



SCHOOLING IN 'POST RACIAL' AMERICA:

*A Counter Story of
Black-White Inequality*

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“CRT’s usefulness will be limited not by the weakness of its constructs but by the degree that many whites will not accept its assumptions; I anticipate critique from both left and right”

(Taylor 1998:124)

THESIS SUMMARY

This mixed-method critical race study explores the manifestations of the enduring 'achievement gap' between black and white (non-Hispanic/Latino[a]) school students, paying specific attention to the counter-stories and experiences of black participants. Set in one diverse high school in Florida, the empirical data presented are drawn from 12 months of participant observation (2010-2011), documentary analysis, surveys, narrative interviews and informal dialogue.

Utilising a critical race framework and narrative presentation, this study argued that segregation by race in schools continues in 'post-racial' America. Permissive segregation of poorer-blacker 'mainstreamed' students and wealthier-whiter 'magnet' students was based almost exclusively on a student's performance on high stake standardised tests. This study also claims that 'magnet' student's standardised scores have significantly increased from the inception of No Child Left Behind, with black students conversely losing ground. The Social Studies curriculum (as a multicultural intervention through which racial inequality could be explored and challenged in schools) was found to be damagingly Eurocentric offering only white narratives as the 'official knowledge'. Valuable black narratives were omitted, marginalised or mis-represented by the white master-script.

This study found limited support for Ogbu's 'Oppositional Culture Theory'. Although traditional methods of analysis could translate the black students seeming rejection of traditional scholastic rewards as 'oppositional' behaviour, Critical Race Theory portrayed the black students in this study, more accurately, as utilising their Afrocentric agency to resist, survive and succeed (and in one case succumb) within and beyond the institutionally racist climate of schooling.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHS – Central High School

CRT – Critical Race Theory

CWS – Critical Whiteness Studies

EHS – Eastside High School

FCAT – Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

NCLB – No Child Left Behind

WHS – Westside High School

CHAPTER ONE

King's Dream 50 Years On

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1963, more than 250,000 people came together in Washington, D.C. for 'The Great March for Jobs and Freedom'. Through the now iconic speeches, that included Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I have a Dream', the group gave voice to the hardships facing black Americans as they sought a fair shot at the 'American Dream'.

According to The State of Black America (NUL 2013), since 1963 there have been 'great gains' made towards that goal, and the black community specifically has seen a significant rise in the standard of living. For example, the report cites that since 1963 the percentage of black people living in poverty has declined by 23 percentage points, and the percentage of black people that own their own home has grown by 14 percentage points. In addition, for every black college graduate in 1963 there are now five. Many are quick to point to these and other apparent 'proofs' of progress, that black Americans are no longer barred from living, learning, and earning, because of their race; often concluding that racial inequalities have been 'overcome' and that the U.S. is today a 'post-racial' society. However, whilst these achievements taken alone could be hailed as good progress, the fact remains that deep racial inequalities persist between the black and white races today (as outlined in section 1.2 and 1.3 of this chapter).

You may reasonably question, why focus on educational inequalities between the black and white¹ races specifically? What about inequalities between white and Hispanic/Latino(a) groups, or between male and female students for example? Whilst ethnicity and gender are equally worthy of exploration², the unapologetic focus of this study will remain firmly on black-white inequalities in education, and the counter stories of black students³ consistent with the tenets of Critical Race Theory (discussed further in Chapter 2).

Why? One would assume in post-racial America, that black Americans have (or at least should have) an advantage over more recently migrated Hispanic and Latino(a) persons (Guzman 2001). The vast majority of black students in the U.S. come from families where English is the first and only language spoken at home; and black people more broadly have a longer history in the U.S. than their recently-migrated Spanish speaking counterparts. In comparison, many Hispanic/Latino(a) students in the U.S. today, are current or first generation migrants, and English is predominantly a second language with Spanish as a first language spoken in approximately 70% of homes (see Guzman 2001). It would therefore be reasonable to assume, that recently migrated students, who do not have the native language advantage, should underperform their historically migrated peers in standardised tests such as reading; but they do not.

This year-long (2010-2011) ethnographic case study, situated in a diverse high school in Florida, sets out to explore this very phenomenon. However, before moving into the specifics of this study, it is important to provide a broad picture of the enduring disparities still faced by black people in America, some 50 years after King's iconic *I Have a Dream* speech.

¹ 'White' in this study always denotes 'white, non-Hispanic' i.e. persons of the white race that are not of Hispanic or Latino(a) origin, as per the U.S. Census Bureau classifications.

² Data pertaining to both groups is presented in Chapter 6 but is done so to contextualise the black-white data.

³ 'Students' in this study generally refers to 'high school students' (aged 14-18), but the term may also be utilised to include college-aged students.

1.1 A Brief Word on Terms

This study does not seek to engage with the sociological or biological debate of the terms 'African American' or 'black', it is beyond the scope of this research to debate the 'rightness' of these terms; even participants who self-identified as 'black' or 'African American' during the course of this research did not agree on their usage; for example, 'black' was seen by one student as "*inaccurate*" (field notes), and others equally felt that 'African American' did not represent them, with many believing themselves to be far removed from African heritage to claim it as part of their identity today. Because of disagreement and labeling preferences, 'African American' and 'black' were often used interchangeably to refer to a similar social identity. This study will therefore utilise the terminology that scholars and participants employed in their original narratives.

1.2 WEALTH, JUSTICE, EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH & POLITICAL INEQUALITIES

There are still substantial levels of economic, justice, employment, health and political inequality between the black and white races in 'post racial' America. For example, the median black household in 2010 had less than two-thirds (60%) the income of the median white household (see NUL 2013), with the average black and white household incomes given as \$33,321 and \$57,009 respectively (see DeNavas-Walt et al. 2013). The most recent U.S. Census (2010) also suggested that, the average white household had 17 times more wealth than the average black household, with the median net worth said to be \$110,500 and \$6,314 respectively⁴ (U.S. Census Bureau 2012b). Additionally, Oliver and Shapiro (1995) established that 60.9% of black and 25.3% of white children grow up in 'asset-poor' households. In 2012, the poverty threshold for a family of four (that

⁴ Of note, the black 'net wealth' figure is today lower than it was in 1984 (\$7,150, see DeSilver 2013)

includes two children under 18) was \$23,283, and during the same year 27.2% of black families were classified as living in poverty, compared to 9.7% of white families (see De Navas-Walt 2013).

In terms of justice, racial profiling continues to be a problem in the U.S. today. Black people constitute a third of the prison population (NAACP 2013) despite comprising approximately 13% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau 2012b). Additionally, one in three black males can now expect to go to prison at some stage in their lifetime (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005), with black women three times more likely to be incarcerated than white women (see Sentencing Project 2007). The U.S. Department of Justice also found that black people were twice as likely to be searched during a traffic stop, and more than four times more likely to experience the use of force during encounters with the police (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005).

White people also enjoy better employment prospects, with the national unemployment rate for black people remaining approximately twice that of white people for the last six decades (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013a). Additionally, in 2012 black persons had the highest unemployment rates of all reported groups (13.8%, compared to 7.2% of whites), with black youths worst affected with an unemployment rate of 38.3% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013a). In 2013, the median weekly earnings for black men working full time was \$682 per week, some 21.4% less than the median income for white men (\$868), with black women earning approximately 17.4% less than the median income of white women (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013b). White individuals earned more than black individuals at every income level, and the gap increased with education level (Stoops 2004). Black individuals earned 18% less than their white counterparts when both had no formal high school qualifications; 20% less when both had Bachelors degrees; and 23% less when both held professional or higher degrees (Carnevale et al. 2013).

In relation to health, the life expectancy for black people born today is 74.7 years compared to 78.8 years for white people, with both white males and white females expected to outlive their black counterparts by 5 and 3.4 years respectively (Brown 2003). The U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (U.S. CPS 2012a) also identified that 19.5% of the black population did not have health insurance (compared to 11.1% of white), and black girls aged 18 and under were more likely to become teenage mothers than their white peers (4.9% and 1.7% of population respectively). Black babies were also more likely to be born to unmarried mothers (72.5% compared to 29.0% of white), and the infant mortality rate was twice as high for black babies. The CPS survey also suggested that black mothers themselves were three times more likely to die during pregnancy and birth than their white counterparts (U.S. CPS 2012a). In 2003, the National Cancer Institute reported that cancer deaths were increasing much faster among black people than white people, and, although breast cancer was more prevalent among white women, black women were more likely to die from the disease (see Brown 2003).

With regard to voting and political representation, there are some evidences that the voting gap between the races has narrowed; or more recently closed. In 2012, the number of black people who voted rose by 1.7 million, which equated to approximately 66.2% of eligible black voters casting ballots (64.7 percent in 2008) (File 2013). For the first time, America's black population voted at higher rates than the white population in both the 2008 and 2012 elections (which saw the election of President Obama for his first and second term respectively). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1970 there were 1,469 black public officials elected in the United States, with 179 of those serving in U.S. and state legislatures. By 2012 this number had increased to approximately 10,500 with 630 serving in U.S. and state legislatures⁵. According to the U.S. Census Bureau however, in 2013 there was only one black senator in the 112th congress, and

⁵ See <http://www.statista.com/statistics/310559/us-black-elected-officials-by-state>

black officials as a collective constituted approximately 2% of all elected officials, far lower than the total population of black people in the U.S. (13%).

1.3 EDUCATION INEQUALITY: THE BLACK-WHITE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

As can be seen in the previous section, despite appeals to progress such as those identified in section 1.1, white hegemony still pervades America's 'post-racial' society (Brown 2003).

In 1954 the landmark *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) decision slowly wedged open access to desegregated and improved schooling for black children. Thurgood Marshall, the lead attorney on the case (himself a black male, and later the first black U.S. Court Justice), successfully argued that segregation was a violation of an individual's rights under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, asserting that separate schools kept people who had formally been slaves "as near that stage as possible"⁶. Fifty years later, the black-white achievement gap still persists (Morris 2009), and is even said to have risen to pre-civil war levels (see Adams 2008; Haycock 2001; Ipka 2003).

