the U.S., is women suffrage.

Employing these definitions, the BLM movement could be a controversial issue as varying opinions of the utility on the BLM movement exist. Adversaries (including a student in this study) claim that #BLM is counterproductive because they think it supports Black lives mattering instead of "All lives mattering" (Tomar, 2021) and because they believe the movement promotes violent and dangerous protest tactics. Conversely, advocates of #BLM argue that the movement is necessary because Black people continue to face institutional and systemic inequalities and have yet to achieve racial justice and equality (King et al., 2016). When done well, with appropriate topics, facilitating discussions on controversial issues is important in social studies classrooms because they encourage student civic participation and action, which can lead to the development of informed, critical citizens (Debauch, 2015; Hess & Granzler, 2007).

Teaching Controversial Issues Through Discussion

While there is general agreement across the literature on defining controversial issues, scholars tend to diverge on how to effectively facilitate discussions on controversial issues in classrooms. The following sections briefly discuss the literature on teacher preparation, teacher

dispositions, and teacher attention to students' emotions when facilitating discussion on controversial topics.

Adequate Teacher Preparation

Scholars have found that successful discussions of controversial topics in social studies classrooms begin with adequate preparation by educators. Educators have noted that educators should provide students with informative materials about the topic before the discussion occurs, that represent a variety of perspectives about the topic (Hess, 2002; Ho et al., 2017; Litner, 2018) to ensure that the resources are biased free and uninfluenced by their political views (Stoddard, 2009). Teachers should also consider students' prior knowledge about the topic, students' life experiences (Litner, 2018), and students' interests (Lo, 2018; Journell, 2011), which enables students to be prepared for discussion (McAvoy & Hess, 2013). For example, Journell's (2011) study of four high school teachers' pedagogies when teaching the 2008 presidential election demonstrated that the teachers missed out on opportunities to use student interests to engage them in nuanced discussions of the 2008 presidential election. He found that while teachers used references to popular culture to increase student interest, the teachers failed to connect the interest they generated to discuss larger societal issues or their understanding of politics. Journell (2011) recommended that when facilitating discussions about controversial topics teachers should "create activities that are authentic rather than abstract to ensure that students can make connections between the political instruction described in class and the real-life politics they will encounter as adults" (p. 239).

Teacher Dispositions

After taking the necessary steps to prepare for the discussion, teachers should ensure that they understand their role as a facilitator during the discussion. When leading discussions on

controversial issues teachers should closely monitor the conversations and, when necessary, redirect discussions that become irrelevant to the topic or insensitive (Litner, 2018). Teachers should also encourage full class participation where students talk to each other instead of directing all the comments towards the teacher, embrace ideological diversity, and avoid trying to sway students' opinions to theirs (McAvoy & Hess, 2013).

Attempts to avoid influencing students' opinions, however, should not be confused with teachers' disclosure of their opinions on controversial issues to their students. Scholars disagree about whether there are benefits when teachers disclose their own opinions about controversial topics to their students. Hess (2005) maintained that teachers' political views inform how or if they disclose their opinions when teaching controversial topics through four different approaches: *denying* that the topic is controversial, *privileging* a certain perspective, *avoiding* disclosing their opinion, or through a *balanced* approach where every perspective is presented as equal. Where some scholars believe that teachers' disclosure of their opinions can help to balance one-sided discussions (Swalwell & Schweber, 2016) others caution against disclosure as teachers' opinions can be unintentionally biased and perpetuate harmful stereotypes (Niemi & Niemi, 2007). In other studies that analyzed how teachers facilitated discussions on controversial topics, scholars found that teachers avoided disclosure of their opinions because of pressure from their administration (McAvoy & Hess, 2013), fear that their opinions would negatively affect their careers (Byford et al., 2009), or that they would receive backlash from the communities in which they teach (Litner, 2018; Miller-Lane et al., 2006).

Attention to Students' Emotions

When facilitating discussions about controversial topics, teachers must also attend to students' social and emotional needs (Sondel et al., 2018) and students' emotionalities and affect

(Garrett, 2020; Garrett et al., 2020; Garrett & Alvey, 2021; Jacobsen et al., 2018; Lo, 2017; Reidel & Salinas, 2011; Ruitenberg, 2009; Sheppard & Levy, 2019) to effectively facilitate discussions about controversial issues. It is hard, if not impossible, to separate emotions from a discussion on controversial issues, and when facilitating discussions on these topics teachers must consider how to value students' emotions in tandem with how students use and refuse facts to formulate their opinions to discuss controversial topics (Garrett et al., 2020). As Garrett (2020) and Garrett et al. (2020) maintained, if teachers want to effectively facilitate these conversations and "better understand how and why students think what they think… the affective issues impacting students' thinking should be equally examined, not as a separate project… but as an integral part of it" (p. 321). Garrett and Alvey (2021) argued that to effectively incorporate the emotions students bring to discussions on controversial topics, social studies educators must "develop further emotional vocabularies" (p. 22) that values students' emotions as a resource (Reidel & Salinas, 2011) and positions their emotions as legitimate components of these conversations (Lo, 2017).

The extant literature on how to facilitate discussions on controversial issues is vast. As scholars have noted, to facilitate these discussions well teachers must adequately prepare materials and resources that are biased free and reflect the interests of their students, they must decide whether and to what extent they will disclose their own opinions about the topic to their students, and they must make sure that they are making space in their classrooms to welcome the varied emotions students bring to these conversations—all while maintaining a safe classroom environment for all students. But as Sheppard & Levy (2019) suggested, more research that examines how students "think about and/or experience emotions in social studies classes would provide a more well-rounded look into the role of emotion in the social studies classroom" (p.

202). Building on Sheppard and Levy's (2019) suggestion to focus on students, this study adds to the literature by amplifying how Black students' racialized emotions informed their understandings and thinking about the past and present.

Additionally, this study emphasizes the importance of preparing teachers on how to understand, acknowledge, and value the racialized emotions students bring to social studies classrooms. Knowledge of racialized emotions is important as scholars have found that white people in the U.S. can interpret the emotions of other white people better than the emotions of African Americans or Asian Americans and that the challenge white people experience with interpreting emotions is rooted in internalized racial stereotypes and prejudices (Johnson & Frederickson, 2005; Zebrowitz et al., 2010). If teachers do not understand the ways different racially marginalized groups express their emotions, then there may be instances where the emotions that students draw from to inform their historical consciousness are misinterpreted and devalued, creating classrooms where students do not feel safe to express their ideas. Related, white teachers need to be able to interrogate and disrupt how they and their students that are racialized as white, weaponize their racialized emotions in social studies classrooms (Matias, 2016).

Teaching Social Movements

Similar to the literature on facilitating discussions on controversial issues, social studies scholarship that both examines the instruction on social movements and offers strategies to strengthen the teaching of social movements is wide-ranging. The following sections briefly discuss the literature on the instruction of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Teaching the Civil Rights Movement (CRM)

There is an abundance of research examining the teaching of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) within social studies literature. Scholars have critiqued the instruction of the CRM, noting that educators often teach the CRM through sanitized narratives that evade discussions of race and racism (Swalwell & Pellegrino, 2015), and that they tend to frame racism through individual acts, omitting the ways racism manifested systemically (Wills, 2019). For example, Wills (2019) found that when teachers restricted racism during the CRM to individuals they limited opportunities for students to critically assess how structural systems privilege whites and limited opportunities for students to develop strong racial literacies, which is necessary for students to be able to acknowledge and respond to racism both in and outside of school spaces.

Understanding that there is a need to strengthen the instruction on the CRM, scholars have offered a variety of strategies to improve the teaching of the CRM including using project-based learning (Turk & Berman, 2018), incorporating music, movies, and documentaries, (Buchanan, 2015; Freeland, 2019; Jeffries, 2019), amplifying counter-stories and oral histories (Gardner, 2019; Moye, 2019; Rodriguez & Vickery, 2020), and drawing from tenets of the Long Civil Rights Movement (LCRM) to guide instruction on the CRM (Ender, 2019; Hawkman & Castro, 2017). For example, Hawkman and Castro (2017) employed tenets of the LCRM to create lessons plans that expanded traditional teachings of Black history and the CRM. The LCRM reexamines traditional narratives of the CRM through three tenets: 1) considering the CRM beyond the American South (Ender, 2019), 2) framing leaders of the CRM beyond heterosexual men by including women and LGBTQIA+ people, and 3) increasing the temporal nature of the CRM beyond the ‘50s and ‘60s (Hall, 2007). The authors’ lesson plans merged counter-stories with the three tenets of the LCRM (demographic counter-stories, geographic

counter-stories, and chronological counter-stories) to shift traditional contributions approach teachings of the CRM to more thoughtful examinations of Black history.

Teaching the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM)

There are fewer analyses of the teaching of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement within the literature, partly because it is a more relatively recent movement when compared to the CRM and it is not widely cited in social studies standards and curricula. Scholars have, however, acknowledged the importance and impact of this movement within society and have offered a variety of strategies on how to teach BLM in K-12 contexts. Some of the strategies scholars have suggested include using multicultural YA literature (Coleman-King & Groenke, 2019), centering personal reflections and experiences (Austin et al., 2016; Tometi, 2020), reflecting on the impact of social media (Cumberbatch & Trujillo-Pagan, 2016; Jimenez, 2016) and how to create space in classrooms for students to explore their own families' backgrounds and identities (King et al., 2016; Muhammad et al., 2017).

In their chapter on the BLM as critical patriotism, King et al. (2016) reminded readers that the BLM movement is not a new CRM, but an extension of the CRM. The authors discussed humanizing holistic historiography as a strategy that teachers could use to create safe spaces to facilitate discussions about the BLM movement, particularly when discussing this movement with Black students. Holistic historiography is "one that allows students from under-represented backgrounds to identify with their full history" (King et al., 2016, p. 98), and it "provides spaces for students to explore their identities through reflection on their racialized experiences, gendered identities, and the role of schooling in either oppressing or muting those identities" (King et al., 2016, p. 100). Understanding holistic historiography is useful for this study in two ways: 1) it provides a name for the types of conversations that naturally evolved amongst the

students during the focus group interviews, and 2) through a holistic engagement with their racialized identities the students were able to reflect on and make sense of how their emotions shaped their understandings and discussion of both the CRM and the BLM movements.

The literature on how to teach the CRM in ways that center race and racism and how to teach the BLM movement in ways that focus on students' experiences and identities, and Black history broadly, are extensive. My research adds to this literature by building of King's (2020) *Black Historical Consciousness Framework* that calls for educators to include narratives of Black joy into their teaching of Black histories to "focus on Black people's resolve during oppressive history" (p. 339). My research demonstrates how attention to Black emotions, specifically (e.g., Black fear, Black rage, Black joy, Black sadness), whose definitions are distinctly different when they are not modified by Black, is another avenue from which educators can draw to teach the CRM and BLM movement in efforts to center discussions of race and racism, while also building students' critical consciousness to combat oppression.

Theoretical Frameworks

The focus of this study is to examine how Black students drew from their racialized emotions to understand the CRM and the BLM movement, with a particular attention on their emotional responses as a result of antiBlackness. Given this focus, the theoretical frameworks I used for this study are theorizations of Black emotions in response to antiBlackness coupled with Lozada et al.'s (2022) *Integrative Model to Black Adolescents' Emotional Development (IMBAED).*

Black Emotionalities as a Response to AntiBlackness

For decades Black scholars have theorized the emotions and affective responses Black people experience while living in an antiBlack society (e.g., Baldwin et al., 1961; DuBois, 1965;

Fanon, 2008; Gilroy, 1993; hooks, 2002; Palmer, 2017; Yancy, 2016). Despite societal attempts to present Black people as non- or sub-human, devoid of a wide range of emotions (Mills, 1994; Palmer, 2017), Black people, like all humans, experience a range of emotions, but are oftentimes forced to "perform" emotions based on their social interactions. In his book, *Souls of Black Folk*, Dubois (1965) discussed the "double consciousness" that Black people embody where they are "always looking at one's self" (p. 44) through the eyes of a racist white society which creates a complex set of feelings, a "twoness," where Black Americans have to grapple between being Black in an antiBlack society. This duality produces a variety of simultaneous emotions (e.g., rage, fear, joy) that Black people must negotiate to exist, survive, and thrive in an oppressive society (Fanon, 2008; Gillroy, 1993).

Even more, when Black Americans express their feelings, their emotions are subjected to stereotypes as perceived by Eurocentric cultural values. Or their emotions are held to standards shaped by whiteness that are steeped in "Racist ideals about the inferiority of being Black or the danger of Black people to a U.S. American way of life that creates expectations for Black people's emotions and emotion-related behaviors" (Lozada et al., 2022, p. 16). These negative expectations shape the ways Black individuals express, understand, and regulate their emotions as both insiders and outsiders within society. I should note that my discussion of theories on Black emotions is not an attempt to essentialize the ways Black people experience emotions but rather I use these theories to understand how Black scholars have examined Black emotional responses to antiBlackness. Specifically, in this section, I focus on Black rage, fear, joy, and sadness.

Black Rage

The American Psychological Association (2022) defines rage as "intense uncontrollable anger," whereas other psychologists have suggested that rage is a more extreme version of anger that often results in physical, verbal, or emotional violence (Willaims, 2017). Black scholars, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, however, have presented different definitions of rage, and to some extent anger, with a specific focus on the ways Black people experience this emotion. For example, building from Audre Lorde's work, Cherry (2021) argued that for Black people, anger is an emotion that can lead to political action in pursuit for equality and justice. James Baldwin (1961) offered a definition of Black rage that centers on concepts of consciousness and the permanence of antiBlackness. In describing Black rage Baldwin famously stated:

> To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time. Part of the rage is this: it isn't only what is happening to you, but it's what's happening all around you all of the time, in the face of the most extraordinary and criminal indifference, the indifference and ignorance of most white people in this country (p. 205).

Different from unracialized definitions of rage, Baldwin explained rage as not merely anger or violence, but as awareness and response to collective antiBlack oppression that occurs regularly. Debra Thompson (2017), a leading scholar of the comparative politics of race, commented that Baldwin's Black rage is not random but propelled by "police brutality toward black people, the latent discrimination of voter identification laws… and the thousand other ways that the experiences of African Americans are different, more difficult, more dangerous, more exhausting, and more infuriating than those of white society" (p. 460). Cornel West (2001)

argued that the conscious rage which Baldwin referenced is really an expression of love for one's community. He contended that because rage is an emotional response to racist structures that impose violence, one must love Blackness in order to have rage when Black people are treated unjustly. Extending on the connections between Black rage and love, Bryan McCann (2013), a scholar of rhetoric and race, asserted that if one did not love the Black community then rage would have no foundation, thus Black rage "is best understood as an affective dialectic between communal affinity and jarring encounters with injustice" (p. 411).

Others, however, have identified Black rage as a justifiable, endpoint where Black people "have been asked to shoulder too much" (Grier & Cobbs, 2000, p. 4), and as a response, they turn to rage. This definition of rage is significant because in some ways it provides more humanity to Black people. Unlike Baldwin, West, and McCann who situated rage as having consciousness and love for community, Grier and Cobbs's definition of Black rage suggested that Black people can feel rage simply because they cannot and will not withstand racism any longer. Their description of rage emphasizes the permanence of antiBlackness while affirming that Black people, too, have a "breaking point" in which they term rage. Their definition of rage leads to questions about society's expectations on how Black people are "supposed" to respond to racial violence, and whether there are societal expectations that Black people endure racial violence absent of emotional responses such as rage.

Black Fear

Psychologists have studied fear extensively, offering a number of definitions attempting to describe fear and they have examined a variety of explanations justifying why people experience fear (Gullone, 2000; Mobbs et al., 2019). One of the most concise definitions of fear described it as an emotion that arises when people have a "conscious awareness that they are in

harm's way or approaching harm's way" (Mobbs et al., 2019, p. 1206), but when Black modifies fear the definition changes significantly. Where the above definition situates the presence of fear at the awareness of harm, Black psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists have suggested that Black fear is the understanding that one's Blackness, or their Black skin, makes one susceptible to harm (Johnson, 2018). In other words, an awareness of harm or a dangerous situation is not necessary for Black people to fear because their very own existence as a Black person in an antiBlack society is fearful—their Black skin is a pre-existing condition to harm.

Some scholars have attributed the specificity of Black fear to historical trauma (hooks, 2002) or cumulative stress (Smith Lee & Robinson, 2019). For example, Smith Lee and Robinson's (2019) study found that police violence and its coverage on social media platforms is a traumatic stressor for young Black men. Others have attributed Black fear to social constructs steeped in white supremacy that locates the Black body as something to be "feared, disciplined, and relegated to those marginalized and imprisoned" (Yancy, 2016, p. 230). And because Black people are aware that these constructs exist and are used to justify violence against the Black body, Black people experience fear simply because of the negative stereotypes associated with the color of their skin.

An important concept of Black fear is to understand that Black people's experience of fear in the U.S. expands beyond physical violence committed by individuals. Efforts to maintain Black fear are embedded in systems and institutions, which, similar to Black rage, have acted as a catalyst for Black action and resistance in both the past and present. For example, the U.S. government implemented harsh fugitive slave laws during the 1700s and 1800s to instill fear in enslaved people to stop them from escaping; but for many enslaved people these laws only compelled them to cultivate more clandestine, creative ways to escape slavery (e.g., Henry Box

Brown). For many Black people, the existence of Black fear in a U.S. context is to understand that fear is always everywhere *and* to be continuously ready to act against it.

Black Joy

While psychologists have studied fear extensively, according to psychologist Robert Emmons (2020) joy is one of the least studied human emotions but noted that across the limited literature joy has been described as a response "to a positive event or circumstance" (p. 2). Black joy, however, is much more than a response to a positive event. Kleaver Cruz (2020), the founder of the *Black Joy Project*, described Black joy as an expression of humanity and an act of resistance that "acknowledges we exist in an anti-black world that is set up to ensure we do not live— to choose life and to choose to enjoy any aspect of that life is a radical act" (Kleaver, 2020, as cited in Joesph, 2020). According to Kleaver, to have Black joy is an intentional choice Black people make amid antiBlack oppression.

Other scholars who have theorized about Black joy emphasize how it produces futures and imaginations that are not bounded by the white gaze (Cruz, 2017; Johnson, 2015). Johnson (2015) expressed that Black joy "allows us the space to stretch our imaginations beyond what we previously thought possible and allows us to theorize a world in which white supremacy does not dictate our everyday lives" (p. 180). As Black joy produces space for Black people to live beyond the white gaze, Black joy also produces space for Black people to be unapologetically Black (Cruz, 2017), to live collectively in community and love (Cruz, 2017; Love, 2019), and perhaps most importantly to experience Black joy is to have an "enduring feeling of 'enoughness'" (Williams, 2022, p. 370).

Black Sadness

Psychologist Paul Eckman (2011) defined sadness as an emotional "response that occurs to the loss of an object or person to which you are very attached" (p. 365) and that sadness can occur for a variety of reasons based on what someone considers a loss. Though there is an abundance of literature on the causes of Black pain, grief, or anger, scholarship that examines and defines Black sadness, specifically, is limited leaving questions about how Black sadness differs from non-racialized definitions of sadness. This lack of research is both surprising and expected. On one hand, it seems that with so much antiBlackness that exists within society, scholarship on Black sadness would be abundant. A 2021 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that Black adults in the U.S. are more likely to experience sadness when compared to white people (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). But on the other hand, even though Black sadness in the U.S. is historic, intransient, and ingrained with pain (Nunn, 2018), one reason Black scholars might not study Black sadness, as frequently as they have other emotions such as Black joy or Black rage, is because of the realization that Black sadness, in an antiBlack society, is not valued; to be Black and sad, without action, in an antiBlack society is not productive.

One noticeable difference between the definition of sadness offered by Eckman and Black sadness, however, is that Black sadness often occurs when Black people lose individuals to whom they are attached *and* individuals to whom they have no attachment; this is exemplified with the sadness Black people experience with the incessant killings of Black individuals by police. In an article from *New York Magazine,* Ashley Weatherford (2016) wrote about the suffocation she felt when learning about the death of Alton Sterling and described Black sadness as "resilience to remain calm when your protector, a police officer, becomes your predator"

(para. 5). This definition is significant because it described how Black sadness operates as an intermediary that allows Black people time to decide how they want to respond to oppressive situations. This is not to suggest that Black people's experience of sadness is not long-lasting but that in an antiBlack society, Black people's performance of Black sadness provides them time to choose if and how they will resist oppression or maintain the status quo.

Whether focusing on rage, fear, joy, sadness or any other emotions, Black people who have experienced and studied Black emotions reminded us that for Black people there is an extricable link between the history of racialized oppression and the ways Black people experience and express their emotions. Indeed, to teach history well and to better understand how Black students are making sense of the past, particularly when teaching about topics of antiBlack oppression, race, and racism, a thoughtful examination of Black emotions, not tangentially, but as central to history is necessary.

Integrative Model to Black Adolescents' Emotional Development (IMBAED)

Lozada et al.'s (2022) *Integrative Model to Black Adolescents' Emotional Development* (IMBAED) is an ecological systems model aimed to explain how Black adolescents' experiences with racialized oppression inform their emotional development, with a specific focus on how schools are emotionally inhibiting environments. Simultaneously, this model acknowledges how adaptive culture and family processes act as responses to racial oppression to "shape Black adolescents' emotional development competencies" (Lozado et al., 2022, p. 28).

An application of this model is beneficial to the present study in three ways. First, this model, broadly, demonstrates how Black youth's experiences with racial and systemic oppression (e.g., racism, segregation) inform their emotional development and the ways they learn how to express their emotions. Second, this model illustrates how racism, prejudice,

discrimination, oppression, and segregation are factors that contribute to schools being spaces that inhibit Black youth from expressing their emotions. More specifically, Lozada et al. (2022) argued that within schools these factors lead to racialized interactions with teachers, the over-presence of law enforcement, and a lack of access to professional emotional support which collectively inhibits space for Black youth to communicate their emotions. Focusing on classroom spaces and racialized interactions with teachers, if teachers respond negatively or interpret Black youth's emotions incorrectly this oftentimes leads to unwarranted discipline of Black students (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Lozada et al., 2022; Skiba et al., 2011). This reality of the negative consequences Black students face when teachers misinterpret their emotions raises questions about Black youth's willingness to participate in classroom discussions; if Black students do not feel safe in their classrooms to express their emotions, then opportunities for Black students to participate in classroom discussions where they draw from their emotions, which inform their opinions, becomes limited.

Last, implications from this model encourage and emphasize the importance for educators to create classroom spaces that value Black emotional expression. Just as there is a need for educators to implement culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogies (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012) in their classes, it is difficult to implement these pedagogies authentically if teachers do not make attempts to value and understand all their students' racialized emotions.

Researcher Positionality

The participants' comfort with openly sharing and discussing their emotions and their experiences with antiBlack racism was, as Dunbar (2008) noted, "predicated on my capacity to understand and to convey that I, too, had similar experiences" (p. 8). As the participants shared

their experiences with race and racism both my verbal and non-verbal discourses not only communicated to the students that I heard them, but more importantly that I understood them and had experienced the same things. Being open about my racial identity, cultural identity, and experiences with antiBlackness created spaces where the participants felt safe to share their own knowledges and understandings, which greatly informed the rich data I was able to collect and the ways in which I analyzed the data. Though the participants and I had different identity markers such as age and professional experience, the ways in which we shared similar emotional experiences and emotional responses when discussing antiBlack oppression speak to the ways our Black racialized identity informed our understandings of both the past and present.

Method

Context

This study is part of a larger research study on Black students and their families' attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in high school U.S. history classrooms in rural and urban school districts in Virginia. As part of the larger study, I also observed how the students' teachers incorporated discussions of race and racism into their units on the Civil Rights Movements, and through interviews, I aimed to understand why they incorporated these discussions of race and racism in the ways that they did. For this present study, I focus specifically on the results of the photo-interviewing with the students from the rural school and their responses during the focus group interviews at a rural high school in Virginia.

Virginia

I selected Virginia to situate my study for two reasons: 1) I am a former high school social studies teacher in Virginia and thus have first-hand knowledge about teaching in this setting, and 2) Virginia has received national attention about the Governor's banning of race and

racism from being taught in public schools and attention regarding the Governor's Board of Education ongoing battle about revisions to the U.S. history social studies standards. Virginia's governor, Glen Youngkin, not only centered his gubernatorial campaign around rhetoric that aimed to eliminate "the use of inherently divisive concepts, including Critical Race Theory and systemic racism" (Cain, 2022) from the U.S. history standards, but more recently, he promoted the adoption of ahistorical U.S. history standards revisions that eliminate opportunities for students and teachers to learn and teach critically about the role of race and racism in U.S. history. With such contention over what should and should not be included in the revised versions of the U.S. history standards, a variety of educational stakeholders, including Black students, should be considered in this decision-making, yet their voices continue to be omitted from these conversations.

Toussaint High School

This study took place at Toussaint (pseudonym) high school which has a school enrollment of 381 students with over 50% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Toussaint High School is located within a small rural county with a population of approximately 9,681 people (United States Census Bureau, 2021). This historically rich county is known for the notable civil rights protests and sit-ins that occurred there during the '50s and '60s. Based on interviews with the students, their families, and their teachers, the people of this county are very proud of their histories, and community members are routinely invited to be guest speakers in history classes at Toussaint and they volunteer at a variety of events the school holds.

Participants

The class that participated in the larger study included 21 eleventh-grade students, with 18 students identifying as Black U.S. Americans and 3 students identifying as white Americans. Because this study focused on Black students' perspectives, I only analyzed the data from Black students who participated in the two-day focus group interviews in addition to the photo-interviewing. Due to time conflicts, not all 18 Black students were able to participate in focus-group interviews on both days; thus, in this article I draw on data from the 10 students who were available both days: Bethany, Christina, Christian, Jessica, Jennifer, Justin, Lisa, Patrick, Ralph, and Tiffany (all names are pseudonyms). Prior to conducting this study, I visited the class, introduced myself to the students, held conversations with the students, and conducted two classroom observations so that I could build some rapport with the students. Additionally, throughout the focus group interviews, the participants noted that they felt "free to discuss their thoughts" because the participants and researcher shared the same ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Data Sources

Data for this study were collected from the students' photo-interview responses and their focus group interviews, explained below.

Photo-interviewing

Prior to conducting focus group interviews, the students were asked to engage in a photo-interviewing activity (Hurworth, 2004). Photo-interviewing, also called photo elicitation, is a form of qualitative data collection where researchers use photos to elicit a response that can "evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brains capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words" (Swalwell & Pellegrino, 2015, p. 82). Hurworth (2004)

noted that photo-interviewing works especially well with children and young people because the photos assist with recall and provide a starting point from which children and young people can have conversations.

Drawing on previous studies where researchers implemented photo-interviewing with students and teachers to understand student thinking and lesson resources within a historical context (Foster et al., 1999; Swalwell & Pelligrino, 2015), for this study I picked 14 photographs and 1 flyer that represented the Long Civil Rights Movement. Throughout this article, when I refer to the photographs and flyer collectively, I refer to them as images. I labeled each image with a letter and a caption with basic information: who/what appeared in the image, when it was taken, and where the image took place. Images ranged from those that are often associated with the Civil Rights Movement (e.g., Rosa Parks) to those that are less often associated with this movement (e.g., Barack Obama's inauguration), and they also ranged in chronology, with some representing enslavement to others representing protest movements as recent as 2020. Some of these images are also Virginia specific in context (e.g., an image of George Floyd on the Robert E. Lee statue in Richmond, Virginia).

Each image was placed on the walls around the classroom. I first asked the students to walk around the classroom and observe the images. After the students observed each image for the first time, I gave students a scorecard (see Appendix A) and asked them to observe the images again. During the second observation of the images, I asked the students to select five images they thought were the most representative of the Civil Rights Movement and to record their answers in the left column of the scorecard. I then asked the students to select five images they thought were the least representative of the Civil Rights Movement and to record their answers in the right column of the scorecard.

After the students completed the photo-interviewing activity, I organized their collective responses into two categories: the top three images the students most frequently chose that represented the Civil Rights Movement and the top three images the students most frequently chose that did not represent the Civil Rights Movement (see Table 1). I then rank-ordered the images within each category (e.g., most frequently selected, second most frequently selected, and so forth). Additionally, during the photo-interviewing activity, I wrote field notes that described the students' verbal and non-verbal reactions when making decisions about their selection of the images.

Table 1

Frequency of Images Chosen to Represent the Civil Rights Movement

Image	Frequency Chosen
Rosa Parks	10
Ruby Bridges	6
Martin Luther King Jr. & Malcolm X	5
Black Panther Protest	5
Chicago Protests	4
John Lewis	4
Little Rock Desegregation	3
Black Power: Mexico Olympics	3
COINTELPRO	3
Gordon	3
George Floyd	2
MLK Funeral	2

Table 1 (cont'd)

President Obama Inauguration	0
Virginia Wade In	0
Barbie Doll Test	0

Focus Group Interviews

I conducted two sessions of focus group interviews with the students. I chose to use focus group interviews because of their group dynamic, which has the ability to generate a range of data "through the social interaction of the group that are often deeper and richer than those obtained from one-to-one interviews" (Rabiee, 2004, p. 656). The questions for the first session of interviews were informed by data from the photo-interviewing where I asked the students to explain why they selected certain images to be representative of the Civil Rights Movement, and why they selected other images to not be representative of the Movement. The second focus group interview focused on students' attitudes towards learning about race and racism during the Civil Rights Movement, and throughout U.S. history more broadly. Additionally, I recorded brief memos following each focus group interview reflecting on the students' discussions.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). I chose IPA to analyze my data because this qualitative approach aims to "investigate individuals' lived experiences . . . and their meaning making that occurs in relation to those experiences" (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, p. 147) with a specific focus on their expressions of emotions. First, I read and reread the transcriptions making line-by-line notes whenever students mentioned specific emotions or when they used phrases that explained feelings. Specifically, I used an organizing

scheme where I color-coded the emotions the participants mentioned based on the emotions from my theoretical framework. When the participants mentioned rage or emotions related to rage such as mad or anger, I highlighted the text in red. When participants mentioned emotions related to fear, I highlighted the text in purple, r emotions related to sadness, were highlighted in blue, and emotions related to joy were highlighted in yellow. Following this pattern throughout my analysis, I highlighted emotions related to sadness in blue. Lastly, when participants mentioned joy or emotions related to joy such as happiness, I highlighted the text in green (see Table 2).

After reading through the participants' responses, I created researcher notes and experiential statements that "speak of the elements of the participant's experience together with the researcher's psychological and conceptual interpretations of them but based on the participant's words" (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021, p. 152). Next, I looked for connections across the experiential statements, clustered the statements that were connected, and created themes and subthemes based on those clusters (see Table 2).

Table 2

Examples of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Coding

Researcher Notes	Transcription Data	Experiential Statement
Rosa Parks central figure- why? Rosa Parks two different emotions.	"I think that's like, a lot of the times when we think of the Civil Rights Movement, we picture Rosa Parks on the bus and how **sad** and kinda **mad** she looked."	Rosa Parks is a popular figure of CRM, the particular image we see produces emotions that we interpret as being related to the purpose of the CRM.

Findings

My research questions asked, how do Black students use racialized emotions in their analysis of images to understand the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), and how do Black students use racialized emotions when discussing the viability and necessity of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Analysis of the data produced two themes: 1) Black emotions played a significant role in how the students understood the CRM and 2) Students compared their interpretations of the emotions represented in the images of the CRM they viewed during the photo-interviewing with their own emotions they experienced when faced with racialized oppression to engage in conversation about the viability of the BLM movement. Ultimately, the students not only agreed that the BLM is necessary today but also discussed how the BLM movement is merely an extension of the CRM because the emotions in the historical images are similar, if not the same, to the emotions they have today when they experience antiBlackness.

Defining Social Movements Through Black Emotions

Due to time constraints, during the focus groups interviews I asked the students to provide explanations about the four images most frequently chosen during the photo-interviewing (see Table 1 for entire breakdown of responses). These images were Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcom X, and a Black Panther Protest. When I asked the students to explain why they selected certain images to be representative of the CRM, their rationales were framed through their interpretations of the emotions in the historical images. All 10 of the students chose the photograph of Rosa Parks to be representative of the CRM, and when I asked them to explain why they chose this photograph Jennifer commented:

> I think that's like, a lot of the times when we think of the Civil Rights Movement, we picture Rosa Parks on the bus and how sad and kinda mad she looked, and at the same

time those mad and sad emotions was probably why she never got up. What is the Civil Rights Movement without Black people feeling some type of way? And those feelings were like, like a spark of like, you know what, this is what this is all about.

In this quotation, Jennifer noted that she chose the photograph of Rosa Parks to be representative of the Civil Rights Movement because of the emotions she perceived from the photograph. For Jennifer, one way to define the CRM was through Black people "feeling some type of way," and not just some type of way but specifically sad and mad. According to Jennifer, Rosa Parks being mad and sad operates in two different ways. In the first part of her rationale Jennifer noted that seeing Rosa Parks mad and sad is common. Later, Jennifer references those same emotions again, and their meanings operate differently. When Jennifer says "and at the same time those mad and sad emotions was probably why she never got up" Jennifer is speaking to how these Black emotions are operating as a response to antiBlack oppression. Jennifer's description of Parks being mad as reasoning for not getting up is similar to the ways scholars have discussed Black rage as being a conscious response to racist structures (Dubois, 1961; West, 2001). Parks was fully aware of what she was doing that day, she was conscious of the consequences, and the rage that she showed was an intentional and radical act against antiBlack policies. At the same time, Parks' expression of rage illustrated an endpoint for simply not wanting to withstand racism any longer (Grier & Cobbs, 2000). In an interview Parks stated that being tired physically was not why she stayed seated, but that "the only tired I was, was tired of giving in" (Parks & Haskins, 1999).

Simultaneously, Jennifer used sadness to describe Parks, which precisely describes Parks in the context of Black sadness. The picture shows a woman looking out the window who remained calm and steadfast in her act of resistance, despite the stares and pressures from the

white passengers and driver to give up her seat. In remembering when she was asked to move, Parks discussed how she immediately thought about Emmett Till's lynching, which compelled her to stay seated (Houck & Grindy, 2009). Perhaps this look of sadness on Parks' face that Jennifer noted was her thinking of Till, but in many ways that look of sadness was, as Weatherford (2016) described, an expression of resilience to remain calm in a hostile situation so she could decide what to do. Parks could have easily moved to the back of the bus, but in that intermediary Parks decided to resist. Jennifer's interpretation of Parks feeling emotions such as mad and sad, speaks to the specific ways Black people are forced to perform emotions based on their social interactions (Dubois, 1965), but also illustrates how Black students interpret these emotions to make meaning of the past, and how students use Black emotions to define the CRM. Additionally, while I am not asserting that a white or non-Black child would not be able to understand Parks' emotions in these ways, I do think that Jennifer, a Black girl who shared her own experiences with antiBlackness, has a better understanding of the emotions Parks felt that day than students who have never experienced antiBlack oppression.

When Christina, another student in the study, explained why she chose the photograph of Rosa Parks to be representative of the Civil Rights Movement she commented,

> So when you see that Rosa Parks, a Black woman, refusing to move which was not common at the time at all you get happy and inspired because you can see how it led to some advancement which is also a part of the Civil Rights Movement. Even though she looked mad, she probably was happy after the fact. You can't have the movement without all those emotions.