Inequalities between black and white school students are evident in course grades, test scores, course selections and graduation rates across the U.S. (see Comer 2001; Phillips et al. 1998). Comer (2001) suggests that as a group, black students score below 75% of white students on most standardised measures, and the differential is present at all socio-economic levels (Munk 2001), with black middle and upper class students showing the greatest academic achievement gap when compared to their white peers. Adams (2008) claimed that black students with college educated parents, scored

⁶ See Appendix 1 for a brief summary of the landmark *Brown* decision.

lower on the 12th-grade reading portion of the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NEAP) than their white counterparts, whose parents only obtained a high school diploma.

Clayton (2001), reporting on the nationwide 'Scholastic Admissions Test' (SAT⁷) scores⁸, suggests that since the 1980's black students verbal test scores have increased by 6 points, and maths test scores by 7 points. Whilst this sounds promising, white students made far larger gains, increasing their verbal score by 11 points and maths by 18 points, thus nullifying any net gain made by black students. A recent National Center for Education Statistics report (see Aud et al. 2010) on the NEAP reading assessments, confirmed that white students were at the top of the 'achievement spread' and black students were at the bottom, underperforming all other reported groups (see Jasnick 2012; Vannerman et al. 2009). Similarly, the NAEP report also demonstrated that white 8th graders scored an average of 26 points more than black students on the standardised reading test (Vannerman et al. 2009). In Florida, Hispanic students were nearly twice as likely as black students to be 'proficient' in the state standardised reading test, and white students were just shy of being three times more 'proficient' than their black peers (FCAT testing data 2013⁹).

1.4 IN SUM

This study begins with the understanding that there is a highly significant relationship between a student's race and educational attainment. What puzzled anthropologist John Ogbu however, was the empirical finding that black students performed less well in

⁷ Now known as the 'SAT Reasoning Test'

⁸ Standardised measure commonly utilised in undergraduate university admissions in the U.S.

⁹ See Florida Department of Education, FCAT 'Student Performance Results: Demographic Report' online at <https://app1.fldoe.org/FCATDemographics>

school than their white peers even when socioeconomic status was statistically controlled for (Ogbu 1987, 1991, 2003). He argued the gap, net of socioeconomic status, was especially interesting because it suggested that black students performed less well even when raised under the same environmental conditions as whites. For Ogbu, the black-white achievement gap was therefore *not* just a function of the fact black children often grew up under poorer conditions (such as those identified in section 1.2), and the provocative part of his argument claimed that the achievement gap was being perpetuated by black students themselves, and the way they responded to their conditions (Downey 2008).

The fact that scholars cannot completely explain the persistence of the black-white achievement gap net of socioeconomic condition makes a cultural explanation more attractive. However Critical Race scholars such as Gillborn (2005) argue that the enduring pattern of racial inequality seen today is not fortuitous, but a deliberate goal of education policy, one that could even be considered an 'act of white supremacy' in a so-called post-racial society (see Gillborn 2005). Both Ogbu's cultural explanation, and Gillborn's institutional explanation are discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.4.1 Thesis Structure

The structure of the present study will proceed as follows. **Chapter 2** will examine Critical Race Theory and closely related Critical Whiteness Studies, in conceptualising the role of racism in education. This chapter also outlines several explanations for the 'gap' in educational achievement between black and white students specifically, to include two of the most popular and provocative explanations, "Oppositional Culture Theory" and "The Burden of 'Acting White'". **Chapter 3** examines the literature pertaining to the curricular home for race and racial equality – the Social Studies curriculum – paying particular attention to multicultural approaches to education. This chapter also explores anti-racist education, critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism

and Afrocentric pedagogy, as critical and radical alternatives to traditional multicultural education approaches in schools. **Chapter 4** discusses this study's research methodology: introducing the case study school, explicating the research design of this study, and justifying the approach adopted to analyse, interpret and present the data. This chapter also examines the position of the researcher *in* the research. **Chapter 5** introduces the 'main characters' of this study, providing a rich vignette of each participant that 'narrates' the four empirical chapters of this study.

Speaking to each of this study's seven research questions, Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 develop a number of discussions around the data collected. **Chapter 6** discusses the first three research questions by exploring: the quantitative manifestation of the black-white achievement gap, participants' awareness, understandings, and experiences of the achievement gap, and, who are 'left behind' by policies that explicitly seek to close the gap. **Chapter 7** investigates this study's fourth and fifth research questions by examining the extent to which participants are aware of 'whiteness' and how the contours of whiteness were understood and/or embodied, and also whether there was any evidence of an 'oppositional culture' to that of the dominant culture. **Chapter 8** addresses research question six by exploring the role of schools in a multicultural society and what counts as multicultural education. This chapter also analyses the messages being promulgated by the curriculum, and through taught materials, about who is powerful and privileged. **Chapter 9**, the final empirical chapter, addresses research question seven by exploring whether participants were 'oppositional', or were they more accurately utilising their own agency to make decisions based on their experiences of schooling. **Chapter 10** reflects on the sociological significance and policy implications of this study's research findings. More specifically, this concluding chapter questions whether we might learn something positive and inspiring from the experiences, actions and choices of the young black participants in this study?

CHAPTER TWO

Theorising Educational Underachievement

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Critical Race Theory focuses on a critical examination of society and culture at the intersection of race and power (Yosso 2005; Gordon 1999). A closely related theory is Critical Whiteness Studies, which seek to examine the construction and preservation of whiteness (Roediger 2005). There is a great deal of overlap between Critical Whiteness Studies and Critical Race Theory as demonstrated by their shared commitment to exposing systems of racial power. Critical Whiteness Studies are sometimes mistakenly subsumed within Critical Race Theory although the former preceded the latter by more than half a century, with some authors tracing the origins of Critical Whiteness Studies to W.E.B. Du Bois' 'The Souls of White Folk' in *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* ([1920] 2003).

Critical Race Theory has been usefully employed as a framework to examine school practices, the schooling experiences of marginalised students of colour and the efficacy of so called 'race-conscious' education policies. Critical Whiteness theory has been helpfully utilised as a framework in which to examine privilege in education by questioning the often hidden privileges of 'whiteness' (Preston 2007). Together, both critical race and critical whiteness theory afford new ways of thinking about racial inequalities in education. For reasons of clarity each will be discussed separately.

This chapter will first explore Critical Race Theory as a distinctive way of conceptualising the role of racism in education, exploring the way in which scholars utilise Critical Race Theory to make sense of, deconstruct, and challenge racial inequalities in educational achievement. Secondly, this chapter will examine Critical Whiteness Studies and how the framework can provide ways of thinking about whiteness and its role in maintaining white privilege and domination in schooling. This chapter also considers differential educational experience and achievement between the black and white groups (net of socio-economic factors), by exploring two of the most popular (and provocative) cultural explanations – ‘Oppositional Culture Theory’ and ‘The Burden of ‘Acting White’ (Ogbu 1987, 1991, 2003; Fordham & Ogbu 1986). Given that CRT places particular importance on the voices, experiences and actions of people of colour, this chapter will firstly define how the term ‘agency’ is used and understood in this study.

2.1.1 A Brief Note on ‘Agency’

Agency is not only a central concept in educational theory and practice, but is also a key idea and question in modern social theory. Within sociology agency is usually contrasted with and compared to structure, emphasising implicitly the undetermined nature of human action as opposed to the alleged determinism of structural theories (Marshall 1998). Often utilised in its simplest form as a synonym for individual action, the term has also been utilised more broadly to draw attention to the psychological and social psychological character of an individual (Marshall 1998), the capacity for autonomous social action (Calhoun 2002), and the ability of individuals to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structure (Calhoun 2002).

The structure-agency debate has arguably become one of the defining discussions of modern sociology and as such is a debate well beyond the scope of this study. For the purpose of this study therefore, the definitions of agency given by

Emirbayer & Mische and Asante are adopted. Emirbayer & Mische (1998:971) suggested that agency was the “capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations”. Asante (1998:177) described agency as “the evolving ownership of action”; the desire to stand within an individual’s cultural location and use that location as a reference to interpret one’s own reality and engagement with others.

Both Emirbayer & Mische’s and Asante’s definitions acknowledge agency as something that is ‘achieved’, which is believed to be well aligned with the scholarly endeavours of Critical Race Theory. The idea of ‘achieving agency’ makes it possible to understand why a student can be ‘agentic’ in one situation and not in another and also explain fluctuations in a student’s agency over time. Agency is therefore *not* something young people automatically have, but is rather achieved during transactions with particular school situations - transactions in which students stand within their own cultural locations and use their location as references to interpret their own reality, assume their own agency and act accordingly (not be ‘acted upon’); an important idea returned to (as demonstrated by this study’ participants) in the empirical chapters of this study.

2.2 CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical Race Theory (hereafter CRT) is generally thought to derive from a number of sources to include the works of Franz Fanon, who perceived the world to be divided between ‘two different species¹⁰’ (Fanon 1963) and from the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois, for whom “the problem of the 20th century [was] the problem of the color-line” (Du Bois [1903] 1989:14; see also Akom 2008). Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic also added as ‘influential’ (to CRT) the names of Antonio Gramsci; Jacques Derrida; Sojourner Truth;

¹⁰ A “governing race” and “zoological natives” (Fanon 1963:40-42).

Fredrick Douglass; Cesar Chavez; Martin Luther King Jr., as well as the protagonists of the 'black and Chicano movements' of the sixties and early seventies (Delgado & Stefancic 2001:4).

Whilst there is no definitive birthdate to the movement, Kimberlé Crenshaw argued that CRT's origins lay in a student boycott¹¹ and 'alterative course' organised by students at the Harvard University Law School in 1981. The course titled 'Race, Racism and American Law' was taught by Harvard University's first African American Professor Derrick Bell (see Lawrence III et al. 1993:4) and was based on Bell's book of the same name (Bell 1973). Crenshaw et al (1995:xxi) described the critical legal course as "the first institutionalised expression of CRT." CRT has also been credited (but far less frequently) to white scholar Alan Freeman and is widely regarded as an outgrowth of critical legal studies¹² (Ladson-Billings 1998).