Similar to Jennifer, Christina not only made note of the emotions she believed Rosa Parks felt to explain why she chose this photograph to be representative of the movement, but she also talked

about emotions *in relation to advancement*. For Christina, the CRM is not defined by advancement alone, but also by the emotions connected to that advancement, such as being mad and happy. Emotions such as mad and happiness are rarely discussed together because they are seemingly opposite in nature, but Christina positions these emotions together as a way to understand and define the CRM. Christina's conception of advancement during the CRM is connected to how Black people experienced very different emotions, simultaneously. This idea reflects the ways Black scholars have defined Black affective responses to racialized oppression.

Scholars have contended that to have Black joy is an act of resistance where Black people choose life (Kleaver, 2020), and by practicing Black joy, Black people are allowed to imagine a world "where white supremacy does not dictate our everyday lives" (Johnson, 2015, p. 180). Christina used the emotion happy to describe Parks, not because being arrested by the police was a joyous occasion, but because Parks' refusal to give up her seat was an act of resistance against white supremacy, and it was a radical act where her actions would create better futures for Black people. At its crux, to have Black joy is an expression of humanity that seeks to produce futures that are not bounded by the white gaze; thus, when Christina said "she was probably happy after the fact," she is speaking to how Parks' actions served as an impetus to improve Black futures. These varied Black emotions are defining features of the CRM, and as Christina said, "you can't have the CRM without all of these emotions."

The photograph of Ruby Bridges desegregating William Frantz Elementary was the second most frequently chosen image to represent the CRM, with six students choosing this image. When I asked the students why they chose this photograph all the students who explained their choice used the emotion fear as part of their rationale. Jessica commented, "she looked so scared like so many people during the movement." Justin mentioned, "we have seen this

photograph a lot and each time I wonder how nervous and scared she must have been." Tiffany said, "I always think about how I would feel if I was her. I would be scared. But I feel like you cannot have the Civil Rights Movement without being scared. Also, back then and now it's just scary being Black."

Jessica, Justin, and Tiffany all spoke about how they chose this photograph to be representative of the CRM because of the fear they interpreted from the photograph of Ruby Bridges. Even more, Jessica noted that many people probably feared during the movement and Tiffany extended upon that idea stating that you cannot have a CRM without being fearful. Theorizations of Black fear suggest that Black people do not have to be in harm's way to experience fear but that being Black alone is fearful enough (Johnson, 2018). Ruby Bridges desegregated William Frantz Elementary in 1960, six years after the passing of Brown v. Board. There should not have been any fear for Bridges to attend this school, and Bridges discusses how she physically did not have fear that day. But Black fear is pervasive and ever present, her Blackness and the students' awareness that people despised Black and white children attending school together, led to that fear perceived by the students in this photograph. To understand the significance of Ruby Bridges' story, this photograph, and the CRM is to understand how and why Black people feared, and that the presence of Black fear is a defining characteristic of the CRM. As Tiffany underscored, whether in the past or present "it's just scary being Black."

The photograph of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X in conversation with each other and the photograph of the Black Panther Party tied as the third most frequently chosen images to represent the CRM, with five students choosing each of these images, respectively. When I asked the students why they chose this photograph, like with the Rosa Parks photograph, the students drew heavily from the interpretations of emotions to explain their answers. Bethany

commented, “when we think of civil rights from the ‘50s, we think of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, because their emotions moved people in the movement.” I asked Bethany to explain more about how the emotions moved people, to which she replied,

> Yea whenever we see King speak, he seems real calm see he looks calm in the picture, but then we hear in his speeches about how he gets excited with joy, but also how can he not be scared, people wanted him dead. Was he ever hesitant? He seems super confident. It’s hard to explain how you can be all those things but I can’t imagine learning about the movement without all those feels. I also can’t imagine someone supporting peaceful protest if they did not have these emotions.”

Bethany drew from feelings such as calmness and the emotions such as joy and fear and noted that she cannot “imagine learning about the movement without all those feels,” which, again, emphasizes how Black emotions are significant factors for students when defining the CRM. Similarly, when explaining why Malcolm X was a key figure that represented the movement, Christina acknowledged that Malcolm X,

> “is often represented as violent or angry. He wanted self-defense because he was just over it, he was ready to get at all of them. Those feelings are also important to the movement. I mean would it have happened if Black people were not angry?”

Christina’s description of Malcolm X’s emotion as “just being over it” aligns with how Grier and Cobbs (2000) described Black rage as an emotion that arises simply because Black people have “had enough,” in that they were no longer willing to endure racism. She went on to pose a question that asked whether the movement would have happened if Black people were not angry. This is an important question because earlier in the conversation, the students shared that being scared and happy were emotions that defined the movement, and yet Christina suggested that the

movement would not have happened if Black people did not have anger. The varied emotions students are drawing from to describe the movement illustrates how Black emotions such as joy, fear, and rage, though distinctly different, are steeped in resistance to antiBlackness. The ways in which Black emotions are tied to resisting antiBlackness is demonstrated in Lozada et al.'s (2022) model for Black emotional development which argued that Black emotional development and expression are inextricably linked to racism, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression; thus, it is not surprising that Black rage, Black fear, and Black joy are at their core emotional representations of resistance.

An interesting observation that emerged as the students explained their answers was that they drew from their previous knowledge about historical figures to inform their understandings, even when the images I showed presented a different story. For example, although the photograph of King and X depicts both men smiling, the students consistently used emotions such as joy and fear to describe King but when describing X, the students used emotions such as anger. At first glance, one might think that the students have a narrow understanding of the two figures. This assumption makes sense given the ways textbooks and other curricular materials tend to place these men into distinct binaries—where King is often situated as a savior (Woodson, 2016) and Malcolm X is either omitted or depicted as a troublemaker or overly radical (Alridge, 2006). And while, based on the focus group interviews, there is room for the students to learn more about how these two figures' philosophies were more aligned (particularly towards the end of their lives) than not (Joseph, 2020), I would argue that their use of joy to describe King and anger to describe X is not an attempt to place these figures into distinct binaries, but that the students' application of Black emotions to describe these figures was a way to understand the complexity and varied emotions that defined the movement.

For the students, the movement cannot exist without the presence of these emotions existing simultaneously, and their understanding of these emotions was also a way to describe the varying strategic approaches King and X employed to fight for equality during the movement. For example, Bethany drew from her interpretations of King expressing joy and fear to explain his peaceful, nonviolent approach to protesting during the movement, whereas Christina drew from her interpretation of X expressing anger to explain his self-defense approach to protesting during the movement. Similarly, when I asked the students to explain why they chose the image of the Black Panther Party to represent the CRM, Ralph noted that for the CRM to exist, to be significant, and to lead to advancement "there had to be groups who, like Christina said, had to be over it and they had to be mad, to be angry, sometimes we have to be those things to see change." Ralph's description of the Black Panther party being mad and angry are not emotional responses of violence, but rather these Black emotions represent consciousness and function as a catalyst for change and advancement.

In these and countless other moments throughout our interviews, the students used emotions such as Black rage, Black fear, and, to some extent, Black joy and Black sadness as defining characteristics of the Civil Rights Movement. Their dependence on Black emotions to understand the past and the significance of social movements demonstrates the importance of social studies educators who value and acknowledge the specific ways Black students draw from Black emotions to develop a historical consciousness of the past.

Using Black Emotions to Discuss Controversial Issues

The previous section considered how students used Black emotions to define the Civil Rights Movement. Building upon that, this section answers my second research question which examined how students discussed the necessity and viability of the Black Lives Matter (BLM)

movement. Findings reveal that when students engaged in conversation during the focus group interviews, on the viability and necessity of the BLM movement, they drew heavily from Black emotions. Specifically, the students compared the emotions they used to define the Civil Rights Movement to the emotions they feel when faced with antiBlack oppression to engage in discussion on the necessity and viability of the BLM Movement. Data for this finding center on the second day of the focus group interviews, which focused more on the students' attitudes towards learning about race and racism during their Civil Rights unit and their experiences with race and racism.

To begin the interview, I asked the students if they thought discussing race and racism when learning about the CRM was necessary, to which all the students shook their heads and responded yes. Then I asked them why race and racism should be included in the CRM unit, and the following conversation ensued:

> Patrick: I feel like it 100% should be talked about, because it's something that people need to know, it's something that people need to know happens out in the real world and like, where it came from and what happened, which is really interesting, because it's not taught as much in schools. Then maybe people might understand why we angry.
>
> Justin: Yea, we proved from the activity that we've acknowledged that civil rights hasn't ended, so discussions of race and racism should not end. People have been racist to me and it don't feel good.
>
> Christian: It should be because like having a white person learn about a Black person's experience. Like that's good to know…like white kids need to know how we feel, how history has and continues to influence all of our lives.

Patrick's, Justin's, and Christian's reasonings for why racism should be included in their unit of the CRM all highlight their emotions or reference affective responses. Patrick talked about being, angry, Justin spoke about being hurt, and Christian stated that people need to know how he feels. But Lisa's response, below, presented a question about the BLM movement that silenced the room and left many of the students with baffled and skeptical expressions on their faces.

> Lisa: I think that's a little bit of a complicated question. I think it is right to acknowledge it [race] because how big it has been in this country. But if we trying to eliminate it, to put everyone on a more equal footing, and to have a sort of race neutral society then how does constantly talking about it get rid of it? If we want to live in harmony, why is there a movement for only Black lives mattering?

The framing of her question situated the idea of living in harmony in direct tension with there being a movement specific to Black lives mattering, which is an argument that many adversaries of the BLM movement support. To break the silence Tiffany responded, "Because people do not think they [Black lives] matter, then or now," to which many of the other participants agreed. In response Lisa replied, "It's not that I don't think they do, I'm Black too, I just wonder how we can get harmony if we are only talking about ourselves?"

Lisa's question led to an insightful discussion on the viability of the BLM movement where students compared the emotions they experienced when faced with antiBlackness to their interpretations of the emotions in the images from the photo-interviewing activity. Because I do not want the students, their stories, and their experiences to be reduced to narratives about struggle that are "extracted" and claimed by the academy I share the following findings through what Tuck and Yang (2014) call refusal. By practicing refusal, I only include snippets from the

students' conversations that demonstrate how they drew from their emotions to create arguments about the viability of the BLM movement.

As the students begin to discuss the viability of the BLM movement, Ralph shared his experience about being at a protest for George Floyd in 2020, where he noted that despite the protest being peaceful the police sprayed the protesters with tear gas and how terrifying of an experience that was for him. Ralph went on to say,

> Ralph: I think it was a wake up call for me. It was like, you know, this is how, you know, society treats us and this is how they see us. And, you know, I still went out even after that after that happened to protest. But I was just really scared. And this makes me think about those images, where people were getting water hosed and attacked by dogs. And I'm like they were getting attacked then and was scared but still did it, and I got tear gassed at a protest, but I still wanted to protest. The fact that I am still scared and mad like them from those images in 2022 is why BLM is necessary.
>
> Tiffany: Yea, and we can't take off our skin, if we could then maybe the Black Lives Matter movement wouldn't be necessary. But when I attended a mostly white school, and the teachers and students treated me like I was an alien. I feel what Ruby Bridges probably felt—being lonely and scared and made fun of because my skin color is different. The fight definitely needs to continue.
>
> Christian: That's a good point schools are the worse and where I experience racism the most. It just sucks and it makes me mad. Brown v. Board was how many years ago, and I still have to worry about teachers looking at me crazy. Yea Black lives still don't matter.

> Lisa: I mean I hear y'all. And yes the killing of George Floyd and geez Ahmaud Arbery are terrible and they look like Emmett Till's. I just wonder about focusing only on Black lives—that's all (raises hand insinuating that she did not mean to offend anyone).
>
> Justin: The question is fair Lisa, I haven't experienced the racism from like back then like, vicious and way like hardcore, but I've felt it most definitely. Me and my brother, my cousins were walking down the street we were only like 12 to 14. And this lady is walking down with her kid and given she's white. And she sees us and she crosses the street. And I was just like, wow. And it wasn't like she crossed the street to get to her destination because when she passed us and got down road she crossed the street back to where she was previously at. I just felt like, I felt terrible. I was like, oh, man why would she even, why would she even think that was necessary to do that? So the fact that people still see us in the same negative light like they did 50, 60 years ago is why the BLM matters. Why do I have the same feelings those people had back then- aren't we supposed to progress?

This rich conversation, in multiple ways, illustrated how students drew specifically from Black emotions, in both the past and present, as a means to engage in discussion about the viability of the BLM movement, and though out the scope of this paper, how they used Black emotions to make the case for the Long Civil Rights Movement. The way the students entered these conversations through a specific racialized lens, which helped to formulate their arguments and framed their emotional responses, is significant. Ralph expressed Black fear when he was protesting and drew from that to understand how Black fear during the CRM often served as an impetus for activists to continue protesting. Tiffany talked about the Black fear she experienced at an all-white school and used that to understand the fear Ruby Bridges must have felt when she

desegregated her elementary school. Last, Justin wrapped up the conversation so beautifully by asserting that because he has the same feelings in the present that Black people felt during the CRM is reason enough for why the BLM movement matters.

Discussion and Implications

Findings from this study demonstrate the vital role that *racialized emotions* have in social studies education. Specifically, the findings suggest that Black emotionalities significantly informed how the students made sense of the Civil Rights movement (CRM), the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM), and how they drew from these emotions to justify their arguments while engaging in discussion on the utility of the BLM movement. The literature, however, has yet to deeply explore the role of *racialized emotions* as a strategy to both effectively teach social movements that focus on race and racism and how to prepare teachers to engage with racialized emotions when facilitating discussions on controversial topics. Ultimately, these two streams of analysis illustrate how attention to racialized emotions can strengthen the teaching of historical events that focus on race and racism, and how an understanding and valuing of the racialized emotions that students bring to the classroom can improve the facilitation of discussions on controversial issues.

The following sections situate my findings within the extant literature on the teaching of the CRM and how to facilitate discussions on controversial issues. Within both sections I also offer implications on how more attention to racialized emotions can improve CRM instruction, and how attention to racialized emotions can strengthen teachers' facilitation of controversial issues.

Using Racialized Emotions to Teach the Civil Rights Movement

Scholars have critiqued instruction of the CRM, noting that teachers tend to frame racism as something done solely by individuals, which erases the ways racism manifested systemically and institutionally (Wills, 2019), while others have noted that when educators teach the CRM they tend to evade or decenter discussions of race and racism. In response to these critiques, scholars have offered a variety of strategies to nuance the teaching of the CRM, such as incorporating counterstories to disrupt oversimplified tropes of the CRM (Gardner, 2019; Moye, 2019; Rodriguez & Vickery, 2020). Employing counterstories, among other strategies, to teach the CRM is useful, as counterstories amplify narratives that are often omitted from traditional teachings of the CRM. But the findings from this study suggest that attention to racialized emotions when teaching the CRM is also valuable because an examination of racialized emotions not only amplifies missing narratives, but it provides opportunities for students to relate to the past emotionally.

During our focus group interviews, when I asked the students to explain why they chose certain images to represent the CRM, they consistently referenced emotions such as Black rage, Black fear, Black joy, and Black sadness represented in the images to justify their answers. Jennifer, for instance, explained why she chose the photograph of Rosa Parks to represent the CRM, she said Parks looked sad and mad, but then noted "at the same time those mad and sad emotions, was probably why she never got up." For Jennifer being mad and sad was not why she thought that photograph represented the CRM, but it was how she understood how Black rage and Black fear operated as a catalyst for Black resistance that impelled her to choose that photograph to be representative of the CRM. Jennifer went on to ask, "What's the CRM without

Black people *feeling* some type of way…*those feelings* were like a spark," further demonstrating how she drew specifically from Black affect to be a defining feature of the movement.

Given the students' reliance on Black emotions to understand the past, I contend that, in addition to the strategies offered by scholars on how to nuance the teaching of the CRM (Gardner, 2019; Jeffries, 2019; Moye, 2019; Rodriguez & Vickery, 2020), teachers should also incorporate a critical analysis of racialized emotions (CARE) into their instruction on the CRM, with a specific focus on Black emotionalities. A critical analysis of racialized emotions is a new historical thinking strategy that incorporates anti-racist pedagogies (Kishimoto, 2018) and transformative social and emotional learning (TSEL, Jagers, 2019) that guides students through an analysis of historical sources. This strategy has the potential to enhance students' racial literacies and teachers' antiracist pedagogies as it creates opportunities for students and teachers to acknowledge, analyze, and critique how racialized emotions have influenced *all* forms of racism, while de-centering and deconstructing whiteness and white emotionalities (King, 2022; Kishimoto, 2018; Matias, 2016) within history education.

For instance, teachers could use this strategy with Sam Cooke's song, *A Change Is Gonna Come*, because of the Black emotions this song evokes. When teaching a unit on the CRM, students could critically analyze the song for the racialized emotions represented by having students answer questions such as 1) What emotions or feelings are present in the song?; 2) Whose emotions are being represented in the song?; 3) How do emotions/feelings intersect with race, racism, power, oppression, and/or resistance in the song?; 4) How do the emotions connect or relate to the goals of the Civil Rights Movement?; and 5) Do you think the emotions or feelings represented in the source are present in today's society? If so, how do the emotions

intersect with racism, power, oppression, and/or resistance in the present? If not, why? What has changed?

Similarly, critically analyzing print sources for multiple racialized emotions across people from different racialized groups helps students not only understand the contentiousness of the CRM but how emotions hold power depending upon who possesses the emotion. For example, students could analyze the well-known photograph of Elizabeth Eckford walking into Little Rock Central High School, where they compare the emotion expressed by Elizabeth Eckford to the emotion on the white woman's face behind her. Asking students to compare the Black fear on Eckford's face to the white rage on the woman's face can lead to conversations about why school desegregation evoked anger from some people, or why, despite fear, Black people persisted in their fight for school desegregation.

In the same vein, teaching the CRM through a critical analysis of racialized emotions responds to Wills's (2019) critique of instruction on the CRM that focuses too much on individualized racism. Critically analyzing the CRM through racialized emotions illustrates how emotions, based on who possesses them, can lead to the creation and justification of policies steeped in systemic racism. Referring back to the school desegregation example, comparing the fear that Black people experienced when Black children were subjected to subpar educational facilities and resources to the fear some white people experienced because their children would have to share classrooms with Black children is revealing. When Black people feared segregation, their fear acted as a catalyst for Black resistance against policies that support segregation and was oftentimes met with violence. Conversely, when white people feared desegregation, their fear acted as a catalyst for the implementation of harmful legislation, such as massive resistance. By comparing the same emotions amongst different racialized groups,

students can understand how emotions can lead to systemic racist policies, and how emotions can lead to resistance. Even more, Swalwell and Pellegrino (2015) maintained that instruction on the CRM evades discussions on race and racism, but a critical analysis of racialized emotions (re)centers discussions on race and racism when teaching the CRM.

Using Racialized Emotions to Discuss Controversial Topics

As the students shared why Black rage, Black fear, Black joy, and Black sadness were significant in their understandings and defining the CRM, they also began discussing how these same emotions are present in social movements today, which resulted in a discussion on the necessity of the BLM movement. The literature on facilitating controversial discussions examines how and what teachers should do to effectively facilitate these discussions (Hess, 2022; Ho et al., 2017; Journell, 2011), while a subset of the literature considers the importance of teachers attending to students' emotions and affective responses when engaging in discussions about controversial topics (Garrett & Alvey, 2020; Jacobsen et al., 2018; Sheppard & Levy, 2019). Findings from this study, however, raise an important question about the facilitation of controversial topics: *How do teachers learn to understand and value the racialized emotions students bring into their discussions of controversial issues?* Currently, there is very little scholarship that focuses on the importance of teachers attending to the *racialized emotions* that students bring to these discussions, but, as my study demonstrated, drawing from Black emotions was significant in how the students formulated their arguments.

The absence of literature on teachers understanding racialized emotions when facilitating discussions of controversial issues is troubling. If teachers do not value or understand why Black students, or other students, make connections to their racialized emotions to engage in discussions, then teachers can easily dismiss these emotions which can lead to Black students

feeling that their emotions and opinions are insignificant in social studies classrooms. As Lozada et al.'s (2022) model demonstrates, if teachers reject or devalue Black students' emotions, this could limit opportunities for Black students to feel safe in their history classrooms and limit opportunities to make history relevant to Black students.

To consider the role of *racialized emotions* when facilitating discussions of controversial topics, teachers must first understand what racialized emotions are. Garrett and Alvey (2020) argued that social studies educators should "develop further emotional vocabularies" to better understand how and why students think what they think, and I extend this claim by maintaining that educators need to strengthen their *racialized emotional vocabularies,* which begins in their teacher preparation programs. To understand racialized emotions, pre-service teachers must first acknowledge that our society is built on racial hierarchies, where race and emotions are intertwined (Bonilla-Silva, 2019). Valoyes-Chávez & Darragh (2022) commented, "Identification and racialized emotions are deeply connected because in racialized social systems, all individuals 'feel' race" (p. 273), and based on their racialized identities, people not only *feel* race differently but how they *feel* informs how they respond, in both the past and the present. For example, in Virginia, after the Supreme Court passed Brown v. Board of Education, some white people felt rage or anger towards the decision and that rage led them to resist the court order leading to massive resistance.

Pre-service teachers must acknowledge the connection between race and emotions within society, and how racialized emotions inform how students respond and how students think. As Tiffany (a student from the study) commented, "We can't take off our skin" implying that her Blackness is entangled in everything that she does, including how her Black emotions inform her understanding of both the past and the present. Although many social studies methods courses

dedicate at least one class on the instruction of controversial issues, discussions, or "difficult" histories, oftentimes instruction on these topics does not center on race and certainly not racialized emotions. The question becomes—*how can social studies teacher educators build and strengthen pre-service teachers' racialized emotional vocabularies in their courses?*

King and Chandler (2016) maintained that social studies teacher educators need to include racial pedagogical content knowledge (RPCK) in their teaching to build pre-service teachers' racial awareness. RPCK (Chandler, 2015) asserts that in addition to having pedagogical content knowledge teachers should know how race works in all aspects of social studies. I argue that when teacher educators draw from RPCK to strengthen their students' racial knowledge that this also includes a centering of racialized emotions to build their racialized emotional vocabularies. Strengthening pre-service teachers' RPCK with a specific focus on racialized emotions begins with an understanding that students' racialized identities inform their emotions, which then impacts their thinking.

Pre-service teachers need to be exposed to the varying ways racial identities may impact their students' thinking. To do this, teacher educators could do an activity where they present their students with a historical event and ask them how that event makes them *feel*, and why they think they *feel* that way. In my own social studies methods course, I did an activity with my students where I asked them how they felt about Confederate monuments being taken down. It is important to note that I did not ask the students about whether they should be taken down, but how the thought of removing Confederate monuments made them *feel* and why. Most of the white students felt indifferent, other white students felt relief, and the only Black student felt contentment. More revealing, however, was hearing the students explain why they felt how they did. The white students who felt relief explained they felt this way because it was embarrassing

being white and having to be associated with the people who built the monuments and the people who want to keep them up. The Black student who felt contentment discussed how removing the monuments made them feel vindicated because Black people have endured oppression for so long that removing them made her feel like it was a win for Black people.

While I acknowledge that other identities such as age inform people's emotional responses and thinking, this quick activity that I conducted with pre-service teachers helped them understand how their racialized emotions informed their thoughts about historical topics. This activity not only aided the pre-service teachers with understanding how racialized emotions could inform their future students' historical consciousness, but it also helped them value the varied ways racialized emotions inform one's thinking. Teacher educators could also model to their students the following sentence structure: I feel (__), which is why I think (__) to help students discuss their emotions when formulating an argument. This structure, which was a sentence formula that the students in this study naturally used to rationalize their thoughts, not only signals to students that their emotions do matter, but also provides language to their students on how to talk about their feelings in relation to their arguments. Additionally, to extend upon Garrett (2020) and Garrett al.'s (2020) who argue that teachers should not value facts more than emotions when their students are engaging in discussions on controversial topics, teachers can use that sentence structure to encourage students to use and refuse facts in tandem with their racialized emotions, to show their students that "facts" are just as valuable as their emotional responses.

However, the use of the sentence structure offered above, and relying on emotions more broadly when formulating arguments in social studies classrooms, is only equitable and effective if students are drawing from these emotions respectfully. Teachers should ensure that students

are not using their emotions as an excuse to be hateful or disrespectful towards their classmates and should provide clear expectations to their students noting that hateful speech will not be tolerated before facilitating these conversations.

Conclusion

Ralph's description of the fear he experienced at a George Floyd rally, Christian's articulation of being mad when he experienced racism from his teachers, Jennifer's interpretation of Rosa Parks as being both mad and sad, Christina feeling emotions of happiness because Rosa Parks' activism inspired her, and many other instances of the students in this study sharing their emotions are significant. The students' racialized emotions impacted their historical consciousness, impacted how they connected the past to the present to make informed arguments, and informed how they critiqued antiBlack racism in present-day. It is important to acknowledge and understand the role that racialized emotions play in shaping our perspectives and understanding of historical events and social issues. Black emotionalities, as discussed by the students in the study, provide valuable insights into how Black individuals have experienced and responded to racism and discrimination throughout history. Incorporating these emotions into the teaching of history and social studies can help create a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of these events and their ongoing impact.

This study highlights the need for continued research and development of strategies that can help teachers create safe and inclusive classroom environments that allow for the expression and exploration of emotions related to race and racism. By doing so, we can help students develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of social issues and promote more effective strategies for addressing them in the present and future. Amplifying, interrogating, and valuing

the racialized emotions that we feel is one way to get us a step closer to Sam Cooke's predication that a change will come—oh yes it will!

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APPENDIX

Scorecard

Directions: Please select five photos that you think **MOST** represents the Civil Rights Movement, and please record the letter of the photo in the left column. Next, please select five photos that you think **LEAST** represent the Civil Rights Movement, and please record the letter of the photo in the right column.

Most Represents the Civil Rights Movement	**DOES NOT** represent the Civil Rights Movement
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

ARTICLE TWO: USING A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF RACIALIZED EMOTIONS (CARE) TO TEACH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

"What is the Civil Rights Movement without Black people feeling some type of way?" This was a question that Jennifer (all names are pseudonyms) posed to her classmates during a focus group interview that I recently facilitated in an eleventh-grade U.S. history class. Some people, including myself, may assume that Jennifer's question was rhetorical because the connections among Black emotions, Black feelings, and the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) are *seemingly* obvious. In fact, some may argue that the feelings and emotions Black people experienced, due to generations of antiBlack systemic racism in the U.S., were the leading impetuses for the CRM. This assumption, however, may be mis-guided.

As explained in more detail later in this article, for two weeks I observed how Mr. Johnson, a white, veteran teacher with over ten years of experience, taught the CRM in his U.S. history class. The most glaring observation I had from his instruction was that although Mr. Johnson intentionally emphasized the various ways that Black people experienced inequitable conditions during the CRM (e.g., separate lunch counters, school segregation), he never associated those experiences with their emotions.

Mr. Johnson's omission of Black people's emotions, or the emotions of other racialized groups, from his instruction, is not an anomaly. The role of emotions within history education has always been a sensitive and touchy topic because emotions are often "construed as the opposite of reason, intellect, and logic" (Reidel & Salinas, 2011), which implies that emotions and reason cannot exist simultaneously. Conversely, scholars who have studied emotions have pointed out that emotions and reason cannot be separated (Damasio, 2010; Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2004) and that emotions are essential to rational thinking (Damasio, 1999).

Emotions have a powerful impact on how educators teach history and how students learn history (Garrett, 2011; Helmsing, 2014; Zembylas, 2007). Unfortunately, strategies on how teachers can effectively and equitably incorporate emotions into social studies instruction remains underexplored (Sheppard et al., 2015), which limits opportunities for teachers to effectively include emotions in their instruction. The lack of training and strategies provided to teachers is exacerbated when we consider Jennifer's question, posed at the beginning of this article, about the CRM. Her question's focus on *racialized* emotions, or the emotions produced when we *feel* race within a society that is built on racial hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Valoyes-Chávez & Darragh, 2022), highlights the need for teachers to examine and include discussions of how racialized emotions have shaped history, especially when teaching about historical events that center on race and racism. But, without proper training and responsible strategies from which teachers can draw, educators who attempt to include discussions and examinations of racialized emotions in their classrooms are at risk of doing more harm than good to their students.

In efforts to fill the gap that exists between the theory and practice on emotions in history instruction, the purpose of this article is two-fold. First, I introduce social studies educators to a new strategy that guides students through a critical analysis of *racialized* emotions, also known as CARE, that they can use with historical sources. In the second part of the article, I provide three thematic lesson plans that use the CARE strategy to nuance the teaching of the Civil Rights Movement. In the sections that follow, I provide a brief overview of the study I conducted with Mr. Johnson and his students; the findings from this study inspired the creation of the CARE strategy. Next, I explain in detail the core components of CARE and, finally, I provide a summary of how each lesson plan employs CARE. As we approach the

sixtieth anniversary of the March on Washington, an event commonly included in PK-12 history curricula (Rodriguez & Vickery, 2020) and rooted in the emotions of racialized people, what better time than now to reconsider the strategies we use to teach the March on Washington and the Civil Rights Movement more broadly.

The Study: The Importance of Racialized Emotions in History

I began seriously thinking about the importance of analyzing racialized emotions when teaching U.S. history after I conducted a study with Mr. Johnson and the students in his eleventh-grade U.S. history classroom, which was part of a larger study that examined Black students' and their families' attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in public schools. In the following section, I briefly explain the findings from my lesson observations of Mr. Johnson's instruction of the Civil Rights Movement and findings from the focus group interviews with students in his class.

Mr. Johnson's Instruction

This study took place at a high school located in a small rural town in Virginia. I was excited to observe Mr. Johnson's class because of the complimentary ways a colleague, who taught Mr. Johnson during his graduate studies, described his teaching style and the rapport he has with his students. Mr. Johnson, a white male, has been teaching at this school which serves predominantly Black students for ten years. As soon as I walked into Mr. Johnson's classroom it was apparent that he was well-liked and respected by many students in the school, as exemplified by students who did not have Mr. Johnson as a teacher but would stop by and say hello or even sit in on his classes.

From the first day of his Civil Rights Movement (CRM) unit, it was clear that Mr. Johnson was knowledgeable of the content and took pride in teaching the CRM beyond the

oversimplified narratives presented in the standards and curriculum framework from which he was contractually bound to teach. He used virtual museums and other modes of technology to engage his students, incorporated primary and secondary sources with multiple perspectives into his lessons, discussed historical figures associated with the CRM that expanded beyond the people who are typically taught (e.g., MLK, Rosa Parks), and invited guest speakers from the community to share their experiences about how they engaged in local activism during the CRM.

Mr. Johnson's instruction should be commended, and his pedagogies can serve as a useful example for other educators on how to effectively teach the CRM in ways that incorporates technology appropriately (Marcus et al., 2017) and extends beyond master narratives of historical figures (Alridge, 2006; Anderson & Metzger, 2011). Additionally, the guest speakers Mr. Johnson invited to the class not only connected the CRM to the students' local context (Wise et al., 2023) but also illustrated how "ordinary people" can bring about social change, which supported his students' civic agency (Woodson, 2015).

Despite curating and teaching an effective unit, like every educator, Mr. Johnson did miss out on some opportunities within his instruction. Mr. Johnson's CRM unit could have delved more deeply into discussions of systemic racism, and he failed to present Black resistance and Black oppression as a longer, connected narrative beyond the '50s and '60s. Additionally, as noted earlier, Mr. Johnson did not discuss Black emotions or any other racialized emotions and feelings during his instruction.

Mr. Johnson is not alone in his instructional missed opportunities on the CRM. Scholars have found that when teaching the CRM and U.S. history more broadly, educators tend to present racism as an individual act (Martell & Stevens, 2017; Wills, 2019), omitting how racism manifested systemically. Other researchers have argued that teachers and curriculum materials,

within a U.S. history context, often position Black resistance as disconnected actions that occurred sporadically throughout U.S. history (Hawkman & Castro, 2017; King, et. al., 2016; King, 2020) instead of demonstrating how Black people in the U.S. have always pursued freedom since their forced arrival.

Focus Group Interviews with the Students

After Mr. Johnson completed his unit on the CRM, I conducted a photo-interviewing activity with 10 Black students from his class. Photo-interviewing is a form of qualitative data collection where researchers use photos to elicit a response that can "evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brains capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words" (Swalwell & Pellegrino, 2015). To do this, I posted 15 images on the walls of the classroom that could be representative of the CRM, and I asked the students to pick five images that they thought were most representative of the CRM and to pick five images that they thought least represented the CRM.

After disaggregating the data from the photo-interviewing activity, I conducted two focus group interview sessions with the students. On the first day, I shared the results from the photo-interviewing with the students and asked them to explain their choices. On the second day, I asked the students questions about their attitudes and beliefs toward learning about race, racism, and Black histories in their U.S. history class. See Table 3 for the photo-interviewing results and descriptive quotations from the students.

Table 3

Photo-interviewing Results and Descriptions

Image Description	Frequency Chose	Descriptive Quotations

Table 3 (cont'd)

Rosa Parks sitting on bus.	10	"I think that's like, a lot of the times when we think of the Civil Rights Movement, we picture Rosa Parks on the bus and how *sad* and kinda *mad* she looked. And at the same time those *mad* and *sad* emotions was probably why she never got up."
Ruby Bridges desegregating William Frantz Elementary School	6	"I always think about how I would feel if I was her. I would be *scared*. But I feel like you cannot have the civil rights movement without being *scared*. Also, back then and now it's just scary being Black."
Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X conversing	5	"When we think of civil rights from the '50s, we think of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, because they their *emotions moved* people in the movement."
Black Panther Party Protest	5	"There had to be groups who, like Christina said, had to be over it and they had to be *mad*, to be *angry*, sometimes *we have to be those things to see change.*"

As demonstrated in Table 3, emotions, specifically Black emotions, played a significant role in how the students understood the CRM. Even more, the students were not simply noting that Black people were sad, angry, or fearful, but rather they were specifically describing how Black emotional responses to antiBlack racism led to Black activism and Black resistance. For example, Christina, a student from the study, commented that Malcolm X,

> is often represented as violent, *angry,* he wanted self-defense because he was just over it, he was ready to get at all of them. *Those feelings are also important to the movement*. I mean would it have happened if Black people were not *angry*?

Here, Christina noted that Malcolm X's anger is not one of extreme rage, but rather his emotions are responses to living to an antiBlack society, and because of experiencing those emotions he was compelled to do something about antiBlack oppression. Similarly, Jennifer commented, "we picture Rosa Parks on the bus and how *sad* and kinda mad she looked, and at the same time those *mad* and *sad* emotions was probably why she never got up."

Reflecting on both the brilliance of how the students connected Black emotions to the historical figures' responses of activism during the CRM, coupled with the missed opportunities in Mr. Johnson's CRM unit, inspired the creation of the CARE strategy that educators can use to 1) teach about the fluidity of systemic racism in U.S. history, and 2) illustrates how Black activism and Black oppression exists beyond distinct, isolated periods within U.S. history.