CRT is a body of scholarship steeped in racial activism that seeks to explore and challenge the prevalence of racial inequality in society. It is based on the understanding that race and racism are the product of social thought and power relations (Rollock & Gillborn 2011). Attacking liberalism and the inherent belief in the law to create an equitable just society, CRT starts from a position which acknowledges that society is not colour-blind, that justice is not colour-blind and that the scales¹³ are not balanced (Williams 2011). CRT holds the view that racism is permanent, pervasive and persistent in the U.S. and throughout the world. As a form of oppositional scholarship CRT has a total distrust of Eurocentricism and challenges the experience of white European Americans as the normative standard. CRT grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of colour, stressing the importance of voice a voice that

¹¹ The main object of students protest was to persuade the administration to increase the numbers of tenured professors of colour.

¹² Critical Legal Studies is "a leftist legal movement that challenged the traditional legal scholarship that focused on doctrinal and policy analysis... in favor of a form of law that spoke to the specificity of individuals and groups in social and cultural contexts" (Ladson-Billings 1998:10).

¹³ In law, weighing scales are said to represent an objective standard by which competing claims are weighed.

is all too often framed by racism and as being at variance with mainstream culture (Cole 2009).

There is insufficient space in this study to offer a full and comprehensive discussion of CRT, its background in U.S. legal studies and the particular ways in which the approach is developing across numerous disciplines in modern social science (for an overview see Crenshaw et al. 1995; Delgado & Stefancic 2000, 2001; Gillborn 2006, 2008; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lynn & Parker 2006; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997; Wing & Stefancic 2007). The remainder of this chapter will focus on CRT in the context of education, following an introduction to the broad tenets of CRT as applied across multiple disciplines.

2.3 TENETS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Crenshaw et al. (1995) point out that there are “no canonical set of doctrines of methodologies to which [CRT scholars] subscribe” (Crenshaw et al. 1995:xiii). However, there are several ‘themes’ that are central to CRT which are presented below (as adapted from Rollock & Gillborn 2011):

- 1) Centrality of Racism – CRT scholars acknowledge that racism is a normal daily fact of life and not aberrant. Because the ideology and assumptions of racism are so deeply entrenched in the socio, legal and political structures of a country it looks ordinary and is viewed as natural to a person in the culture (Delgado & Stefancic 2000, 2001). CRT scholars also acknowledge that racial designations have complex historical and socially constructed meanings that ensure the superiority of white groups (Lynn & Parker 2006).
- 2) White Supremacy – CRT scholars understand the role and power of white supremacy in creating and reinforcing racial subordination and maintaining

white privilege, a tenet central to CRT's imperative to reveal and oppose racial inequality (Rollock & Gillborn 2011). CRT scholars acknowledge it as a form of 'oppositional scholarship' in that CRT "challenges the experiences of white European Americans as the normative standard, grounding itself in the contextual experiences of people of colour simultaneously challenging existing social constructions of race" (Lynn & Parker 2006:260).

- 3) Interest Convergence – CRT scholars are aware that racism serves to reinforce and advance white supremacy and maintain the status quo and that "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated *only* when it converges with the interests of whites" (Bell 1980:523). CRT is also characterised by a critique of liberalism, which points to the failure of notions such as 'merit', 'neutrality' and 'colour-blindness'.
- 4) Intersectionality – CRT scholars understand intersectionality to equate to the complex and multiple ways in which various systems of subordination can come together at the same time i.e. racial inequalities do not operate to the exclusion or disregard of other forms of injustices i.e. age, gender etc. (Crenshaw 1989).
- 5) Voice – CRT scholars place particular importance on the voices and experiences of people of colour, their insights into the operation of racism and their understanding of being racially minoritised. Building on a long tradition of oral histories and counter-storytelling, CRT scholars often adopt a narrative approach giving particular prominence to the experiential knowledge of people of colour¹⁴.

¹⁴ Utilising a 'narrative approach' in CRT research is explicated in this study's methods chapter (Chapter 4).

2.4 CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND EDUCATION

CRT in education rose to prominence in the early 1990s where education scholars began to use it as a tool for explaining existing inequalities in education, such as those identified in the previous chapter (notably Ladson-Billings 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Lynn & Parker 2006; Tate 1997). Given CRT's relatively recent entrance into the field of education, critical race scholars over the last two decades have explored the theoretical and methodological significance of CRT in the context of its role in and links to education. Three of the most influential articles that explain define and frame CRT and its connection to education are Lynn and Adams (2002), Parker and Stovall (2004), and Ladson-Billings (1999).

Lynn and Adams (2002) exemplified the ways in which CRT currently shapes education research and how it enables education scholars to analyse educational outcomes that may otherwise remain hidden from view. Parker and Stovall (2004) answer a CRT call-to-action by exploring how CRT can move beyond a theoretical explanation to action that impacts the lives of people of colour (see also Bartee et al. 2000). Ladson-Billings (1999; see also 2005) outlined how CRT could be used to examine curricular, funding, instruction, assessment and desegregation in education, contending that a close examination of each show that students from racially diverse backgrounds experience significantly different accounts of what is taught, how it is taught, and the ways schools evaluate what students know. Lynn & Parker (2006) add that CRT can be usefully employed as a framework in which to examine pedagogy and practices, the schooling experiences of marginalised students of colour and the efficacy of 'race-conscious' education policy. A brief overview of critical race research in each area follows (see over):

2.4.1 CRT – School Pedagogy and Practice

CRT sees the ‘official knowledge’ of the school curriculum as a culturally specific artefact designed to maintain the current social order (Apple 1993; see also Ladson Billings 2003). Swartz (1992:341) argued the presence of ‘master scripting’ within the ‘official knowledge’ of schools, suggesting that:

“Master scripting silences multiple voices and perspectives... legitimizing dominant, white, upper-class male voices as the ‘standard’ knowledge students need to know... [and any] content that does not reflect the dominant [white, upper-class male] voice must be brought under control.”

CRT scholars would argue that the presence of master scripting in modern schools serves only to preserve and perpetuate the white hegemonic social order. Through master scripting the important narratives of people of colour are omitted, muted or misrepresented in the curriculum and classroom (King 1992). Dyson provided the example of Martin Luther King Jr., who in the presence of master scripting, becomes a ‘sanitised folk hero’ who enjoyed the support of all ‘good’ Americans, rather than the FBI’s public enemy number one who challenged an unjust war on marginalised groups (Dyson 2000).

CRT’s project in education is also to uncover the way pedagogy is racialised and selectively offered. CRT raises important questions about the quality of the curriculum offered to and accessed by different groups. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2003) argues that children of the dominant (wealthier-whiter) group disproportionately have access to ‘enriched’ and ‘rigorous’ curriculum, whereas poor, immigrant, bilingual, and children of colour are usually confined to the ‘basics’. Academic restriction is a good example of Cheryl Harris’s (1993) view of the ‘use’ and ‘enjoyment’ of whiteness as property. Harris argues that whiteness is a form of property that entitles whites to certain rights, to include the absolute right to exclude.

Ladson Billings & Tate’s (1995) seminal paper also advances a set of propositions connecting race and property as central constructs in understanding the

‘property function of whiteness’ in education. Their analysis demonstrated the centrality of racial inequalities in U.S. schools, illustrating how racism is a persistent historical and ideological construct that accounts for inequalities to include the achievement gap. They outlined links between property values and the quality of school practices, demonstrating how poverty and low social status is ‘racialised’, with African Americans (and other marginalised groups) routinely having access to property with low value, which affects the inherent value of the schools attended, the resources available at the school, the quality of teaching and the achievement (or underachievement) of certain groups of students. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995:60) contend that de-facto segregation by race continues in school today as a result of whiteness and the ‘absolute right to exclude’:

“In schooling, the absolute right to exclude was demonstrated initially by denying blacks access to schooling altogether. Later it was demonstrated by the creation and maintenance of separate schools. More recently it has been demonstrated by white flight (out of urban areas) and the growing insistence on vouchers, public funding of private schools, and schools of choice. Within schools, absolute right to exclude is demonstrated by re-segregation via tracking.”

‘Accelerated curricular’ and ‘magnet schooling programs¹⁵’ that are commonly offered to ‘gifted and talented’ students in the U.S. can therefore be viewed as one of the current means through which whiteness is asserted in modern schools. The property function of whiteness ensures that black students are disproportionately placed into the lowest tracks and afforded fewer educational opportunities than their white peers (Darling-Hammond 1997; Oakes 1995; Oakes 2005; Oakes et al. 2000). According to CRT, the failure of certain groups to participate in advanced classes is not by happenstance and

¹⁵ Magnet program – Although originally proposed in the 1960s to remedy racial segregation in public schools (by utilising geographically open admissions), the larger proportion of magnet programs today have a competitive entrance examinations. ‘Magnet’ refers to how the schools draw students from across the normal boundaries/school ‘zones’ defined by authorities. All students admitted to magnet programs are entitled to state funded school transport regardless of their geographical proximity to the school/program.

therefore this study should seek to explore the structure of schooling and access to the school curriculum by group (see **RQ1**, section 2.4.2).

2.4.2 CRT – Efficacy of Race-Conscious Education Policy

CRT scholars have continued to develop their social critique in the most recent era of educational accountability where ‘colour-blind’ policies for ‘improvement’ and ‘reform’ (synonymous with standards-based learning and high stakes testing) have become law¹⁶. They believe the implementation of policies, including the No Child Left Behind Act¹⁷ (hereafter NCLB), to be no more than vehicles in which to sort and stratify students with the goal of preserving white hegemony and the social pecking order. All too often policy makers promote colourblindness as an ideal social practice, yet in practice race (defined by skin colour) still serves as a marker for social status, history and power (Guinier & Torres 2002).

The manifest goal of the NCLB Act is to ‘close the gap’ - defined as “the difference between how well lower-income and minority children perform on standardised tests as compared with their peers” (U.S. Department of Education 2004). Referring specifically to “those with disabilities, those from low-income families, racial and ethnic minorities, and those with limited English proficiency” (CQ Press 2005:469), NCLB claims to ‘close’ achievement gaps by instituting a system of ‘accountability’ (see Armaline & Levy 2004). The NCLB legislation holds individual schools accountable for the proficiency rates of their students by group (see Baker et al. 2002; Davidson et al. 2013).

National data show that not only have all 50 U.S. states adopted ‘high stakes testing’ in line with the accountability requirements of NCLB, but the greater majority

¹⁶ The No Child Left Behind Act was signed by President George W. Bush in 2002 and was rolled out as an educational reform based on “stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, encouraging proven education methods, and more choices for parents” (No Child Left Behind Act).

¹⁷ See also the introduction of the ‘EBacc’ in the UK (Gillborn 2011)

now utilise the resultant high stake 'tests' to determine other schooling decisions, including 'promotion' to the next grade or 'retention' in grade; to determine access to enhanced or accelerated curriculums; and to determine whether a student is eligible for graduation from high school (CEP 2012). Some states, including Florida, even offer schools and teachers monetary rewards on the basis of their NCLB-mandated test scores¹⁸.

Ladson-Billings (2004b) claims that, "current... schemes continue to instantiate inequity and validate the privilege of those who have access to cultural capital" (Ladson-Billings 2004b:60). Thus, from a CRT standpoint, it is *not* a coincidence that the intent to 'leave no child behind' has manifested itself as state-wide testing initiatives that: 1) divert much-needed funding from lower-performing schools in blacker poorer areas and reward higher-performing schools in whiter-wealthier areas (see Myers & Curtiss 2003); 2) disproportionately mandate retention in grade for blacker and poorer students who do not perform well on standardised tests (see Morris 2009); and 3) disproportionately prevent blacker and poorer students from graduating high school with a diploma, regardless of their all-round performance on multiple measures e.g. GPA¹⁹ (see CEP 2012; Dee & Jacob 2006; Orfield & Kornhaber 2001).

Roithmayr (2003) argues that the growing lead achieved by wealthier whiter students in schools is impossible to overcome by marginalised groups, terming the situation a 'locked-in monopoly'. Gillborn (2008) argues that the black-white gap in test scores on both sides of the Atlantic have all the hallmarks of locked-in inequality; inequalities so great that they cannot be closed through the 'normal workings' of the education system. Gillborn maintains that mainstream policies that continue to

¹⁸ I.e. Governor J. Bush's 'A+ plan' in Florida rewards \$100 per student to schools that receive an 'A grade' on their score card. See 'Grading Florida's Public Schools' online at: <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/pdf/0910/Guidesheet2010SchoolGrades.pdf> accessed 09/05/11.

¹⁹ Grade Point Average (GPA) - Grade point average is commonly calculated this way: 4 points for an A grade, 3 points for a B grade, 2 points for a C grade, 1 point for a D grade, and no points for an F grade. Each high school class is graded and each grade is averaged out over the 4 years of high school cumulating in one GPA figure.

prioritise initiatives in the name of 'standards' result only in increased selection and separation within mainstream schools (through meritocratic initiatives like 'setting' or 'streaming' by ability). Black students are well documented to be grossly under-represented in accelerated curriculum groups which benefit from additional resources such as covering more of the curriculum, being entered for 'higher' exam papers reserved for 'more able' students and being taught by better quality teachers. Black students are however over-represented in the low-ranked groups who are said to spend most of the day with a 'phony curriculum' that is reluctantly presented by teachers who offer no curriculum enrichment outside of 'basic' test preparation for the NCLB mandated tests (see Gillborn 2008; Ladson-Billings 2003; McNeil 2002). An initial question for this study may therefore be:

- **RQ1 - What is the quantitative manifestation of the achievement gap in one American high school? And what (if any) relationship does the gap have with enrolment in standard or accelerated curriculum classes?**

2.4.3 CRT – The Schooling Experiences of Marginalised Students

In addition to examining education policies, pedagogy and practice, CRT also provides a unique framework that allows black students as racialised beings to talk about their perceptions and experiences of school and the ramifications of policies such as NCLB on their lives. For example, Howard's (2008) study revealed some of the obstacles that African Americans sought to overcome in order to become academically successful. Howard's study outlined, utilising rich narrative, that black participants were keenly aware of how race shaped the way they were viewed by their teachers and school administrators, with the data also revealing how black participants explicitly fought to eradicate negative racial stereotypes. Howard supported the use of CRT as a platform upon which black students could discuss race-related issues in a manner that they felt was lacking in their regular school environments (Howard 2008).

Another example of the use of CRT to shed light on the experiences of black students was demonstrated in DeCuir and Dixon's (2004) examination of the racial climate at Wells Academy, an elite private school located in a predominately white and affluent, south-eastern U.S. city. Employing a CRT analysis of African American students' experiences, DeCuir and Dixon uncovered the persistent and subtle acts of racism that black students experienced at the school with regularity, documenting the pervasiveness and normalcy of racism at school. A CRT framework permitted the African American students at Wells to better elaborate on the tacit and explicit acceptance of racism demonstrated by schoolteachers and administrators at the school (DeCuir & Dixon 2004).

Noguera's (2003) research found that African Americans had vastly different experiences of schooling than their white counterparts. Noguera discovered that although the overwhelming majority of African Americans believed that education was important and that they had 'strong desires' to attend college, they were also the group least likely to believe that teachers cared about them and their learning. A number of studies have shown that black students are much less likely to feel alienated and disaffected if they feel welcome, supported, and valued at school and that the school represents and reflects their own interests (Osterman 2000). When black students perceive that their teachers understand their lives outside of school and care about them as complex individuals, they are more likely to engage in the learning process (Osterman and Freese 2000). DiAngelo (2010) however outlined that the overwhelming majority of white teachers, who make up the large majority of the teaching force in the U.S. (85%²⁰), failed to acknowledge the significance of a student's group membership and as such failed to understand a black student's life outside of school. Noguera (2003) therefore posits that the hostile and non-supportive feelings that African Americans experience in

²⁰ In 2010-11, 84% of the U.S. teaching force was classified as white (non-Hispanic), with 7% classed as Black, 6% as Hispanic, and 4% as 'Other'²⁰. Of the 7% of teachers classified as Black, only 10% of those were male (see Feistritz 2011).

schools merits a deeper examination into structural explanations for the achievement gap between the races.

Kozol (1991, 2005), drawing similar conclusions to Howard (2008), offered accounts of poor urban schools attended by students of colour. Kozol documented the effects of disparity in funding on poor, utilising rich descriptive narrative accounts of predominantly black students. Duncan's (2002) ethnography also utilised CRT to analyse the differences in the dominant discourses and counter stories of black (male) students, and the voices of other students and faculty at City High School. Building on the scholarship of Richard Delgado (1995), Duncan argued that the exclusion and marginalisation of young black students, who were 'beyond love' at the case study school, was taken not as a cause for concern, but as a "predictable albeit unfortunate outcome of a reasonably fair system" (Duncan 2002:134). Delgado (1995:49) claimed that:

"Blacks, especially the black poor, have so few chances, so little interaction with the majority society, that they might as well be exiles, outcasts, permanent black sheep who will never be permitted into the fold. Majority society, in effect, has written them off."

Duncan and Jackson's (2004) study, although not expressly using CRT, critically examined the schooling inequities of African American males at a mid-western high school. The study sought to specifically "privilege the voice of those who bear the brunt of inequalities in schools and grant them an opportunity to inform the analytic and conceptual categories we bring to our research" (Duncan & Jackson 2004:3). By centring the voices of young black males and their accounts of schooling, Duncan and Jackson's study highlighted the political nature of language in schools and how African American males make sense of schooling in an environment that many of them felt was inherently unjust (Duncan & Jackson 2004).

Watts and Erevelles (2004) also offer a different insight into the existing literature on African American males, which all too often blames them for violence in

U.S. schools and labels them ‘natural born killers’. They assert that, “education is both violent and oppressive because of its psychological impact [on African American students]... who have had to struggle against the illusion that every one is operating under a fair but competitive market” (Watts & Erevelles 2004:284). Borrowing from the works of Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon, Watts and Erevelles conclude that African Americans’ outward expressions of violence and resistance in schools are not the true problem, but the racist practices and ideologies that are institutionalised and normalised within schools (but are equally not acknowledged because they are so normalised). Watts and Erevelles (2004) argue that scholars need to focus on the racist practices and ideologies in schools if ‘authentic’ remedies for underachievement are to be identified.

What is particularly troubling, in light of the literature presented here is the potential for reinforcement of racist and classist normative beliefs (or white dominant ‘attitudes’). For example blacker-poorer students who perform badly on high-stakes standardised tests are confirmed to be ‘less capable’, ‘less intelligent’, and inherently less prepared to do well in school and society. Test scores have great potential to be viewed as reliable “evidence [upon which] to make such claims about particular populations” (see Howard 2008). A second question for this study may therefore be:

- **RQ2 - To what extent are the participants aware of achievement gaps (if any) between white and black students at the school? And, what are their understandings and experiences of the ‘gaps’?**

2.5 CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Mike Coles’ *Critical Race Theory and Education: A Marxist Response* (2009) is possibly the most in-depth refusal of CRT in education today. Cole challenges two of CRT’s main tenets: the use of the term ‘white supremacy’ and the ‘primacy of race over class’ (as the primary form of oppression in society). Cole details his problems with white supremacy

(over racism) arguing that the term “homogenises all white people and perpetuates the traditional black-white binary” (see Cole 2009:16). Delgado and Stefancic add that CRT amounts to a form of black exceptionalism, suggesting that the black-white paradigm “weakens solidarity, reduces opportunities for coalition, and deprives the group of the benefits of the others’ experiences” (see Delgado and Stefancic 2001:70). Delgado and Stefancic also warn that the black-white social dichotomy simplifies analysis dangerously (Delgado & Stefancic 2001).