Critical Analysis of Racialized Emotions (CARE)

CARE is a humanizing strategy that has the potential to strengthen the teaching and learning of history. When teaching Black histories, specifically, the CARE strategy pairs particularly well with LaGarrett King's (2020, 2023) *Black Historical Consciousness Framework,* which presents "pedagogical practices that seek to reimagine the legitimacy,

selection, and interpretation of historical sources" (King, 2020, p. 337). Within history education more broadly, using the CARE strategy can enhance students' racial literacies and teachers' antiracist pedagogies as it creates opportunities for students and teachers to acknowledge, analyze, and critique how racialized emotions have influenced *all* forms of racism, while de-centering and deconstructing whiteness and white emotionalities (King, 2022; Kishimoto, 2018; Matias, 2016).

CARE also has the potential to strengthen students' historical thinking skills by having students critically assess sources for racialized emotions to explore continuity and change, historical causation, and historical contextualization (Wineburg, 2001). Another benefit of CARE is that it promotes students' historical empathy (Bartelds et al., 2020), by having students investigate sources for racialized emotions to understand inequity in the past through an affective lens. There are three important components that comprise the CARE strategy: an understanding of racialized emotions, an understanding of social and emotional learning, and the strategy's guiding questions.

Racialized Emotions

A key component of CARE is first understanding the difference between non-racialized and racialized emotions. The U.S. is a racialized society built on racial hierarchies, where all people *feel* race, power, and racialized racism differently (Bonilla-Silva, 2019). Depending upon one's racial identity, when some people *feel* race they can *feel* power, which can be weaponized into justifying harm against others. For example, when white colonizers came to the land currently known as Virginia, they *feared* attacks from Indigenous groups and used that *fear* to rationalize their attempts at Indigenous extinction and their enforcement of Indigenous removal. Conversely, people who are lower on society's racial hierarchy can *feel* race and they *feel*

oppression. At the same time, however, groups who are racially marginalized can also *feel* empowerment when they *feel* oppression, leading these groups to pursue racial equality. For instance, when Black people *feared* disenfranchisement in the U.S. that *fear* compelled them to protest for voting rights.

Despite the differences in how racialized people *feel* emotions in a racialized society, traditional definitions of emotions focus solely on the conditions that cause people to experience emotions, without any reference to the various ways that racial, ethnic, cultural, and other identity markers impact people's emotional experiences and emotional responses (see Table 4). CARE provides opportunities for students to analyze historical sources for racialized emotions to understand how race, power, oppression, and resistance all intersect throughout U.S. history.

Table 4

Non-racialized and Racialized Emotions

Emotion	Non-racialized Definition	Example of Racialized Definition
Fear	One experiences fear when they are in or approaching harmful situations	Black fear: understanding that Blackness presupposes one to harm without having to be in harmful situations. This fear often leads to resistance and activism.
Rage	Violent uncontrollable anger	Black rage: consciousness of living and being Black in an antiBlack society, using this consciousness to create change.

Transformative Social and Emotional Learning

A core component of the CARE strategy is social and emotional learning (SEL), with a particular focus on transformative social and emotional learning (TSEL). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020), SEL incorporates five competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management, and responsible decision-making. Together, these competencies create equitable school environments that promote positive and inclusive school cultures (CASEL, 2020). Although SEL seeks to create just and inclusive school environments, scholars have noted that without explicit attention to racism and societal structures that uphold inequity, "any well-intentioned program or project, falls woefully short of addressing the ongoing dehumanization of Black students" (Legette et al., 2022, p. 279) and all other racially marginalized students.

Work done by Jagers et al. (2018, 2019) reconciles SEL with issues of racial oppression and systemic inequity through what they call transformative social and emotional learning (TSEL). TSEL is a justice-oriented framework that ensures students and teachers co-exist in classroom environments that promote similarities and differences, critically analyzes the historic causes of inequity, and develops solutions to problems within society (Jagers et al., 2018). This framework is of particular importance for teachers to understand when employing CARE because of the strategy's foci on asking students to analyze how people's racialized emotions and emotional responses impacted systemic racism, power, oppression, and resistance in the past, and examining how those racialized emotions and emotional responses inform our current society.

Having a developed understanding of TSEL is important before teachers implement CARE, because of the strategy's focus on racialized emotions. Teachers must understand that Students of Color's experiences with racism inform how they understand history (Epstein, 2000),

their emotional development, and how they perform their emotions in schools (Lozado et al., 2022; Williams-Johnson, & DeCuir-Gunby, 2014). For white students, their racialized identities also inform how they understand history (Epstein, 2000; Perrotta, 2018) and how they perform their emotions in schools (Matias, 2016). Given the impact that racialized identities have on how students navigate their emotions in schools and how racialized identities can inform students' historical consciousness, CARE is a useful strategy that teachers could use in their history classrooms. But without a well-developed understanding of TSEL, educators could unintentionally create dehumanizing and harmful classroom environments when using this strategy.

To help mitigate the potential harm teachers could inflict while using CARE, drawing from TSEL (2018, 2019), I offer a self-check questionnaire social studies teachers should ask themselves before they implement the strategy.

Social awareness: Am I aware of the socio-historic foundations of systemic racism and white supremacy in this country and how it can inform the behavior and emotions of *all* students? (Lozado et al., 2022)? Do I have the language and racial literacies (King 2016, 2022) to acknowledge and name racism in both society and history state standards and other curriculum materials?

Self-awareness: Am I engaging in constant reflection of my biases as they pertain to the racialized emotions students bring to my class? Am I aware of the racialized emotions that I bring to the classroom? Do I consider the racialized emotions students bring to my history class as legitimate and valuable? Am I committed to this work?

Responsible decision-making: Am I able to facilitate discussions of racialized emotions to foster historical empathy *(*Bartelds et al., 2020) *without* asking students, particularly Students of Color,

to be experts? Am I able to ensure that students are not using their emotions to justify hate and disrespect?

Relationship skills: Have I created a safe space in my social studies classroom where students feel comfortable, represented, and believe their racialized emotions matter? If students are willing to share, am I willing to disrupt power dynamics so that I can learn from students that might have more insight on the topic than I do?

Guiding Questions

There are five questions, intentionally ordered, that guided the creation of the CARE strategy. Because these questions are based on students' understandings of emotions and feelings, each lesson plan is accompanied by an emotional wheel to assist students with naming the different types of emotions and feelings that exist.

Question 1: What emotions or feelings are present in the source?

This question introduces students to a critical analysis of historical sources for emotions, by asking students to analyze the document and to make note of all the emotions and feelings represented in the source.

Question 2: Who has the emotions/feelings, or whose emotions/feelings are being described in the source?

After identifying the emotions or feelings represented in the source, this question asks students to analyze the source for *racialized* emotions. Students will connect the historical figures' race to the emotions or feelings they identified in the previous question.

Question 3: How do emotions/feelings intersect with race, racism, power, oppression, and/or resistance in the source?

After connecting the emotion or feeling to the historical figures' racial identities, this question asks students to examine cause and effect. Using evidence from the source in conjunction with the historical figures' race, students will identify what may have caused the historical figures to experience the emotion or feeling, and how those emotions or feelings impacted their responses.

Question 4: Do you think the emotions or feelings represented in the source are present in today's society? If so, how do the emotions intersect with racism, power, oppression, and/or resistance in the present? If not, why? What has changed?

After analyzing how emotions or feelings intersect with race, racism, power, oppression, and/or resistance, this question asks students to consider continuity and change. The question asks students to examine whether they think emotions or feelings intersect with these systems today and compels them to draw on their own understandings of society to provide justification for their answers.

Question 5: How did analyzing historical sources for racialized emotions make you feel?

This last question addresses students' historical empathy, but it is not intended for students to feel obligated to share their answers. The goal of this question is for students to personally reflect on the emotions, if any, the source made them feel and how those emotions impacted their understanding of the source and their own position within society. Teachers should remind students that feeling apathy is a valid emotion and not to disregard that feeling.

CARE Lesson Plans

I conclude this article by briefly describing three thematic lesson plans I created that use the CARE strategy in conjunction with a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g., laws, poems, songs, speeches, images) to nuance the teaching of the CRM. While most lesson plans have learning target trackers or essential questions that guide and follow students' learning,

CARE offers an "emotion tracker" which is a question(s) that is presented to students at the beginning and end of each lesson that asks students to analyze how racialized emotions impacted the particular theme of the lesson. Because CARE is a strategy used with historical sources, it addresses many standards from the C3 Framework and content themes from Educating for American Democracy. The lesson plans offered are intended for grades 9-12.

Connecting Black emotions to Black Resistance and Activism

As noted earlier in this piece, emotions are understudied (Sheppard et al., 2015) and oftentimes undervalued in the field (Reidel & Salinas, 2011). Using the CARE strategy, this lesson guides students through an examination of how Black emotions acted as a catalyst for Black people to resist unjust systems leading up to the CRM. This lesson could be useful to teach as an introductory lesson to CRM unit as a way to connect previous instances of Black activism to the CRM or to remind students of the permanence of Black oppression at the beginning of the CRM unit.

To begin this lesson, the teacher will present students with everyday scenarios where they consider how their own emotions influence their responses to different everyday events. Next, students will engage in an activity where at five different stations they analyze various sources for the emotions and feelings represented. The sources range in date from the 1700s to the 1950s. After the students finish the station activity, they will participate in a whole group discussion where the teacher asks questions about the connections between emotions, activism, and Black people's pursuit of civil rights. The lesson concludes by asking students to respond to the emotion tracker questions:

1. Throughout U.S. history, what caused Black people to experience emotions such as fear and rage?

2. What has been the effect when Black people experienced emotions such as fear and rage?

Examining Racialized Emotions, Power, Resistance, and Systemic Racism During the Civil Rights Movement

Researchers have found that instruction of the CRM tends to position racism through individual acts (Martell & Stevens, 2017; Wills, 2019). This lesson uses the CARE strategy to guide students through an examination of the intersections of race, power, resistance, and systemic racism during the CRM. This lesson is useful when discussing the socio-political aspects of the CRM because it demonstrates how emotions held power and led to the creation of systemic racist policies and how emotions led to activism, depending on one's racialized identity.

To begin this lesson, students will engage in an AGREE/DISAGREE activity to assess whether the students understand the following terms: race, resistance, social power, and systemic racism. The teacher then explains the definitions of each of those terms and presents students with questions about how those terms apply to their lives. The students will silently reflect on how their answers to those questions make them feel.

Next, the students will engage in an activity where they are split into four groups and are given documents where they analyze historical sources for racialized emotions. Two groups will be given documents based on the political aspects of the CRM, and the other two groups' documents are based on the social aspects of CRM. After the groups finish their activities, they will be paired with a group that had a different lens (e.g., a social group paired with a political group) and teach the other group about what they learned from the activities they completed. The lesson concludes by asking students to respond to the emotion tracker questions:

1. Historically, how have racialized emotions and feelings influenced resistance?

2. Historically, how have racialized emotions and feelings influenced systemic racism?
3. Historically, how have racialized emotions affected the power that people have?

Using Black Emotions to Examine Black People's Ongoing Pursuit for Civil Rights in the U.S.

Scholars have noted that Black resistance is oftentimes presented as isolated events (Hawkman & Castro, 2017; King, et. al., 2016; King, 2020) with the CRM oftentimes being positioned as a culmination of Black activism. In response to this critique, this lesson uses the CARE strategy to illustrate how Black people have always pursued freedom, even before they arrived to the land now known as Virginia. This lesson could be used as a concluding lesson to a CRM unit.

The lesson plan begins by asking students to think about times throughout U.S. history where Black people fought for their civil rights, and the teacher will record their answers on a timeline, which the teacher will come back to at the end of the lesson. The students then engage in a partner activity where they analyze a variety of sources across four centuries, with the first source beginning in 1600 and the last source from 2020. As the students finish analyzing the sources for each period, they will answer a question on the timeline before moving to the next century.

In a whole group, students will then discuss the significance of Black people having the same emotions, such as fear, across centuries and what that means about progress within a U.S. historical context. The lesson concludes by asking students to silently reflect on the emotion tracker questions:

1. How did analyzing the recurrence of emotions in the sources make you feel?
2. Do the emotions of others in the past impact how you understand the present?

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ARTICLE THREE: "IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I WOULD THINK BLACKNESS WAS THE PROBLEM": A COMPOSITE COUNTERSTORY ON BLACK CAREGIVERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEACHING OF RACE, RACISM, AND BLACK HISTORIES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Derrick Bell's (1992) "The Space Traders" (TST) is one of several fictional short stories in his trailblazing text, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well.* In TST, Bell masterfully crafted a story about foreign creatures known as "Space Traders" who came from a faraway star in space to the shores of the Atlantic with hopes of brokering a "trade" with the U.S. government. As part of the trade, the Space Traders, "in familiar comforting tones of former President Reagan" (Bell, 1992, p. 159), offered to give the U.S. government enough gold that would bail the country out of bankruptcy, magical chemicals that would depollute the environment, fuel that would replenish the country's nearly depleted supply of fossil fuel, and a nuclear engine (Bell, 1992). Readers might imagine that this offer was too good to be true, and that whatever the Space Traders wanted in return would be too extravagant in price to which the U.S. government could and would agree.

Without any explanation, the Space Traders expressed that the only thing they wanted in return was to take all the African Americans who lived in the U.S. back to their faraway star. As the U.S. government debated on whether they should agree to the Space Traders' offer, Black people organized rallies and gatherings, such as the Anti-Trade Coalition (Bell, 1992), to express their discontent with a trade that they thought was steeped in antiBlackness. Despite their unwaveringly protests, fast forward to the end of the story, where it becomes ominously apparent that "the interest of Blacks in achieving [and maintaining] racial equality will be accommodated only when that interest converges with the interests of whites in policymaking positions" (Bell, 2004, p. 69). With this understanding, Bell (1992) ends his story leaving this uncomfortable, yet all too familiar, image sketched in the readers' minds:

> Crowded on the beaches…some twenty million silent black men, women, and children including babes in arms…the Space traders directed them, first to strip off all but a single undergarment; then, to line up; and finally, to enter those holds which yawned the morning light…The inductees looked fearfully behind them…There was no escape, no alternative. Heads bowed, arms now linked by slender chains, black people left the New World as their forebears had arrived. (p. 194)

Many scholars have speculated about the ending of TST. Some have contemplated on whether a scenario, where the U.S. government would trade or sell Black Americans in return for riches, could actually come to fruition (Delgado & Stefancic, 1991), while others have speculated on the futures of the Black people that boarded those spaceships on that fateful day (Warren & Coles, 2020; Wing, 2009). Warren and Coles (2020) chose to imagine an optimistic ending through a Black liberatory perspective. They argued that "these 'space people' used the trade agreement…to emancipate black people in an alternate universe where they would no longer be burdened by racism and other byproducts of white supremacy" (p. 383). Warren and Coles also observed that despite not knowing *why* the "Space Traders" wanted the Black people, it is evident that Black people held some sort of value—which raises several questions: How much value did they have? What if Black people had *too* much value? What if they were *too* intelligent, *too* successful, or *too t*alented? What if their histories were *too* rich and were filled with *too* many stories that demonstrated all the ways they continued to not only exist, but to resist, persist, and thrive, in spite of systems and institutions created to keep them as second-class citizens?

Perhaps through a more pessimistic lens than Warren and Coles, in this article I am choosing to understand the "Space Traders" as foreign creatures whose motives and logics were guided by fear and rage. In the eyes of the "Space Traders," Black people were never meant to progress *too* much or hold *too* much power in the U.S., and when they did, the "Space Traders" became fearful and then rageful. And while my interpretation is, of course, fantasy, my description of the "Space Traders" as being fearful of Black people is similar to Lensmire's (2010) description of white fear which arises when whiteness feels as though its power is being threatened. I also understand the "Space Traders" to feel a rage that resembles Anderson's (2016) description of white rage, which she described as being "triggered by Black advancement" (p. x). Guided by fear and rage, the "Space Traders" not only brokered a trade they knew the U.S. government would not refuse, but they also *attempted* to erase the Black people's histories with hopes that their captives and their descendants would have little to no recollection of their pasts. As a result, the Black people, and subsequently their descendants, that boarded the Spaceship were left discouraged, unempowered, and grossly mis-educated (Woodson, 1933).

From Fantasy to Reality

My description of the "Space Traders," as creatures whose emotions of fear and rage motivated them to capture Black U.S. Americans and then erase their histories may be fantasy, but efforts to dilute or eliminate Black histories in U.S. public schools are very real. Currently, politicians are attempting to prohibit curricula that focus on Black histories and Black studies from being taught in public schools, claiming that Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies lacks educational value, is too woke, and violates state law (Meckler, 2023). In some states, lawmakers have also successfully banned educators from teaching about race and racism

in public schools (Schwartz, 2023). As politicians, similar to the "Space Traders," continue to erase the teaching of Black histories, I wondered, where are the Black voices? How do Black caregivers respond to such erasures?

In an attempt to move Black perspectives from the margins to the center, the purpose of this article is to amplify Black caregivers' beliefs and attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in U.S. public schools. Data for this article come from a larger study that examined Black students' and their caregivers' attitudes toward the learning and teaching of race, racism, and Black history in high school U.S. history classes in Virginia. The larger study also examined how the students' teachers implemented discussions of race and racism in their U.S. history lessons. For this study, I focus specifically on the interviews that I conducted with the Black caregivers. The following questions guided this study:

1. What are Black caregivers' beliefs and attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in PK-12 public schools? Why do they have these beliefs and attitudes?
2. Do Black caregivers discuss race, racism, and Black histories with their children; if so, why and how?

Inspired by Bell's "The Space Traders" and his use of composite characters, which is a critical methodology where researchers create fictional characters to illuminate how systems and ideologies in the U.S. maintain white supremacy (Cook & Bryan, 2021), I present data from this study in a composite counterstory (CCS). I begin the article with an explanation of critical race theory (CRT), both broadly and with a more detailed description of how social studies scholars have engaged with CRT. In the sections that follow, I discuss the methods of the study which include contextual information on Virginia, the site of the study; descriptive information about

the participants; and how I collected the data. I then describe how I developed the CCS and present my findings through the CCS. I conclude with a discussion of the CCS, where I offer implications for future social studies research, and a brief explanation of the other critical race literary approaches I incorporated in the CCS.

Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory (CRT), with an emphasis on storytelling and counterstorytelling, guided my analysis of the data. CRT emerged in the legal studies field to both illuminate how the U.S. legal system maintains white supremacy and to explain how this maintenance negatively impacts People of Color in the U.S. (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado, 1989; Harris, 1993; Matsuda, 1995). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) identified five major themes of CRT:

1. Racism as ordinary
2. Interest convergence
3. The social construction of race
4. Intersectionality and anti-essentialism
5. Storytelling and counterstorytelling

Other major principles and themes of CRT include Commitment to activism; Critique of liberalism and colorblindness; Material determinism; Racial realism; Revisionist history; (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017); Social change (Dixson & Rosseau, 2006); and Whiteness as property (Harris, 1993).

CRT was introduced into educational research by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who asserted that race was undertheorized in the field and that an analysis of race and racism could aid in explaining educational inequity and its impact on Students of Color. Drawing from tenets

of CRT presented by legal scholars, Ladson-Billings and Tate presented three propositions in which school inequities are grounded:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States.
2. U.S. society is based on property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 48).

Since the publication of this foundational article, an abundance of educational scholarship has been published that employs CRT frameworks and CRT methodologies, which exemplifies the utility of CRT as a way to unveil and analyze educational inequities (Dixson & Rosseau, 2005; Ledesma & Calderon, 2015).

Storytelling and Counterstorytelling

In CRT the use of storytelling, as a rhetorical device, draws from first-person accounts, narratives, and allegories that challenge traditional dominant narratives and notions of power that "captures the perspectives of those at the bottom…with the least advantage and privilege" (Cook & Dixson, 2013, p. 1243). As a sacred practice in African American culture, Lawrence (1991) contended that the process of telling stories provides context to the experiences omitted from traditional discourse and that it can serve as a source of data to understand "complex social processes" (p. 2283); he also contended that the use of imagination in storytelling makes space for marginalized people to express their "deepest insights and sympathies" (p. 2285).

Delgado (1989) asserted that "oppressed groups have known instinctively that stories are an essential tool to their own survival and liberation" (p. 2436); thus, CRT scholars often use counterstorytelling to challenge dominant racist discourses and beliefs in society by amplifying the voices of People of Color to understand how race and racism function in society from their

own perspectives (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1989). According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), there are three types of counterstories: personal stories, other people's stories, and composite stories. Personal stories recount the experiences of individuals, while other people's stories convey the narratives of another person told in a third voice. Composite stories "draw on various forms of 'data' to recount the racialized, sexualized, and classed experiences of People of Color" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 33).

As explained in more detail in the methods sections, to create composite counterstories (CCS), researchers first craft fictional characters, places, and/or events that represent data collected from the study. These characters then become part of a story whose goal is "to render visible the structures . . . in systems that maintain white domination and oppression" (Cook & Bryan, 2021, p. 252). Within educational research, scholars have crafted CCSs to counter dominant narratives by revealing marginalized experiences (Cook & Dixson, 2013; Ender, 2019; Smith et al., 2017; Solorzano & Delgado, 2001). For example, Cook and Dixson (2013) created a CCS to discuss Black teachers' experiences with school reform in New Orleans post hurricane Katrina, while Ender (2019) constructed a CCS to amplify how in-service social studies Teachers of Color learned from community to resist hegemonic narratives in social studies curricula. In this article, I use a CCS to describe Black caregivers' beliefs toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in their children's history classes as an act of resistance to dominant narratives that erase and omit these perspectives.

CRT and Social Studies Education

As Busey et al. (2022) noted in their systematic review of CRT research in social studies education, "the pragmatic and theoretical symmetry between CRT and the social studies field is irrefutable, as CRT's legal foundations dealt with tensions concerning citizenship, social studies

education's principal concept" (p. 11). Despite the clear connection between CRT and social studies education, Ladson-Billings (2003) along with other scholars piercingly illustrated how the field evades discussions of race and racism in her edited book, *Critical Race Theory Perspectives on Social Studies: The Profession, Policies, and Curriculum*. This necessary critique and call to action led to a significant increase in social studies scholarship that utilized critical frameworks to center race and racism in their research. For instance, scholars have used counterstorytelling to amplify the narratives of Students (Woodson, 2016) and Teachers of Color (Duncan, 2020; Jones, 2023), while Vickery's (2015) use of critical race feminism explored how Black women teachers' experiences reconceptualized notions of citizenship in U.S. social studies classrooms.

Other scholars have used CRT to analyze how pre-service teachers learn to teach race (Martell, 2017). Chandler's (2015) racial pedagogical content knowledge combines tenets of CRT with the concept of pedagogical content knowledge to aid teachers with incorporating discussions of race into their social studies lessons. Social studies scholars have also applied "branches" of CRT to their research to examine the ways social studies standards and curricula erase experiences of historically marginalized groups (e.g., AsianCrit: An, 2016; BlackCrit: Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2019; Jones, 2022; TribalCrit: Padgett, 2015).

Though social studies scholars have significantly increased their use of CRT in their research, Busey et al. (2022) found that much of the scholarship focused on the centrality of racism and counterstorytelling with very few empirical studies examining interest convergence or the social construction of race. An important critique offered by the authors, which sits in tension with the goals of CRT, was that "voice and experiential knowledge, especially counterstories from communities of color, are often sacrificed in the research" (Busey et al.,

2022, p. 21). They noted that of the 59 social studies articles that used CRT as a methodological frame, only 8 articles focused *solely* on the perspectives of Students of Color. Even more relevant to the current study, Busey et al. (2022) found that when these articles centered Students of Color, it was through students' experiences with teachers and how students perceived textbooks, contemporary historical figures, and historical narratives. The lack of empirical social studies research that centers the perspectives of Students and Families of Color on race and racism emphasizes the significance of this study.

Positionality

I bring my whole self to this work. I am a Black woman who grew up in Virginia and attended Virginian public schools, a former high school social studies teacher who served predominately Black students in Virginia, a historian of Black Virginian histories, a daughter of two former elementary school teachers who taught in Virginia, and a descendent of enslaved Black people whose blood, joy, and resistance are entrenched in Virginian soil. My racialized, geographic, ancestral, and professional identities are all connected to how I learned Black histories and why I began to question Black history instruction. As a child, comparing the oversimplified versions of Black histories I learned in school to how my parents and elders taught me Black histories at home created a dissonance that made me wonder: Whose versions of Black histories am I learning? As a teacher, when administration and district leaders told me to teach from a U.S. history curriculum that erased Black people's humanity, I did the opposite by centering Black people's humanity in my lessons, as an act of resistance. My identities and my experiences with teaching and learning Black histories inform the critical race theoretical framework and methodologies I use in this study, as CRT frameworks and methodologies are

intended “to critique racist power structures and to create change,” (DeCuir-Gunby, 2020, p. 246).

Additionally, within research, it is also important to recognize the limitations of our experiences and identities and how they may impact our interpretation of data. Although the participants and I have shared ethnic, racial, and geographic identities, as a non-caregiver, I acknowledge the “blind spots” (Yosso, 2005) that I have when analyzing the data that describes the emotional experiences of the caregivers, as they explained their experiences with raising and educating Black children in an antiBlack society.

Method

Context

I conducted this study with caregivers who live in rural and urban areas in Virginia. Beyond my personal connection with Virginia, this state was an ideal place to conduct this study due to the tension that exists between Virginia’s long history of antiBlackness and contemporary attempts to omit race and racism from the state’s U.S. history standards.

It is well known that the first enslaved people arrived in James Town, Virginia at Comfort Pointe in 1619 (Hannah-Jones, 2021). But what many do not know is that by 1639 Virginia was the first colony to exclude Black people from “normal protections” by the government. In 1662, Virginian lawmakers passed legislation that stated the status of the mother determined the enslavement status of the child, which legally expanded definitions of slavery (Schwarz, 2010). These antiBlack laws are significant because other slaveholding colonies would quickly adopt them, normalizing the inhumanity of Black people throughout the colonies, and then states. And though these are just two examples of Virginia’s early systemic antiBlack policies, Virginian lawmakers would continue to create antiBlack laws across centuries that other

states adopted (e.g., 1723: Negro Anti-assembly law, 1806: Removal of free Black status, 1956: Massive Resistance policies) (Pratt, 1992; Schwarz, 1987, 2010). Not only is Virginia's history embedded with antiBlackness but in many ways the state created the blueprint on how to maintain and perpetuate antiBlackness systemically in this country.

Given Virginia's history of establishing and maintaining antiBlackness, it is impossible to teach Virginia history and U.S. history well without discussing race and racism. Yet, on January 15th, 2022, his first day in office, Virginia's Governor signed *Executive Order Number 1* (Exec. Order No. 1, 2022) which stated:

> Inherently divisive concepts, like Critical Race Theory and its progeny, instruct students to only view life through the lens of race and presumes that some students are consciously or unconsciously racist, sexist, or oppressive, and that other students are victims (p. 1).

Related, the state has received national attention regarding disputes over revisions of their *Virginia and U.S. History and Social Science Standards of Learning and Curriculum Framework* (Virginia Department of Education, 2015). The revisions have been delayed at least three times, due to public outcry that criticized Youngkin and his Board of Education for "whitewashing" the standards (Cline, 2023) and removing language that connected enslavement to current racial issues in the U.S. (Fiske, 2022). Since then, following Governor DeSantis' efforts to block AP African American Studies from being taught in Florida public schools, Youngkin has also stated that he was going to review the AP's curriculum to investigate whether it conflicts with the state's policy on the teaching of race (Mirshahi, 2023).

Understanding the friction that exists between Virginia's history, which is filled with antiBlackness, and political efforts to remove antiBlackness from being taught in history

classrooms is crucial to understanding the significance of this study. Amid debates over what should be included and excluded in the U.S. history standards, the opinions, experiences, and perspectives of Black people are often missing from these conversations, even though their histories are the ones lawmakers are trying to erase.

Participants

In this study, I intentionally use the word caregivers, as opposed to parents, to describe the participants to practice inclusivity and reflect the dynamic and collective ways that childcaring exists. I relied on convenience sampling (Ekin et al., 2016), as the eleven participants I interviewed were caregivers to the students that participated in the larger study. All participants identified as Black U.S. Americans, grew up in various parts of Virginia, and received their PK-12 education in Virginian public schools. Their demographic backgrounds: biological sex, geographic area, highest level of education, number of adults present at the time of the interview (letters represent more than one person was represented at the interview), and relationship to the student, were varied (see Table 5).

Table 5

Participant Demographics

Caregiver	Biological Sex	Geographic Area	Highest Level of Education	Relationship to Student
1	Female	Urban	Master's degree	Mother
2a	Female	Urban	Master's degree	Mother
2b	Female	Urban	High school diploma	Grandmother
3	Female	Rural	Bachelor's degree	Mother
5	Female	Urban	Bachelor's degree	Grandmother

Table 5 (cont'd)

6	Male	Rural	Bachelor's degree	Father
7	Female	Rural	Doctoral degree	Mother
8a	Female	Urban	Bachelor's degree	Mother
8b	Male	Urban	Bachelor's degree	Father

Data Collection

In addition to writing researcher memos, I conducted eight semi-structured interviews between June and July 2022; seven interviews were conducted in person and the other interview was conducted over Zoom. Non-coincidentally, the in-person interviews took place at the participants' kitchen tables, which has always been a significant place for Black people, particularly Black women. As Haddix and other sister scholars (2016) noted,

> The kitchen table represents physically and symbolically an inclusive space for Black girls and women to come together, to be seen, to be heard, and to just be. The kitchen table signifies the rich history of our foremothers and grandmothers who sat at the kitchen table where, beyond gossip and social talk, women bared their souls and received healing and affirmation in the company of their sisters (pp. 380-81).

To add context and breadth to the interview findings, I also collected and analyzed newspaper articles and reports that covered Virginian politicians' attempts to remove race, racism, Advanced Placement (AP) African American studies, and Black histories from being taught in public schools and within social studies state standards, which added another layer in which I could situate my analysis. I collected online newspaper articles printed in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *The Virginia Mercury*, and read stories from two local news

outlets, *Virginia Public Media and 8News,* between February 2022 and February 2023. Across all 5 media outlets, I collected and read 34 newspaper articles or news stories.

Composite Counterstorytelling

To analyze and create the composite counterstory (CCS) I drew from approaches offered by Cook and Bryan's (2021) chapter in the *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*, which provides guidance on how to engage in this complex methodology. As my study focuses on the voices and experiences of Black caregivers, using this critical methodology was ideal because this method values knowledge of those that the dominant society has disempowered and illuminates how systems of oppression impact the lives of racially marginalized people (Cook & Bryan, 2021; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Because my interview questions asked the participants about their experiences from childhood through adulthood, after I transcribed the interviews, I coded them based on the different time periods of their lives following Cook and Bryan's (2021) process. For example, when a participant referenced their experiences as a child or their experiences in elementary and middle school, I coded that part of the data as *childhood.* When the participants referenced their experiences as a teenager, or their experiences during high school, I coded that part of the data as *teenage years.* The other temporal codes I used are *adulthood, college days,* and *caregiver.* I then put these codes on a separate document, in temporal order, and created what Cook and Bryan (2021) called a temporal timeline. I came back to this timeline later in the analysis. Next, I analyzed the interviews for potential answers to my research questions:

1. What are the Black caregivers' beliefs and attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in PK-12 public schools? Why do they have these beliefs and attitudes?

2. Do Black caregivers discuss race, racism, and Black histories with their children; if so, why and how?

Three major themes emerged from my analysis: "(dis)empowerment," "communal learning," and "fact-fillers." Cook and Bryan (2021) noted that once the themes are developed, they should be "transposed onto the historical/ temporal codes to develop a thematic story" (p. 260). To do this I returned to each participant's temporally coded interview and searched for the themes throughout the interview. I then added the themes and quotes to each interval on the temporal timeline. For example, Caregiver 3 discussed the theme "communal learning" during her time as a caregiver, so I placed quotes that represented that theme under the *caregiver* code on the temporal timeline. Caregiver 3 discussed the theme "disempowerment" during her time as a child *and* during her time as a caregiver, so I transposed the appropriate quotes under the *childhood* code on the temporal timeline and under the *caregiver* code on the temporal timeline. Because there is only one temporal timeline for all the participants, to distinguish between participants' quotes, I assigned a color to each participant. Cook and Bryan noted that by creating a temporal timeline, researchers are generating "thematic stories" which shape the thematic development in CCSs. In my CCS, readers see these thematic stories in the development of the story, and in the headings within the story.

Next, I began creating the composite characters for the CCS. According to Cook and Bryan (2021), it is important to "capture the essence of each individual" (p. 260) so that participants are not depicted through flat portrayals in the composite characters. To do this, I returned to the individual transcriptions and searched for any instances where I could decipher information about participants' personalities, their emotional responses, or their dispositions. The researcher memos were very helpful during this process because after each interview I

handwrote notes that captured the participants' emotional reactions and their reticence during certain portions of the interviews. Readers will notice that in my CCS the composite characters experience a variety of emotions, which are directly related to the emotions represented in the interview data. The composite characters use Black language (Baker-Bell, 2020), and Black communicative gestures (Johnson, 2004) as non-verbal discourses, which are representative of the ways the participants communicated during the interviews. Cook and Bryan also maintained that context is essential to composite character building. My CCS incorporates a variety of contextual features that merged the transposed themes from the transcripts, content from the newspaper articles, and events through which the participants have lived. This attention to context helped to construct a coherent storyline and complex characters.

A final, yet important, feature when creating CCSs is ensuring that the composite characters have unique voices that represent the distinctive parts of the data (LaPlante, 2007). Each composite character in my CCS has an intentionally unique personality that is based on the themes from the data. It was also important to me, personally, that the composite characters have characteristics that honor Black historical figures, their legacies, and Black histories more broadly. This homage to Black historical figures also acts as a retort to politicians who are attempting to erase Black histories from public school education. In this way, readers will recognize the names and traits of the composite characters.

The beauty and utility of using composite counterstorytelling is that as a method it blends the complexity of analyzing and interpreting the layered beliefs and experiences of the participants into an accessible presentation acting as a "valuable mechanism for sharing knowledge" (Cook & Bryan, 2021, p. 262) of those whose voices are too often found at the bottom (Bell, 1992).

A Note on Reading the Counterstory

In the CCS, the narrative, dialogue, settings, and thoughts of the composite characters come directly from the interviews, memos, and other data sources, but are edited to maintain a flow within the narrative (Cook & Dixson, 2013). The *italicized* dialogue and *italicized* narrative represent direct quotations from the interviews, which "advances a detailed reading" (Ender, 2019, p. 136) that moves the participants' perspectives, rendered invisible by the dominant society, from the margins into the reader's gaze (Cook & Dixson, 2013). Keep in mind that although the characters in the CCS draw heavily from the interview data, creating a CCS also allows room for fictive creative writing liberties. The analysis of the CCS occurs later in the article; thus, as you are reading the story, I suggest you follow Cook and Dixson's (2013) recommendation to, "suspend judgment and listen for the story's point" (p. 1246). What you may find is that the line between fiction and reality is quite thin. Read closely, read between the lines, read from front and from backwards, because everything discussed and described in the CCS is intentional.

That's the Magic of Our People

Who Are the Space Traders?

> The Space Traders are from a faraway star known as TsicaR. While no one really knows much about TsicaR or the Space Traders, what we do know is 1)TsicaR is located far away from the equator, which is why the Space Traders appear as though they lack melanin; 2) The Space Traders have access to the best technology in the universe; and 3) Many many moons ago the Space Traders deployed undetectable and indestructible drones throughout the universe to spy on other galaxies.