Critics warn that researchers engaging in the black-white paradigm wrongly make ‘other whites’ invisible by placing black people at the centre of any analysis of American culture or American white supremacy (see Perea 1997; Chang & Gotanda 2007). Citing U.S. Census data (2007), Cole writes “while the number of Black people living below the poverty line is some three times that of white... this still leaves 16 million ‘white but not Hispanic’ [people] living in poverty” (Cole 2009:27). He suggests that grouping 16 million whites together with white billionaires is not only problematic, but is completely incorrect. Cole argues therefore that the term ‘white supremacy’ in this context obscures what he calls ‘non-color-coded racism’ i.e. that CRT cannot address Gypsy/traveller racism, Islamophobia, or xeno-racism (Cole 2009).

Darder and Torres (2004:117) suggest that critical race theorists continue to neglect with any theoretical specificity the political economy of (racialised) class inequalities. They argue that this lack of engagement is a major limitation in an otherwise ‘significant’ and ‘important’ body of literature. Darder and Torres argue that CRT decontextualises racism by failing to examine racism in relation to the needs of the capitalist class. They conclude that failing to distinguish between “working-class and bourgeois whites” or “oppressed and oppressing whites”, contributes to this mystification (Darder & Torres 2004:117). Green argues that oppressed and poor blacks and whites have too much in common in class terms for “race [to] trump class” (Green 2008).

2.5.1 Responding to the Criticisms of CRT

In acknowledging the criticisms outlined in section 2.5, **RQ1** can be amended to address class and other key measures (albeit utilising the crude measure of ‘free/reduced school meals’ to distinguish between ‘bourgeois’ and ‘working class’ blacks and whites²¹):

- **RQ1 - What is the quantitative manifestation of the achievement gap in one American high school? And if present, what relationship does the ‘gap’ have with race, gender, free/reduced lunch eligibility and enrolment in standard or accelerated curriculum classes?**

It is here argued that CRT is often misrepresented in that CRT does *not* attempt to homogenise white people or downplay the significance of poverty among white people. Conversely, CRT *is* sensitive to differences in power and privilege within the category of white people. However, CRT *does* point to the benefits that accrue to *all* white people from their positioning within a racist system; that is not to say white people are *all* equally privileged, but more specifically that *all* white people gain a degree of advantage from their whiteness²² (see Allen 2006; Gillborn 2008; Stovall 2006). To that end it is important not to neglect advantage by group. By adopting a critical race stance that presumes that racism has contributed to *all* contemporary manifestations of group advantage, as well as disadvantage, it is important to question:

- **RQ3 - Who (if any) are the children ‘left behind’ by the No Child Left Behind legislation and its high-stakes standardised testing requirements? And who are the children that have benefitted most from the legislation?**

²¹ Free or reduced school meals as a measure of class is discussed further in this study’s methodology chapter (Chapter 4).

²² Their interests are assumed to be important and any challenge to their centrality is met with hostility and violence, both symbolic and physical.

2.6 CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP ON WHITENESS

As seen in section 2.4, although a number of works have empirically documented African American students' perspectives of their learning environments, few have used CRT or a comparable theoretical framework to examine how African Americans believe their lives are being influenced and impacted by whiteness and white hegemony specifically.

In contemporary America to be white is to be considered American (Bell 2009). The normalcy of the category 'white' (the category that all others are compared to) is said to be accompanied by a set of systematic privileges that advantage those of the dominant race to the disadvantage of all others (Allen 2006; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Gillborn 2008; Stovall 2006). Whiteness is embedded in the "historic systems of oppression that sustain wealth, power, and privilege" (Featherstone & Ishibashi 2004:105) and white as a category is often synonymous with having 'no race' or being 'race-less' (Dyer 2000).

Social scientists turned a critical eye towards the 'white majority' in the early 19th century (notably in the works of Frederick Douglas and David Walker) and just as in the 1800s, scholars of the 20th century (including: W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Frantz Fanon, Rev. Thandeka, Ella Baker, St. Clair Drake, Horrace Cayton, Malcolm X, Toni Morrison, Peggy McIntosh and Ralph Ellison to name a few) were disregarded as nothing more than fodder of "the African American left" (Roediger 2005). Collectively, their seminal works provided "detailed (and) accurate accounts of racial inequality that went unheeded, disregarded and ignored" (Twine & Gallagher 2008:10). However, the critical treatment of whiteness arguably owes its greatest intellectual debt to the works of W.E.B. DuBois, whose observations provided a theoretical foundation for both critical whiteness studies (hereafter CWS) and CRT.

Whiteness studies critically examine and dismantle white supremacy through a systematic analysis of what it means to be 'privileged' and 'white' in society (Warren 1999), exposing the hidden privileges of whiteness in schooling (Preston 2007a). Noel

Ignatiev and David Roediger have written extensively on the topic of whiteness (and critical race theory) and scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998, 2003) and Zeus Leonardo (2002) have interrogated white privilege and white supremacy in the context of education. Although CWS has been applied and interrogated in the U.S. for several decades, in the UK “the reaction to it... has been less sanguine” (Preston 2007b). For example, Gillborn outlined a (white) professor who, during a major UK conference, suggested, that “although some of [Gillborn’s] earlier work had been ‘useful’, this talk of ‘supremacy’ meant that [he] had... ‘gone mad’” (Gillborn 2005).

Preston warns that most white people are not ready to hear talk of white supremacy, with most believing white supremacy to be associated with explicitly racist organisations such as the British National Party or the Ku Klux Klan. White supremacy however depends only on the devaluation of non-whites (Baffoe et al. 2014) and Preston warns that the supposedly ‘post-racial’ modern society is in very real danger of denying racism in our everyday experiences and practices (Preston 2007a). Understanding the privileges conferred through whiteness is thus essential, but what is ‘whiteness’, and what does whiteness look like?

2.7 WHAT IS WHITENESS AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

According to Featherstone & Ishibashi (2004), whiteness is “an interlocking pattern of beliefs, values, feelings, and assumptions; policies, procedures, and laws; behaviours, and unwritten rules used to define and underpin a worldview” (Featherstone & Ishibashi 2004:105). Although there is some agreement among scholars as to how whiteness is performed and how it affects the material realities of daily life, there are differential emphases placed on whether whiteness is “an identity, a performance, a set of beliefs, a structure, or nothing at all” (see Castango 2008:319).

Dyson (1996) explained, that as an 'identity,' whiteness refers to the self-understanding, social practices, and group beliefs that articulate whiteness in relationship to American race. As an 'ideology' whiteness references the systemic reproduction of conceptions of whiteness as domination. Finally, as an 'institution' Dyson argues that "from the home to the school, from the government to the church... [various institutions] compose the intellectual and ideological tablet upon which have been inscribed the meanings" (Dyson 1996, see Chennault 1998:300-302).

Specific to schooling, Castango suggests that whiteness is a well-entrenched structure that is manifested in, and gives shape to, modern schools. Some of the characteristics of institutional whiteness include the ignoring of race/racism, the embracing and rationalising of meritocracy, the denying of institutional oppression, and the protecting of and investing in privilege (Castango 2008). It is therefore argued that institutional whiteness serves as a form of amnesia allowing white people to forget or ignore how they were (and still are) implicated in the maintenance of 'post-racial' systems of privilege based on race (to include those outlined in Chapter 1).

Gillborn warns that those "who are implicated in whiteness rarely... realise its existence, let alone acknowledge their own role in its repeated iteration and re-signification" (Gillborn 2005:9). Bell hooks (1989:113) argues:

"When... whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white supremacist²³ values and beliefs, even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination, they cannot recognise the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they profess to wish to see eradicated."

²³ By 'supremacist' hooks does not elude to white supremacist groups or Neo Nazi ideology, but to the greater political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power, material resources and entitlement (see also Ansley 1997).

By contrast, Giroux (1997) suggests that since the 1990s whiteness has actually become increasingly visible to white youth specifically, who “have become increasingly sensitive to their status as white” (Giroux 1997:287).

Leonardo (2002), building on earlier works by Frankenburg (1993) and Roediger (1992), outlines the defining ‘characteristics’ of whiteness, to include:

- 1) An unwillingness to name the contours of racism i.e. inequity is explained by reference to any number of alternative factors than being attributable to the actions of whites;
- 2) An avoidance of identifying with a racial experience of group i.e. ‘white’ is the norm from which other races stand apart and in relation to which they are defined; and,
- 3) Displaying behaviours and attitudes that minimise racist legacies i.e. seeking to ‘draw a line’ under past atrocities as if that would negate their continued importance as historic, economic and cultural factors.

Efforts to examine the privileges that come with white skin pigment arguably adds depth to any educational conversation that desires to understand racism and racial inequality. Critical education scholars like Peter McLaren (1997), Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997) and Henry Giroux (1997a, 1999b) agree that educationalists should “place an increasing emphasis on understanding the social construction of whiteness” in a concerted effort to critically examine racism and white privilege in the classrooms (McLaren 1997:8). Whiteness should therefore be recognised and understood as more than just a colour or a race-less descriptor. An important area for investigation in this study is therefore:

- **RQ4 – To what extent were the participants in this study aware of ‘whiteness’? And, how were the contours of whiteness understood and/or identified?**

2.8 OPPOSITIONAL CULTURE AND THE BURDEN OF 'ACTING WHITE'

As outlined in Chapter 1, anthropologist John Ogbu puzzled over the empirical finding that black students performed less well in school than their white peers, even when socioeconomic status was statistically controlled for (Ogbu 1987, 1991, 2003, see also Phillips et al. 1998). The fact that scholars cannot completely explain the persistence of the black-white achievement gap, net of socioeconomic condition, makes a cultural explanation more attractive. Perhaps no other scholar's work remains as influential on matters of black underachievement as that of John Ogbu and his former colleague Signithia Fordham.

Ogbu (1987, 1991, 2003) and Fordham and Ogbu (1986) initially colonised the idea that African American students display 'oppositional' behaviours in schooling because they associate high academic achievement with 'acting white' (Fordham & Ogbu 1986). Evolving since the 1970's the controversial 'Oppositional Culture' theory of academic performance quickly gained prominence within and beyond education. Collectively, Ogbu and Fordham's work highlights how whiteness is learned, internalised, privileged, institutionally reproduced, performed and revisited inside and outside of schools. Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) study provides a detailed account of the impact of racial inequality on educational achievement. Fordham and Ogbu are however not without their critics. Fordham (2008:229) argued that all sides of the political spectrum:

"Proceed immediately to the misguided notion that the adoption of a stronger work ethic on the part of the black population, especially black children, would render those long standing deterrents to social and economic inequity harmless. The pathologies identified as endemic within the black communities could easily be erased... if black people would just behave better and take responsibility for themselves²⁴."

²⁴ A sentiment Fordham vehemently opposes. Although not of direct relevance to the present study, it is worth noting that Fordham's (1996) study also places the 'acting white' hypothesis in a gendered perspective.

2.8.1 Oppositional Culture Theory

Unlike previous culture of poverty theories (i.e. Lewis 1966 who claimed the subculture of the poor develops mechanisms that tend to perpetuate it; Murray 1984 who argues that persistent poverty passes from one generation to the next because of intrinsically dysfunctional behaviors; and Wilson 1987 who argued that race is far less of a factor than economic class position) 'oppositional culture' casts a much wider net in terms of the group whose behaviour it attempts to explain. Oppositional culture theory claims to explain failure among blacks of *all* classes, arguing that African American students under achieve academically because schooling is seen as an extension of the dominant culture; a culture that threatens their group's cultural identity (Lundy 2003).

Oppositional culture posits that a minority group's historical relationship to the dominant group plays an important role in shaping group members' beliefs about how schooling will pay off. In Ogbu's theory, 'voluntary (immigrant) minority' groups (those that have migrated to the host country of their own free will) tend to compare their condition to their relatives in their homeland and because the comparison is often favourable, they develop optimistic attitudes and embrace the notion that school efforts will pay off in the host country. Ogbu claimed that although voluntary migrants often lack knowledge of the kinds of school-related skills needed for success (and they may experience discrimination), voluntary minorities view these obstacles as short-term challenges to be overcome. Voluntary migrant groups also have a 'symbolic option' of returning to their homeland (unless for political reasons). By contrast, 'involuntary minorities', such as African Americans, have experienced a historically antagonistic method of incorporation into society (i.e. through slavery, colonisation or conquest). Lacking a clear foreign reference group, involuntary minorities do not hold such positive expectations for their future. Ogbu believed that involuntary minorities learn from those around them that they have limited job opportunities and place little emphasis on success at school. Involuntary minorities are subsequently said to develop a pattern of

linguistic, cognitive, motivational, and other skills related to schooling, that are often at odds with the norms of the U.S. public school system and then blame the system for their subordination. Ogbu added that involuntary minorities see cultural differences between them and the dominant group as barriers to be retained and therefore avoid complete assimilation into the mainstream society.

Authors like McWhorter have drawn similar observations to Ogbu, placing the blame for underachievement squarely on the shoulders of black students after contrasting involuntary black youth culture with that of voluntary black immigrants (including blacks from the Caribbean and Africa), who “haven’t sabotaged themselves through victimology” (McWhorter 2000).

Ogbu argued that black youths look around them, perceive barriers to success in school and respond in a way that is psychologically protective; “embracing a collective identity that defines their group in opposition to current white-controlled institutions” (Ogbu 1987, 1991, 2003). In addition, Ogbu argues that the system of racial subordination which blocked opportunities and denied equal rewards to blacks, led blacks to define certain symbols, activities, and ways of speaking, as appropriate for whites but not for blacks. Thus, Ogbu suggested that black students developed a separate system of behaviours and traits deemed appropriate for them, which Ogbu termed ‘an oppositional culture’. Engaging in behaviours outside of this framework is therefore said to threaten the shared identity of the larger group and as such group members face pressures from their peers (Fordham & Ogbu 1986:181):

“To behave in a manner defined as falling within a white cultural frame of reference is to ‘act white’ and is negatively sanctioned.”

Ferguson, Ludwig and Rich (2001) also noted an ‘oppositional culture’ in their ethnography of Shaker Heights. Instead of a low-income school in Washington D.C. (as chosen by Fordham & Ogbu 1986), Ferguson, Ludwig and Rich focused on a school in an upper-class suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. The Shaker Heights study was said to be set in a

community where both black and white were said to enjoy the advantages of a 'good neighbourhood' with 'good schooling', and yet, consistent with Ogbu's cultural argument, an 'anti-intellectual (oppositional) culture' was documented among the black group. Shaker Heights became synonymous with 'the burden of 'acting white'' (discussed further in section 2.8.2), and Ogbu also chose Shaker Heights for the site of his final book *Black American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Academic Disengagement* (Ogbu 2003).

Gibson (2005) identified four types of barriers that contributed to black students' academic disengagement in Ogbu's (2003) study: the 'feeling of not belonging' at school, a 'mistrust of teachers', 'peer influences' (that undermine academic striving), and what Ogbu referred to as 'missing connections'. In relation to the first barrier, black and white students at Shaker Heights were often assigned to different classes due to 'tracking' (streaming/setting). When high-achieving black students were assigned to higher-level classes they were often isolated and experienced a significant social distance between themselves and their white peers. Ogbu (2003) suggested that black students felt 'discomfort', 'intimidation' and 'inferior' in higher-level classes and argued that some black students enrolled in less challenging classes where they felt comfortable and shared a sense of belonging.

Ogbu's (2003) study also noted a 'general mistrust of teachers', with black students believing that their teachers did not understand black culture or community and did not care about them as individuals. Ogbu's (2003:53) recommendation was that black students should be less concerned:

"With how they are treated or represented in the curriculum and with whether schools and teachers 'care for them' [and be] more focused on the fact that their teachers were experts who had 'knowledge, skills and language' that [they] could impart to the students."

The third barrier 'peer influences' is discussed in greater detail in section 8.2.8. Briefly however, Ogbu (2003) suggested that for black students being 'smart' was to be

defined as 'acting white' and black students who acted white risked being teased and even ostracised by their peers. He also suggested that, students who engaged in this type of teasing were often those who were most at risk academically.

The final barrier identified by Gibson (2005) was 'missing connections'. Ogbu (2003) included a lack of 'adequate parental involvement' in schooling, a lack of 'good study skills', and a general lack of 'knowledge about how the education system works' i.e. a clear understanding of the connections between AP courses (advanced placement courses), grades and getting into selective colleges. He also suggested that black parents lacked 'good strategies for intervening' when a student came home with a poor report; rarely attended school meetings; were not involved in school activities; were too busy with jobs outside the home to give their children the "constant guidance and support" that they needed; and taught their children "abstract beliefs" about the value of schools but failed to model "concrete behaviours and attitudes that contribute to success in school" (Ogbu 2003: 147-148).

Ogbu's recommendation at the end of his final book (2003) was to encourage the black community to become more engaged in schooling and suggested that blacks need to change how they respond to their conditions: "The academic achievement gap is not likely to be closed by restructuring the educational system or by what the schools... can do for black students. Equally important [is] what the black community can do" (Ogbu 2003:274).

2.8.2 The Burden of 'Acting White'

Although they did not coin the term 'acting white' (its origins are obscure), it was Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) ethnographic study that did the most to bring 'the burden of 'acting white' to the attention of their fellow academics²⁵.

²⁵ Fordham widely criticises the use of 'acting white' rather than the full phrase "the burden of 'acting white'" as created from her ethnographic observations. Thus where this thesis uses 'acting white' it does so explicitly acknowledging the original intention – the burden of 'acting white' as imposed on black students within a white

For students in an earlier published study by McArdle & Young, acting white meant to “become more inhibited, more formal, or to ‘lack soul’” (McArdle & Young 1970:137) - noting here that academic achievement was *not* named as a marker of acting white. Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) ‘Capitol High’²⁶ study noted an oppositional culture at the school in which black youth dismissed academically oriented behaviours as being ‘white’. Ogbu believed that to be academically successful and accomplish certain goals in the U.S. means that one has to adopt the norms of white culture. Ogbu however asserted that it was possible for blacks to instrumentally adopt the norms of white culture without losing their black identity. To the extent that black students did not adopt the norms of white culture, Ogbu believed that the black students were contributors to their own academic shortcomings (see Cokely 2013). McWhorter (2000) made similar comments in his book *Losing the Race: Self Sabotage in Black America*, where he argued that the black students he taught did not have the ‘right attitudes’ and did not engage in ‘appropriate (synonymous with ‘white’) academic behaviours’ to be successful.

Some scholars have sought to associate ‘acting white’ with certain cultural forms i.e. tastes in music, sense of dress and linguistic codes (see Bergin & Cooks 2002; Carter 2005; Lundy 2003; Neal-Barnett 2001; Perry 2002; Tatum 1997; Tyson et al. 2005). Some of the behaviours charged with acting white identified in Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) study were: speaking standard English, listening to white music and white radio stations, going to the opera or ballet, going to a Rolling Stones concert, having cocktails or a cocktail party, going to a symphony orchestra concert, having a party with no music, listening to (European) classical music and putting on ‘airs’ (and graces). According to Fordham and Ogbu’s study, acting white can thus be defined as using language or ways of speaking; displaying attitudes, behaviours of preferences; or engaging in activities,

dominated institution in which black culture is marginalised and stigmatised and an alienating performance is the price of academic success (Fordham 2008).

²⁶ A pseudonym for a predominantly black high school in a low-income area of Washington, D.C.

that are considered to be white cultural norms (see also Bergin & Cooks 2002; McWhorter 2000; Perry 2002; Tatum 1997; Tyson et al. 2005).

Some have also conflated acting white with co-ethnic ridicule (see McWhorter 2000). According to the 'acting white' thesis, peer groups play a prominent role in a student's academic achievement. Fordham and Ogbu (1986:183) offered this characterisation of the peer group:

"At the social level, peer groups discourage their members from putting forth the time and effort required to do well in school and from adopting attitudes and standard practices that enhance academic success. They oppose adopting appropriate academic attitudes and behaviours because they are considered "white." Peer group pressures against academic striving take many forms, including labelling, exclusion from peer activities or ostracism, and physical assault."