The Space Traders used those drones to study the creatures that inhabited all the different galaxies throughout the universe, but they became particularly infatuated with the Black people who were living in the U.S. They were amazed and impressed that descendants of enslaved people were able to thrive in a society that intentionally created systems and institutions to keep them at the bottom.

However, after 2008, the year *the first Black person was elected president in the U.S., something shifted* amongst the Space Traders. What was at first feelings of admiration, the Space Traders quickly began viewing *Black people as a threat*. It's hard to tell what brought about this sudden shift in feelings towards Black people, but for one reason or another they felt a sense of urgency *to stop Black* advancement because they feared *Black people may become too powerful* and, somehow, disrupt the natural flow of the universe. Waiting until the perfect moment, around the early months of 2017, the Space Traders offered a deal that they knew the U.S. Government would not refuse, and in return they wanted to take all the Black people that lived in the U.S. back to their land, TsicaR. Without any hesitation, the U.S. Government accepted the deal and that is how Black people from the U.S. ended up in TsicaR. An important piece of the story, however, that often goes untold is that before heading back to TsicaR, the Space Traders attempted to erase their captives' memories by using high-tech, mind-altering technology so that the Black people would not have any recollection of their histories—a common tactic used to control people's thinking. But, unknown at the time, the mind-altering devices only had a 90% efficacy rate, thus some of the captives did not lose their memories and through storytelling and Black language writing, their histories were secretly passed down through the generations.

Welcome to TsicaR Year 2417

As one could imagine, a lot has happened in the 400 years since the U.S. Government traded their Black residents to the Space Traders. Though never enslaved in TsicaR, Black people and their descendants were considered and treated as lower-class citizens, and they were separated from the Space Traders in all aspects of life. They attended segregated schools, which were underfunded; they lived in segregated neighborhoods, which were neglected; and they only had access to "Black Only" public accommodations, which were subpar—at best.

However, about 70 years ago, a major event occurred in TsicaR known as the Great Liberation Movement. According to Space Trader historians, the Great Liberation Movement was a time that brought *monumental, equitable, change for Black people* and *improved Black*-Space Trader *relations.* As a result of the Great Liberation Movement, Space Traders began moving into Black neighborhoods, which led to improved streets and sidewalks, higher rent costs, and Black families being pushed, I mean moving to other areas.

The Space Traders believed the greatest accomplishment of the Great Liberation Movement was the creation of the Stay Woke Boarding Schools. These state-of-the art K-12 schools, funded and controlled by philanthropic Space Traders, were made specifically and exclusively for Black students to attend. The students had to live on the Stay Woke Campus Monday-Fridays and were able to go home to their families on the weekends. Said to be the best schools in the universe, let's peek into Medagar's eleventh grade TsicaR history class to see what all the hype is about.

Mis-education

"Yo Barbara, I had the strangest dream last night," Medgar said to his friend as they were sitting in their TsicaR History class waiting for the teacher to begin.

"I can't remember all of it, only bits and pieces. But, I do remember there was a Black man as president, that was dope, and then I remember *Black folks being in chains* in one of the old versions of the spaceships *with shackles*, and then I *remembered something about people holding signs, a bridge, a restaurant… I don't know* about that part, but that's when I woke up."

Barbara, laughing at Medgar's disjointed story, smirked and said "Boy, all *that sounds crazy, a Black president*? That could only be someone's dream."

As the word DREAM rolled off Barbara's tongue, Ms. NeraK, the teacher, walked to where Medgar and Barabra were sitting. In a hateful tone rewriting history, she said, "yes Medgar *you should have a different dream, a more realistic dream, because a Black man being president will most likely never come true."*

You see, even though Medgar didn't know (at least not yet) that there was a Black president in the U.S., Ms. NeraK did, and wanted to be sure that *the students never found out about that part of history*.

As she was walking back to the front of the classroom, Ms. NeraK turned around and threatened Medgar saying, "And your little dreams are disrupting class, if I hear you talking out of turn again— *TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE YOU GO*!"

Confused, Medgar calmy responded, "But Ms. NeraK, class hasn't even started yet, *I wasn't talking out of turn."*

Shocked that Medgar spoke back to her, Ms. NeraK's face began turning as red as a ripe tomato. Clutching her imaginary pearls Ms. NeraK uttered, "Medgar! *How dare you scream at me like that! What are you going to do? Beat me up for nicely asking you to be quiet?"*

Dramatically, Ms. NeraK then started to cry as all the students watched in both amusement and amazement. Amusement because everyone was used to Ms. NeraK's theatrics, amazement because after five minutes of "crying" the students had yet to see a tear come down her face. She then excused herself into the hallway slamming the door. After 15 minutes, Ms. NeraK, seemingly calm again, returned to the class and began her lesson as if nothing happened.

Excitedly, Ms. NeraK announced to the students, "Today we are beginning our unit on the Great Liberation Movement! This was a glorious time in history *that greatly affected how you all live your lives today!"*

"The Great Liberation Movement was a time when *Black people* and the Space Traders *came together.* The Space Traders *worked hard to create laws where you all could vote,* and though the voting rights law did not pass, the Respectability Rights Acts of 2365 did! This is why you all are afforded things like being able to live in neighborhoods with Space Traders and attending these nice schools—*unlike your parents who didn't have the same opportunities."*

Rolling her eyes, Mahalia, another student in the class who rarely spoke but seemed to know a "different" history than the other students, said under her breath just loud enough for Medgar to hear, *"Well at least those schools our parents went to had some Black teachers."*

Chuckling, Medgar told Mahalia, "*You better be quiet* before Ms. NeraK *calls the principal on you*."

To ensure that the students understood that the Great Liberation Movement *was a time of reconciliation,* Ms. NeraK turned on the dictation whiteboard, a device that transcribes everything the teacher says onto the whiteboard.

Slowly, so that the whiteboard picked up everything she said, Ms. Nerak enunciated: "The Great Liberation Movement *was a time of PEACE, HARMONY, and PROGRESS* amongst us all! It was a time that *made everyone equal, and it put all of us on the same playing field*."

After repeating that the Great Liberation Movement was a time of peace, harmony, and progress at least 10 times, Ms. NeraK looked at the clock and realized that there was only 20 minutes left in class. Turning to her students, Ms. NeraK said, "Since it's Friday, and *you all wasted so much time at the beginning of class,* I'm going to start our unit on Monday. For the remainder of the class, you can *read this packet on* Mr. M.L. and *answer the questions* for homework."

"*Though* Mr. M.L. *is the only Black person* that I will discuss, you all will see how *he was a central figure, or the only figure, who worked to improve relations* between Blacks and the Space Traders."

The bell rang at 3:45 and by 3:46 all the students were out of Ms. NeraK's class. Saying goodbye to Barbara and his other friends, Medgar got on his hoverboard, weekend bag in tow, and headed home.

Medgar lived in an increasingly "diverse" neighborhood, and as he was hovering home, passing the massive Dixie monuments, he remembered that as a young child, *there were*

hardly any Space Traders *in his neighborhood, but now he sees them all the time*. Magically, as the neighborhood became less Black, there were more grocery stores, *more businesses, and a new bus line!* Though Medgar noticed the transformations he never thought deeply about them, because he didn't find the *changes relevant to his life*.

The Shift

"I'm home," yelled Medgar as he walked into his house.

When nobody responded, Medgar cautiously uttered, "Helloooo, *Ma, Pop,* I said I am home."

Whispering in the kitchen, Septima and Asa, Medgar's parents, were trying to decide *whether to say anything to* Medgar about another child who had disappeared from Stay Woke School.

"I mean, he is going to find out about it eventually on that social media stuff so we might as well say something," said Septima. "Yea that's cool, *but not too much detail, unless he asks questions*, let's go off his reaction," Asa said.

"Medgar we're up here, in the kitchen," said Septima.

As Medgar walked up the stairs, he noticed that his parents were staring at the T.V.

Wondering why they were staring, he read the headline flashing across the screen which read:

BREAKING: STAY WOKE STUDENT, VONTRAY NITRAM, HAS GONE MISSING

His only remains are a hoodie and a pack of Skittles

Confused and concerned, Medgar woefully asked his parents, "Vontray is missing? I just saw him the other day. He was cool peoples, what happened?"

His parents, *not knowing how to respond, just silently looked at each other*. Breaking the loud silence, Septima responded, “The investigation is still out--,”

But before Septima could finish her sentence, Medgar yelled, “This is the fourth missing student in two months, is this normal? *Why is it happening?”*

As Asa was about to respond to Medgar’s questions, the doorbell rang. The Ring camera showed that it was a police officer, and Septima quickly waved to Asa signaling to turn off the T.V. before she answered the door.

“Officer Gip how are you doing today?” said Septima slowly opening the storm door, leaving the screen door to act as a partition between her and the officer.

“Ms. Randolph,” said the officer, *“I am going around to all you people’s, I mean*, all the homes on this side of the street, to let you all know that we have implemented a 9:00 pm curfew due to some unrest that happened earlier today. Please make sure you all are in the house by then.”

With an assertive nod, Septima quickly closed and locked the door.

Later that night as Septima was turning all the lights off in the house and headed upstairs to go to bed, she glanced into Medgar’s room and saw him working. Medgar was the Secretary for his school’s Student Council. Not wanting to disturb him, Septima quickly closed the door.

As she walked away, she heard Medgar ask questions such as, “Why Vontray*, what did he do,* why is he gone?*”*

She also heard him make disparaging claims like*, “He must have done something,”* and helpless statements such as*, “There is nothing I can do.”*

As Medgar uttered that last comment, he began to cry because *he felt hopeless*, and for many reasons, Septima began to cry too.

Like any parent, Septima did not want her *child to experience pain or feel helplessness*, but Septima was also crying because she *knew she needed to talk* to Medgar about why the Black children had gone missing and the history of violence against Black people in TsicaR.

Equally as important, she knew that she needed to teach Medgar about how Black people in TsicaR *are not helpless* and how they do have a history of fighting for equality.

This was all compounded by the fact that Septima was an educator who designed programs to teach Black people how to read and write in TsicaR. As an educator she felt so guilty that she had not had these conversations with Medgar.

But for Septima, Asa, and many other Black parents in TsicaR, *though these conversations are necessary, having them did not come easy.* The parents in TsicaR were clandestinely taught Black histories, they knew about them, but they were reluctant to teach their children these Black histories because they did not want their children to face backlash when they went back to the boarding schools.

You see, TsicaR law banned topics such as racism and Black resistance from being taught in schools, and many parents were scared of what would happen to their child if one of their kids went back to school and started talking about these topics.

Even more, when Asa and Septima were children, their *parents did not talk to them much about the "bad things" that happened to Black people* in TsicaR. And it *wasn't because their parents did not want to, but because talking about it was painful.*

Consequently, because Septima's and Asa's parents never talked to them about "the bad things," they did not *know how to best discuss "the bad things"* with Medgar.

Feeling like a bad parent, Septima got in bed, turned to her husband, and said, *it's time for "the talk."*

"The talk" was not only about the dangers of being Black in TsicaRian society, but "the talk" also included teaching Medgar about Black histories—from Black people.

Empowerment

While doing some homework at the kitchen table Saturday morning, Asa noticed that Medgar was learning about the Great Liberation Movement. Curious about what Medgar was being taught, he asked, "son, *why did the* Great Liberation Movement *happen, what caused it*?"

Medgar said, "Pops we just started learning about it, but it seems *like it happened* because some dope Space Traders *wanted to help Black people."*

With a disgusted look on his face, Asa asked, *"you don't think Black people wanted better for themselves?"*

Raising his hands in the air, Medgar responded, "I mean I don't know; *I am just going by what this textbook says. It doesn't say anything about Black people doing anything, I mean what could we do?"*

Hitting Medgar upside his head, Asa responded, *"*Boy *it's not what we could have done it's what we did!"*

Medgar and his father spent the day together learning about the histories of Black people in TsicaR. Asa also taught Medgar about the histories of Black people in the U.S., before they were traded to the Space Traders. Asa's stories were not about Black people being

down and out, but about how Black folk affected change, *how they were fashion icons, poets, athletes, leaders, and* how they *invented Hip Hop and Rock n' Roll.*

At one point Asa was feelin himself so much he started rappin, "*It was all a dream, I use to read word Up*…."

Before he could say *magazine* Medgar cut him off saying, "Ok dad, I got it. You doin too much now."

Despite the unsolicited rappin, simply put, that day, Medgar *was exposed to The Culture.* Feeling both *empowered and full of pride,* later that night Medgar was excited to text his friend Barbara to tell her about all the things he learned.

He told her about sit-ins and protests organized by Black women that took place during the Great Liberation Movement. He told her about Zoot suits, the Negro Leagues, and his father's favorite labor group, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Matching Medgar's excitement, Barbara shared that her parents also started talking to her about the things Black people did during the Great Liberation Movement. So eager to share, Barbara decided to call Medgar because relaying it through a text was not good enough.

Talking so loudly Medgar had to move the phone from his ear, Barbara nearly screamed, *"Did you know kids our age led some of these movements!* One girl *led a whole walkout from her school*, and the Space Traders *had the nerve to shut the whole school system down*.

Other kids were *brave enough to walk up into schools that was only for* Space Traders!*"* exclaimed Barbara. Laughing, Medgar said, "I know, *I can't wait to talk about it in class* on Monday!"

Disempowerment

Monday came and Medgar and Barbara had never been so excited to go to history class. As Ms. NeraK started discussing all the Space Traders who contributed to the Great Liberation Movement, Medgar earnestly raised his hand.

"Yes Medgar," sighed Ms. NeraK.

With the most respect and the deepest sincerity, Medgar told Ms. NeraK, "But you forgot about…" as he started listing all the things he learned over the weekend.

Barbara chimed in asking Ms. NeraK about all the Black students who participated in protests during the Great Liberation Movement.

And Mahalia, already being privy to these histories that Barbara and Medgar recently learned, added, "Yea Ms. NeraK, *and teach us about HOW the* Space Traders, *who did not like these protests, responded. Talk about the things they did to try to stop the protests."*

Confused, Medgar turned to Mahalia and asked, "*Wait, wait what did* the Space Traders *do? My parents didn't tell me that* yet?"

Frazzled and frightened in ways that only NeraKs can be, Ms. NeraK, on the verge of crying, again, yelled "I didn't do anything, I mean *they didn't do anything to you*! Plus, the Great Liberation Movement *was about progress, togetherness*, not divisiveness! That's what we talk about in this classroom!"

As soon as Ms. NeraK uttered those words, the excitement that Medgar and Barbara had about learning TsicaR history was instantly deflated, and any interest they had in learning about Black histories vanished.

At Stay Woke High School, the students only learned about histories that were deemed relevant and educational as determined by Space Trader officials, and Black histories held no value in the school's curricula. While Ms. NeraK constantly *repeated that Black people benefitted from the* Great Liberation Movement, the Movement was taught through a Space Trader gaze.

According to the TsicaR History Curriculum Framework, when it came to the Great Liberation Movement, the students were only supposed to learn about:

- The *Black vs. Space Trader Board of Education* Supreme Court Decision.
- Mr. M.L.'s "A Dream Deferred" speech.
- The Respectability Rights Act of 2365.

In fact, the Tsicar History Curriculum Framework did not even explain *why there was a need for the Black v. Board of Education* case, Mr. M.L.'s speech, or a Respectability Rights Act, because discussing any historical violence perpetrated by Space Traders was illegal and it ensured that teachers, like Ms. NeraK, would not feel guilty when having to teach history.

As Ms. NeraK continued teaching this version of the Great Liberation Movement, Medgar started to question whether the things his parents told him were even true.

For the rest of the week, Medgar and Barbara remained silent and *uninterested in the version* of the Great Liberation Movement *that was being taught in their history class.* By the end of the week, it was almost as if any *pride* Medgar *had in being Black was gone.*

As another Friday came around, Ms. NeraK informed the students that they would have a test about the Great Liberation unit on Monday.

Though Medgar quickly *lost all interest* in learning about the Great Liberation Movement, he couldn't forget what Mahalia said in class asking about what the Space Traders did to the Black protesters. As he rode his hoverboard home that Friday he reminded himself to ask his parents about that.

"Yo, I'm home," said Medgar as he opened the door to his house.

As usual, his *parents were in the kitchen,* a versatile room in their home. The kitchen was not only a place where the family ate, but where they watched the news and had important conversations, his *mom even washed her hair in the kitchen sink.*

In a serious tone, Medgar turned off the T.V. and asked his parents very bluntly, "Y'all told me about Black culture, and *how Black people fought back*, but y'all *didn't tell me about what the* Space Traders *did to Black protesters*!"

Taking a deep breath and with a heartfelt utter, Septima said, "Backlash *happened a lot,* in fact *sometimes it was brutal."*

Septima went on to describe how Black protesters were often met with *violent threats, attacks from dogs, and beatings.*

Intensely, Medgar asked, *"*well if the Space Traders did all that *and beat us and shit, why didn't…"*

Cutting him off before he could finish his sentence. Septima, in a way that Medgar knew exactly what she would do without even having to finish her sentence said, "*Boy if you don't watch your mouth*, I'm going to…"

Quickly fixing his tone, Medgar reasoned with his mother, *"*Naw Ma I'm just saying, I'm being for real. If *they knew they could get killed and the* Space Traders *would get away with it, why would they keep fighting*? Weren't they scared?"

Smiling, Septima replied *"that's the magic of our people,* of our bloodline, *our pain turned into power- it kept us going.* Plus, *they wanted a better future."*

With that spark of empowerment back in his eye, Medgar smiled and with a sigh of relief said, *"Thank goodness that violence does not happen to us today."*

As Septima and Asa looked at each other wearily, neither affirming nor denying Medgar's claim, Medgar's smile turned to uncertainty.

"Right*?* he asked, *"It doesn't happen anymore?"* Medgar asked that question in a way where it was clear that he already knew the answer.