Thus according to Fordham and Ogbu's characterisation, the achievement gaps reported in Chapter 1 are due in part to black peers' undermining and thwarting the academic efforts of others through negative peer pressure.

It has been also argued that the racial diversity of a school has a relationship with 'acting white'. Bergin & Cooks' (2002) study suggested that whether a school was predominantly black, predominantly white, or racially balanced, had an effect on a student's ethnic identity and need for racial solidarity. They argued that black students in predominantly white schools would be less likely to be accused of acting white, and that black students attending predominantly black schools were only at risk of being accused of acting white if their behaviour goes "beyond high achievement and shows 'proper speech'... 'white dress', or preference for other white things" (Bergin & Cooks 2002:131). Black students in racially diverse schools however were reported to be the most likely to be accused of acting white, because enrolment in advanced classes puts high-achieving black students in constant contact with white students and at the same time there is equally a large enough number of black students in mainstreamed classes who are in a position to comment on the 'supposed defection' to white identity. **RQ1** should therefore be amended to specifically situate the study in a racially diverse school

to maximise potential to explore a participant's ethnic identity and need for racial solidarity in school:

- **RQ1 - What is the quantitative manifestation of the achievement gap in one diverse high school? And what (if any) relationship does the gap have with race, gender, free/reduced lunch eligibility and enrolment in standard or accelerated curriculum classes?**

2.8.3 Research in Support of Ogbu's Frameworks

Authors such as Suskind (1994a, 1994b; see also Suskind 1999) have won a Pulitzer Prize (in 1995) for stories chronicling high-achieving black students, reporting findings similar to Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Majors and Billson (1992:1) claimed that "the American virtues of thrift, perseverance, and hard work" did not generate the same returns for blacks as for whites and so blacks tended to adopt a 'cool pose' through which they distanced themselves from 'uncool' activities such as 'studying' and 'relating positively to teachers'. Fischer et al. (1996) echoed Ogbu's work in assigning the underachievement of African Americans on standardised tests to 'ethnic status', rather than any 'biological factor' (as argued in Herrnstein & Murray 1994²⁷ for example). Like Ogbu, Fischer et al. (1996) argue that it is an involuntary minority's 'rational pessimism' that produces a resistance to schooling. Graham et al. (1998) investigated the achievement values of middle school students in two schools. Using peer nomination procedures to test (and ultimately support) Ogbu's theories, they found that girls of all ethnicities valued high-achieving classmates of the same gender, and white boys valued boys of the same ethnicity who were high achievers. Ethnic minority boys however, least valued high-achieving male students. Farkas et al. (2002) used the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) dataset to explore the evidence for an oppositional culture among black students. They found that males experienced more peer opposition

²⁷ Herrnstein and Murray's (1994) *The Bell Curve*, argued that the genetic make-up of an individual determined their intelligence and in turn their performance on IQ tests.

than females, and that blacks and Hispanics were subject to this phenomenon to a greater extent than whites. Steinberg et al.'s (1992) study also supported the notion of acting white suggesting the 'problem' of acting white was ultimately a dilemma in which a student would have to make a conscious choice between academic success and popularity (Steinberg 2002). Some authors supporting the acting white thesis have claimed that 'acting white' has a relationship with low popularity among co-ethnic peers i.e. when black students maintain high GPA's²⁸. Fryer and Levitt (2004) concluded that when a black student's GPAs rises above 3.2, their popularity falls precipitously; a response that was not noted among 'similarity situated' white students.

2.8.4 Research Disputing Ogbu's Frameworks

Erickson (1987) criticised Ogbu's claims, arguing that his oppositional framework did not account for the success of some individuals from 'domestic minorities'. Erickson also called into question the causal validity of Ogbu's work on the grounds that his evidence could only confirm correlation, *not* cause. Trueba (1988) also criticised Ogbu for his failure to explain why some minorities succeed and argued that his classification of minority groups exhibited an "overwhelming generalisation" (Trueba 1988: 276). Trueba also argued that Ogbu looked at "success" in absolute terms and did not take into account the relative success of minority groups.

O'Connor's (2002) study did highlight the varied nature of black responses to education, arguing that the work of Ogbu and his collaborators was too preoccupied with explaining academic failure and gave insufficient attention to students who were able to adapt to the 'white norms and expectations' of school; also drawing into question the assumption that those that succeed disaffiliate from their ethnic group. O'Connor's (2002) students were said to be high-achieving, expected to realise their ambitions, aspired to attend college and aimed to assume middle class professions. O'Connor

²⁸ Grade Point Average (GPA), see footnote 19 p20.

stressed that the black participants in his study did not operate within the context of 'acting white' but fully embraced black culture and articulated a sense of affiliation to that culture. Although the selective nature of O'Connor's sample did not permit generalisation, the key point was that the accounts of Fordham and Ogbu failed to recognise that black responses to 'white-dominant' education were not uniform (O'Connor 2002).

Bergin and Cooks' (2002) study posed the question: 'Did students report avoiding academic achievement in order to avoid appearing to act white?' Their findings suggested that black respondents did not report avoiding academic achievement in order to avoid accusations of acting white. It is worth however noting, that students in their study had a mean GPA of 3.3 and were considered high achieving black (and Mexican) students. Tyson et al. (2005) also noted that although there was 'some evidence' of the acting white hypothesis at the research site, they argued that any resulting co-ethnic-ridicule (accusations of acting white) *did not* deter high achieving black students from enrolling in advanced courses (college preparatory or AP classes) or striving for academic success (Tyson et al. 2005; O'Connor 2002).

Cook and Ludwig (1998) utilised data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) to explore the validity of Ogbu's oppositional theory and concluded that blacks did *not* exhibit greater alienation than whites, suggesting their desire to stay on in education was high, their drop-out rates low, their effort levels impressive and parental involvement high. They also suggested that high-achieving blacks were in fact more popular than low-achieving blacks and as such concluded there were no 'social costs' for supposedly acting white. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998, see also Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell 2002; Farkas et al. 2002; Fryer 2006; Massey et al. 2002) also utilised the NLES data. Focusing on African American, Asian American and non-Hispanic white students in order to represent involuntary, immigrant and dominant groups, they found that black students expressed greater optimism about their futures

and viewed education as more important and exhibited more pro-school attitudes than their peers. Additionally, rather than academic success being equated with unpopularity, black students were found to be especially popular when they were viewed as a 'good student' (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey 1998).

Jaynes and Williams (1989) pointed to Ogbu's (2003) failure to carry out comparative research on white students, suggesting that unless he could establish whether the educational aspirations of black students were developed within a significantly more negative or uncertain framework than that of whites, his research could not be validated (see also MacLeod 1995). Also unconvinced, Bobbit-Zeher's (2004) study contested Ogbu's assumption that "white and black classes are not too dissimilar" (Ogbu 2003:36) in Shaker Heights, highlighting additional information from the U.S. Census Bureau (Bobbit-Zeher 2004:415):

"In 2000, the median value of a home in the city of Shaker Heights was \$238,000 for white homeowners and \$131,300 for black homeowners... The U.S. Census Bureau also showed that 32.6% of black households and 58% of the white households in Shaker Heights had an average annual family income of \$50,000-\$100,000."

Bobbit-Zeher concluding that it is difficult to know what the black-white achievement gap or the reported oppositional behaviours would have looked like if blacks and whites were truly confronted with comparable living conditions (Bobbit-Zeher 2004; see also Morgan & Metha 2004).

'Oppositional Culture Theory' and 'Acting White' remain two of the most theoretically provocative explanations for racial/ethnic differences in school performance today and as such, an important question for this study is therefore:

- **RQ5 - What evidence is there of an oppositional culture to that of the dominant culture in the school? And can black students be found to be 'acting white'?**

2.9 CRITIQUE OF OPPOSITIONAL CULTURE THEORY AND “ACTING WHITE”

Whilst ‘Oppositional Culture Theory and the Burden of Acting White are theoretically provocative, the conceptual appeal is that both acknowledge the historical significance of slavery and rebuff damaging genetic explanations for the achievement gaps between black and white students (i.e. Herrnstein & Murray 1994). The danger of oppositional culture theory is however that it amounts to deficit thinking. Deficit theories assume that the people in question have problems to be solved, drawing correlations between the levels of educational achievement and the amount of motivation of the people involved and their culture. From a CRT perspective, Ogbu’s theory suggests that there is a deficiency in African American culture and that black students needs to be altered in some way (a culture of poverty argument, see Lundy 2003).

Another damaging criticism is that black culture itself is characterised through atypical negative (‘oppositional’) behaviour (see Pierre 2004), leaving white identity to go unproblematised as the ‘correct’ identity to adopt and aspire towards in school and beyond. In addition, Lundy (2003) argues that the drive to locate oppositional culture among underachieving black students has led to absurd applications. For example, Solomon’s (1992) ethnography of ‘black resistance’ in a Canadian high school labelled the language (Jamaican) spoken by participants, the music (“roots music”), the dress style (dreadlocks and the preference for the colours black, red and green) and even the dancing (“wall dancing”) as oppositional (Lundy 2003). It can therefore be argued that the marginalising nature of Eurocentric analysis does not warrant a characterisation of black underperformance as a response to the fear of acting white or a personal deficiency; or indeed the over-performance of black students as being an inherently ‘white’ behaviour.

In addition, whilst it is obviously incorrect to contend that no African American child has been teased for acting white, the phenomenon is invariably far more complex

and nuanced than a simple indictment of academic performance. It is questionable whether in succumbing to Eurocentric analysis previous scholars have been seduced by oversimplistic explanations to understand complex behavioural and cultural phenomena.

Perhaps the biggest danger of all is that Ogbu's frameworks homogenises black culture and posits the agency of black people to be an effect of their marginalised social positions rather than as a result of their own agency (see Akom 2008; Asante 1998; Nobles 2006). In attempting to understand and explain black student underachievement, Ogbu's frameworks have failed to interrogate the possibility that his observation of the rejection of so-called white attitudes and behaviours may have been part of a larger movement of black agency that is demanding of more culturally appropriate and relevant education.