Asa explained, *"*Those Black people that have recently gone missing are part of a group who were planning a protest for voting rights. They went missing because the Space Traders *do not want us to vote, they know with* voting *we could gain a lot of power.* The people who organized the protests *knew the potential consequences* of trying to gain voting rights*—but they did it anyway…"*

Freedom

A single question about Black violence in present day TsicaR turned into a two hour-long conversation, which resulted in Medgar experiencing a variety of emotions and learning a lot more about Black histories. Black history was no longer something *he couldn't relate to*.

He felt better *about himself and realized the power of learning about Black history.* His parents told him more than once that *they don't teach Black histories in* Stay Woke *schools because they are scared that the students might become too powerful*; that they might organize protests like our Ancestors.

His father explained to him, *"The last thing they want is for y'all to be radical, and, of course,* the Space Traders *don't want to look bad."*

Leaning closer to Medgar, Asa uttered*, "And let me drop some more knowledge youngin, you can't get power without violence*, you think the Space Traders *were the first people to live here*? Nope they weren't*, but they not tryin to acknowledge that."*

As the conversations with his parents about Black histories continued every weekend, Medgar began to become rageful. But this wasn't a rage that resembled anger, but a rage that resembled consciousness. He now understood the *association between* Space Traders *moving into his neighborhood and there being more grocery stores* and better sidewalks. The parents in the neighborhood also began organizing and forming groups where they gathered at different homes each week to *collectively teach their children* about Black histories *and have "the talk."*

For the first time, Black kids, together, openly, and freely talked about how they were *proud of their histories.* They stopped saying things such as *"we don't have a history*," or *"we didn't do anything but be told what to do."*

The Black kids in TsicaR really looked forward to those meetings because they felt as though they could be themselves, they *felt a connection with the history*. They started *imagining themselves as lawyers, activists, and leaders.*

Inspired by what he had learned about the PCAAN, a group that was formed to increase Black equity for Black people living in TsicaR during the Great Liberation Movement, Medgar often talked about how he would have been a Field Secretary for the PCAAN. At every meeting, Barbara would announce that had she lived during the Great Liberation Movement she would have led a school walkout. And Mahalia, the spunky student who

never said too much in history class, was incredibly outspoken during the weekly meetings and was an amazing singer. As each meeting came to an end, you could always hear Mahalia singing inspirational songs that talked about “How I Got Over” or “In the Upper Room.”

Discussion and Implications

The composite counterstory (CCS) presented above is layered, textured, and encompasses multiple themes from the interview data and newspaper articles. In the following sections, I will explain how the main characters, Medgar, Septima, and Asa, represent a different theme from the participants’ interviews, while also putting the theme into conversation with the extant social studies literature. I conclude the sections by offering questions for social studies educators to consider.

Medgar: (Dis)Empowerment

Medgar’s character personifies the participants’ answers to the first research question, which examined their attitudes toward the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in public schools and why they held those attitudes. Readers should be reminded that though the participants are adults now, Medgar’s character is based on their memories from their PK-12 schooling experiences. His character embodies the participants’ memories of learning about Black histories, race, and racism in their history classes, and how that instruction made them feel.

Disempowerment

In the first half of the story, Medgar’s disinterest in history draws from the participants’ negative personal experiences with learning Black histories as children and teenagers. The participants noted that their learning of Black histories was limited to the frequently taught Black

historical figures and events (e.g., enslavement, MLK) and that they rarely, if ever, had meaningful discussions about race and racism. Medgar's ignorance of the negative effects gentrification has had on Black neighborhoods in TsicaR represents how the participants described their unawareness of systemic racism. The caregivers discussed how they only learned about individualized racism in school, and because they were not exposed to other forms of racism, as teenagers, they automatically assumed that "Black people were the problem," which is why in the CCS Medgar asks what Vontray did, instead of questioning the violence of the Space Traders.

The participants' recollections of how they were taught Black histories should not be surprising as scholars have found that standards (Journell, 2008), textbooks (Brown & Brown, 2010), and other curricular materials (King, 2020) portray Black histories through flattening narratives with an overemphasis on oppression and resistance "with less emphasis on culture, beauty, joy, and the full emotionalities of Black people" (Wise et al., 2023, p. 5). Similarly, learning about racism as an individual act in history classrooms is not an anomaly (Wills, 2019). Although teaching Black histories and racism uncritically in PK-12 public schools is common, this normality does not assuage the significance of *how* these narrow representations made the participants *feel* as children, and how it may make Black students currently in PK-12 schools feel. The participants' experiences illustrate the adverse impacts that learning sanitized narratives of Black histories and omitting nuanced discussions of race and racism can have on how Black students see themselves and their cultures in both history classrooms and within society.

Empowerment

As the CCS progresses, Medgar's parents begin educating him about Black histories and he experiences a shift in how he views Black histories and himself. This shift represents the ways

the participants described how their feelings changed about Black histories and the role of race and racism in society when they were exposed to more complex teachings of Black histories and engaged in discussions about racial hierarchies and systemic racism. The participants were no longer "discouraged and uninterested" in Black histories but rather became empowered, engaged, and as one participant noted, "full of pride." The participants' counternarratives demonstrate how teaching through Black histories, or as King (2020) contended "through complex and nuanced narratives that attempt to get at the full humanity of Black people," (p. 337) aids Black students to see themselves in Black history. Even more, their counternarratives suggest that the earlier students are exposed to conversations about race and racism, the sooner they can develop their socio-political consciousness and racial literacies (King, 2022).

Implications for Social Studies Teacher Education

The negative impact on Black students when they do not see themselves represented in history is not a new understanding (e.g., Woodson, 1933/2006). Yet, politicians continue to advocate for the removal AP African American studies from public education and whitewash Black histories, coupled with banning educators from teaching about the role of race and racism in this country. Though this hegemonic discourse is disturbing, it is not surprising as critical race scholars remind us that Black perspectives, and the perspectives of other racially marginalized groups, are rendered insignificant in U.S. society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Given this understanding, it is expected that these racist majoritarian ideas have transpired into laws, while simultaneously excluding Black experiences and perspectives. What is surprising, however, is that given these specific attacks by lawmakers on Black histories and Black studies, there is not more social studies scholarship that amplifies Black caregivers or Black students' voices on the importance of learning about Black histories and engaging in discussions on race and racism.

Outside of a few studies and scholars, (Doharty, 2018; Woodson, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019), social studies researchers have not conducted empirical research that amplifies *Black* students' voices, and very few, if any, have amplified the perspectives of Black caregivers on the teaching of race, racism, and Black histories in schools. My call for more scholarship that centers Black perspectives, however, is not naïve. I do not have enough faith in our society to believe that uplifting Black people's voices will stop politicians from banning these topics in schools. But as Cook and Bryan (2021) asserted, composite counterstories can be used in "transformative ways to illuminate the experiences of marginalized and minoritized people of color" (Cook & Bryan, 2021, p. 262). In this way, I do believe that amplifying Black voices through research can transform fears (e.g., district backlash) pre- and-in- service social studies teachers may have when teaching these topics. Questions that social studies researchers should consider are:

1. For pre-and in-service teachers who are afraid to teach about race, racism, and Black histories in their classes, how might having access to empirical studies that show the positive impacts of teaching these topics for all students, but especially Black students, mitigate some of their fears?
2. If empirical research does not exist, are we actively engaging in research that centers historically marginalized groups' perspectives on race and racism, and other topics banned by politicians?

Asa and Septima: Filling-facts in Communal Spaces

Asa's and Septima's characters (as Medgar's parents) exemplify the complex and delicate ways the participants answered research question two, which examined why and how caregivers discuss race, racism, and Black histories with their children. Where Medgar's character was created based on the participants' experiences as children, Asa and Septima

represent the participants' experiences as adults and caregivers. In the CCS, we see Asa and Septima undergo a significant transformation, which was sparked by Medgar's visceral reaction to the disappearance of Vontray Nitram coupled with the disparaging, demeaning, and helpless comments Septima overheard him saying.

Fact-Fillers

Asa's and Septima's reaction to how Medgar responded to Vontray Martin represents why the participants talk to their children about Black histories and racism. One participant concisely summarized a sentiment that was shared by all the caregivers saying, "videos portraying Black violence is so prevalent on social media these days, it is impossible for the kids not to see it," and subsequently "not to ask about it." The caregivers discussed how they "felt it necessary" to talk about the recurrence of Black violence because they knew that *responsible* conversations about the intersections of race, racism, and Black histories were not occurring in their children's schools. Additionally, the participants expressed that these conversations were important because they did not want their children to be misinformed or have the same attitudes towards Black history that they did as children.

Black parents "filling in the gaps" is not an anomaly. Epstein's (1998) study examined the differences in Black and white students' perspectives on U.S. history. She found that for Black students, their family members were "the most credible source because they 'filled in facts' about African American history that were missing from or misrepresented in history" (p. 408) classrooms. More recently, a study by the Pew Research Center found that Black Americans receive the most amount of information on Black history from their families and friends (Cox, 2022). But what often goes missing from these conversations about how Black families "fill in the gaps" is that these conversations are not always easy. As one participant

commented, “one of the few things Black people are praised for publicly is that we are ‘strong’ because we have to have ‘the talk’ with our kids. But society doesn’t care about how ‘the talk’ is not easy.”

Praising Black families for having ‘the talk’ without recognizing the emotions that Black parents may have when giving ‘the talk’ is analogous to educators and curricula that discuss Black suffering (e.g., enslavement) without acknowledging the emotions Black people felt because of the suffering (Jones, 2022). In addition to the discomfort the participants felt when having “the talk,” Asa and Septima’s characters also represent how the caregivers’ inexperience in having conversations about race and racism with their own parents contributed to their reticence of having ‘the talk’ with their children.

Communal Spaces

The second part of research question two asked *how* the caregivers had conversations about race, racism, and Black histories with their children. Asa and Septima’s characters also represent how the participants formed and engaged in Black communal spaces to alleviate their discomfort with having conversations about race and racism with their children. The caregivers noted that Black communal spaces, such as Black social clubs (e.g., Jack and Jill) or events held by Black organizations, were places they depended on to engage in collective conversations about race and racism where they “did not feel isolated.” The participants also referenced churches as being significant communal spaces, because of the Black history programs their churches organized.

Implications for Social Studies Research

CRT scholars would argue that one ideology politicians use to defend the banning of teaching race and racism in schools is that the U.S. is a post-racial society (Delgado & Stefancic,

2017). In this CCS, Asa's and Septima's characters demonstrate the fallacy of the U.S. post-racial society logic, shown by Septima's hesitancy to answer the door when Officer Gip knocks, in the subtle mention that Black people were not able to vote, and by the normality of Black people going "missing" in TsicaR. Using composite storytelling as a methodology, I was able to illustrate the "collective histories and experiences with racist structures and practice" (Cook & Bryan, 2021, p. 262), as noted by the participants *and* the collective ways the participants resisted these structures through community.

For social studies educators, there is much to be learned from why and how caregivers engaged in collective spaces to fill in the gaps of history for their children. King (2019) discussed the importance of creating unconventional spaces of education to teach histories to Students of Color, and in an earlier article, King and Brown (2014) suggested that schools should create Black history committees that included input from community members to expand the teaching of Black histories. Similarly, Wise et al. (2023) offered instructional approaches such as counter-storytelling from Black families and communities to teach through Black histories, race, and racism responsibly. But before social studies teacher educators advise their pre-service teachers to include community perspectives in their instruction, they should consider the following questions:

1. When I suggest that students incorporate the perspectives of Black community members into their lessons, am I first instructing them to avoid making assumptions about Black community members' willingness to participate? Am I ensuring that my students recognize Black community members' humanity by considering their emotions before asking them to share their experiences? Particularly their experiences with racism.

2. Am I instructing my students to incorporate Black community members' perspectives in humanizing ways that do not situate Black experiences as anomalous, but rather values their knowledges as legitimate lived experiences a part of the U.S. narrative?
3. Am I providing my students with the necessary tools and skills to navigate potentially uncomfortable conversations about race and racism with community members?

Composite Stories, Context, & Interdisciplinary Research

This final section briefly explains the contextual and interdisciplinary features represented in the composite counterstory (CCS). Cook and Bryan (2021) maintained context is important to CCSs because it raises "the analytical power of the counterstory by illuminating the complex ways in which racial domination operated" (p. 260). Thus, it was important that, in addition to the data gathered from the interviews, I incorporated the newspaper articles to inform the context and setting of the CCS so that the reader could understand the lasting, and sometimes tacit, nature of racial domination in U.S. society. Similarly, applying interdisciplinary approaches to research on race is an important component of CRT (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015); thus, I infused references from disciplines such as history and sociology into the CCS.

Context

In the CCS, Medgar attends Stay Woke Schools in which teachers are prohibited from discussing race, racism, and Black histories. The name of the school is inspired by DeSantis' *Stop Woke Act* that prohibits instruction on race and systemic racism in public schools in Florida (Craig, 2022). Although this study took place in Virginia, newspaper articles discussed how Virginia's governor is highly influenced by DeSantis and his policies on education, as exemplified in Youngkin's decision to also "review" the AP Black studies curriculum to ensure

that it adheres to Virginia's policies on teaching race, which prohibits the teaching of CRT (Exec. Order No. 1, 2022).

Related, the pedagogies Ms. NeraK used to teach the Great Liberation Movement center on the idea of racial progress absent of any acknowledgment of systemic racism. In the CCS, readers should have noticed that Mr. M.L. is the only Black historical figure mentioned in the Great Liberation Movement unit, yet Ms. NeraK never mentioned race or racism in her instruction. This type of teaching demonstrates the irony and racism in Youngkin's *Executive Order Number 1* (Exec. Order No. 1, 2022). This order, signed on his first day in office, quotes Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. while prohibiting the teaching of "divisive concepts," which he defined as topics that reference race, skin color, and ethnicity.

Interdisciplinary Approaches

CRT scholars have argued that an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach is necessary when analyzing race and racism because it allows for fuller understandings of social inequality, and it honors the ways that CRT grew out of many disciplines, such as feminist theory (Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As a critical race methodology, incorporating other disciplines allows researchers to stretch their creative imaginations when creating composite characters.

I drew from Black U.S. histories not only as inspirations for the characters' names but to add depth to their personalities and to juxtapose Black people, whose histories represent resistance, against a society (TsicaR) and school (Stay Woke) who attempted to erase these histories. For example, readers who closely read the CCS would understand that Medgar being a secretary for his school is not a coincidence but a nod to the person after whom he is named; Medgar Evers was a civil rights activist and Field Secretary for the NAACP. Though Medgar did

not understand the rich histories of Black resistance until later in the story, his very namesake made it so that he embodied resistance throughout the entire story. This formula can be found in Barbara's, Septima's, Asa's, and Mahalia's characters.

I also drew from U.S. Black histories to critique gentrification in Black neighborhoods, to expose the harm of philanthropic organizations on Black education (Watkins, 2001), and to identify the symbolic racism of Confederate monuments. Additionally, the Stay Woke schools are boarding schools, which I used to acknowledge the horrors of Boarding Schools as sites of cultural erasure that white people forced Indigenous children to attend throughout U.S. history (Tuck & Yang, 2018). To be clear, this is not an attempt to compare the removal of Black histories from public schools to the violence of these boarding schools, but rather to show the long, and varied ways assimilationist tactics have existed in this country and to acknowledge the unique, and concurrent, relationship between settler colonialism and antiBlackness to the formation of this country (Tuck & Yang, 2018).

I also drew from sociology and critical whiteness studies to create the character Ms. NeraK and to provide more background on the Space Traders. Ms. NeraK's personality is influenced by the infamous "Karen." Sociologist, Apryl Williams (2020), described the "Karen" as a popular term used to describe middle-aged white women who use their power and privilege associated with their whiteness to "police, surveil, and regulate Black individuals in public spaces" (p. 2). Karens are neither new figures nor is their existence limited to parks or grocery stores. Karens have always plagued Black people in the U.S., and plenty of Karens exist in schools. Ms. NeraK represents the quintessential Karen in the CCS as she is quick to threaten her students and uses her instruction to surveil, control, and limit what her Black students learn.

As mentioned earlier in the article, I understand the Space Traders to represent how whiteness operates within U.S. society. The Space Traders' motivations for capturing the Black people were situated around the notion that whiteness becomes threatened if Black people gain *too* much knowledge or become *too* empowered (Lensmire, 2010). In the CCS, when a Black man was elected president, the Space Traders became fearful that Black people would somehow be able to take away their power. The Space Traders then weaponized that fear to justify and enact violence against Black people. The censoring of Black histories, studies, and conversations about race and racism in public schools is a manifestation of white fear. For fear of white students feeling uncomfortable when learning about the Euro-centric violence inflicted upon historically marginalized groups to maintain power, legislators have censored history education. Unfortunately, as shown through the participants' interviews, this fear can also lead to Black students feeling disempowered.

The experiences of the caregivers in this study highlight the importance of responsibly discussing race, racism, and Black histories in schools and the role that Black communal spaces play in alleviating discomfort and filling in gaps of knowledge. Although the implications from this study ask social studies researchers, specifically, to reconsider who they include in their research and how they engage with Black community members, the questions I raise extend to every stakeholder in education who claims to care about creating equitable, anti-racist educational opportunities.

Epilogue

We don't know how things turned out for Medgar, Barbara, or any of the other Black people living in TsicaR. But what we do know is that it didn't matter whether Stay Woke schools taught about race, racism, or Black histories because, though not always easy and sometimes

with hesitance, the children's parents found it their duty to teach their kids about truthful Black histories. The parents believed that there was nothing that could equip their children better to live and thrive in an antiBlack society than knowing that they came from strong, resilient people who constantly pursued freedom. Embodying the wise words of their Ancestor, Dr. Woodson, the parents knew that "if you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions" (Woodson, 1933/2006, p. 41). By teaching their children about the whole of Black histories, they were ensuring that nobody could control their children's thinking.

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