Shujaa (2003:245) defined schooling as a "process intended to perpetuate and maintain society's existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements." Perhaps the black students in Ogbu's studies were not rejecting academic success, but rather rejecting white cultural hegemony in education. Maybe they were challenging, in the most fundamental of ways, the Eurocentric bias in schooling and the determination of academic success. A vital perspective to be further explored in this study is whether black students appear oppositional because they are not interested in participating in, and perpetuating, systems that reinforce the white status quo. This important question is returned to in Chapter 3.

2.10 IN SUM

As seen in this chapter, although often well-meaning, there is much ethnography on young black students that misrepresent black reality and cultural expression. Arguing

that it is an affinity for the black community and its culture is what prevents young black people from achieving success on par with their white counterparts in schools, places most authors squarely in the camp of conservative explanations for the black-white achievement gap. These conservative explanations suggest the root of the inequalities outlined in Chapter 1 lie in the deviant 'oppositional' and 'self-sabotaging' behaviours of the black community, which can *only* be remedied by acquiring the habits, norms and values of white America.

Critical Race Theory therefore offers a distinctive and essential way of conceptualising the role of racism in education (Gillborn 2005; Pérez-Huber 2008) and a lens in which scholars can expose, deconstruct, challenge and disrupt the racial inequalities in schooling documented in this and the previous chapter (Rollock & Gillborn 2011). Additionally, Critical Whiteness Studies also provide new ways of thinking about differential educational achievement between the black and white groups by focusing attention on institutional racism in schools and the ways in which white people (both students and teachers) use white racial preferences; examining how power is implicated in the maintenance of white privilege.

2.10.1 Interim Research Questions

Below are the proposed research questions thus far, as derived from the literature presented in this chapter:

- RQ1 – What is the quantitative manifestation of the achievement gap in one diverse high school? And if present, what relationship does the 'gap' have with race, gender, free/reduced lunch eligibility and enrolment in standard or accelerated curriculum classes?
- RQ2 – To what extent are the participants aware of achievement gaps (if any) between white and black students at the school? And, what are their understandings and experiences of the 'gaps'?

- RQ3 – Who (if any) are the children ‘left behind’ by the No Child Left Behind legislation and its high-stakes standardised testing requirements? And, who are the children that have benefitted most from the legislation?
- RQ4 – To what extent were the participants aware of ‘whiteness’? And, how were the contours of whiteness understood and/or identified by the participants?
- RQ5 – What evidence is there of an oppositional culture to that of the dominant culture at the school? And can black students be found to be ‘acting white’?

CHAPTER THREE

Race & the Multicultural Curriculum

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds (Abbott 2014). Generally speaking, multicultural education is predicated on the principle of educational equity for all students regardless of culture and it strives to remove barriers to educational opportunities and success for students from different cultural backgrounds (Abbott 2014).

This chapter seeks to examine the literature pertaining to the curricular home for race and racial equality – the Social Studies curriculum – paying particular attention to various approaches to multicultural education found within the classroom and academy. Multicultural education is often cited as a solution that enables teachers to improve minority students' education and achievement and therefore reduce the achievement gap outlined in the previous chapter. This chapter will also look to a number of critical and radical alternatives to traditional forms of multicultural education – anti-racist education, critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism and Afrocentric pedagogy – which explicitly seek to critically examine and challenge racism in schooling.

3.2 CURRICULUM INTERVENTION

Schools, as argued in the previous chapter, are one of the central institutions involved in the drawing and redrawing of racial lines. Not only are many lessons learned and taught in the actual curriculum, but schools (and school personnel) also serve as a source of racial information; a location (and means) for interracial interaction; and as a means of both affirmation of, and challenge to, previous racial attitudes and understandings. Although not the only institutions concerned, they are critically involved in framing ideas about race during formative years (Fine et al. 1997).

Students come to school with many stereotypes, misconceptions and negative attitudes towards outside racial, ethnic and social class groups (Stephan & Stephan 2004). For example, Wessler and De Andrade (2006) provide revealing and disturbing evidence of the kind of racial, religious, and sexual epithets that students use in school. Without curriculum intervention, the racial attitudes and behaviours of students become more negative and harder to change, as they age (Banks 1994a; see also Stephan & Vogt 2004). It is therefore an important aim of schools to provide students with experiences and materials that will help them develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards individuals from different racial, ethnic, language and social-class groups (Banks 2006). Schools are arguably one of the few places where racial understandings can be successfully challenged (Lewis 2001, 2003).

3.3 THE CURRICULAR HOME FOR RACE – SOCIAL STUDIES

In recent years, debates over ensuring an inclusive curriculum that embodies the presence of diverse groups have become increasingly contentious (Ang 2010; Apple 1993; Banks 1995; Binder 2002; Maylor et al. 2007; McLaren 1997; Sleeter 1995; Sleeter

& McLaren 1995). Education systems are, like so many public institutions on both sides of the Atlantic, formally committed to equality of opportunity and multiculturalism. But in practice, as we have seen in the previous chapter, schools continue to be a major producer of racial inequity (Gillborn 2006).

One of the most prominent and historic goals of American schooling has been to prepare its students to become ‘future citizens’ (Hahn & Torney-Purta 1999). The teaching of skills needed to effectively participate in a democracy has historically been viewed as a major responsibility of U.S. schools (Ochoa-Becker et al. 2001). Social Studies as a content area, was developed for the express purpose of teaching citizenship education (Brophy 1990). Many scholars and educators view the social studies curriculum as a potential vehicle for social change and as a space in which students can learn the knowledge and tools they need to be effective and critical citizens (Adler 2001; Banks 1997; Cherryholmes 1996; Evans 1996; Hursh & Ross 2000; Marker & Mehlinger 1992; Saxe 1992; Thornton 1994).

In the U.S. social studies began to appear sporadically as a separate subject around 1830 (Nelson 2001). Popular literature often portrays the term social studies as emerging from a relatively progressive *Report of the Committee on Social Studies of the National Education Association Commission* published in 1916 (See Murry 1994²⁹; see also Hertzberg 1982; Lybarger 1991). The NEA report established “social studies as a content area and social education as its primary purpose” (Brophy 1990:356); calling for good citizenship within schools’ mission of social efficacy. The NEA report also asserts that social studies should be informed by several social science disciplines in addition to history (Murry 1994). The curriculum proposed in 1916 remains substantially in use today (i.e. National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS]), with history continuing as the dominant subject studied in schools and citizenship education

²⁹ Saxe 1992 notes that ‘social studies’ was a term used in schools in England, by 1884.

the primary purpose for teaching it. According to Parker (2005), citizenship education is the 'cornerstone' of the social studies curriculum in the U.S.

In the UK, Citizenship Education offers a curricular space for the discussion of social and moral issues that are too general or too controversial for treatment within other subject specialisms to include race, racism and racial inequality (Osler 1999). Whilst there is little disagreement that citizenship education (or the like) *can* provide part of the context for challenging racism (Maylor et al. 2007), with respect to challenging institutional racism specifically, citizenship education has great potential to be deeply misconceived. For example, Gillborn (2006) argues that citizenship education has historically been used as a force of stability and control (a sentiment that can arguably be applied to both sides of the Atlantic, see Chikwe 2012). Where issues of racism and inequality are discussed (if at all), Gillborn asserts it is done so in a context that reduces racism to issues of "personal prejudice", adopting a "moralising tone that seeks to ensure compliance and passivity... [in which] resistance and protest must be held within the bounds of accepted 'democratic' principles" i.e. parliamentary elections (Gillborn 2006:11). Gillborn contends that although there remains some opportunity for challenging racism, overall citizenship education reforms remain 'haphazard' and 'insufficient' as a response to the institutional racism and racial inequalities such as those identified in Chapter 1 (Gillborn 2006).

The dominant manifestations of citizenship education in practice today are said to reinforce the status quo by "binding students to a superficial and sanitised version of pluralism that is long on duties and responsibilities, but short on popular struggles against race inequality" (Gillborn 2006:13). An initial question drawn from the literature presented in this chapter may therefore read:

- **RQ6 – What roles do teachers see for schools in a multicultural society?**

An initial obstacle to implementing any multicultural education lies with teachers and educators themselves, with many unconvinced of its worth or value (Gay 2004). As

much of the literature on whiteness in the previous chapter has pointed out, white individuals largely lack an understanding of their own roles as racial actors and how they can act as roadblocks to racial justice (Fine et al. 1997). This sentiment can be applied to the large majority of the teaching population in the U.S. Although the student population is increasingly diverse³⁰, the teaching population is still largely white and middle class. In 2010-11, the year the ethnographic fieldwork of this thesis took place, 84% of the U.S. teaching force were classified as white (non-Hispanic) with 7% classed as Black, 6% as Hispanic, and 4% as 'Other'³¹. Of the 7% of teachers classified as Black, only 10% of those were male (see Feistritzer 2011).

Issues of race, racism and structural inequality are assumed by many teachers to be 'non-issues' in the post-racial era (Jenks et al. 2001). For example, in suburban schools, in which the population is largely white and middle-class, multicultural education is often viewed as 'unnecessary' (Jenks et al. 2001). The assumption that multicultural education is only important if the school district's population is itself diverse represents a misunderstanding of the importance of providing *all* students (especially those who have been raised in a Eurocentric³² (white-hegemonic) school system) with the understandings and competencies necessary to contribute to achieving the goal of a democratic and multicultural society (Jenks et al. 2001).

Delpit (1995) names the cultural gap between students and teachers as the "futures greatest [educational] challenge" (Delpit 1995:167). Ladson-Billings (1999) & Sleeter (2001) not only agree with Delpit but also warn that the cultural gap is in fact still growing, suggesting newly qualified teachers come to the classroom with little to no cross-cultural experience or knowledge and with only limited visions of what teaching a diverse student body entails. Jordan-Irvine's (2003) study of white teachers found that

³⁰ In California, Florida, and Texas, white (non-Hispanic/Latino(a) students have become less than 50% of the total student population (see Darling-Hammond, 2004).

³¹ But this figure has dropped from 91% white teaching force in 1986.

³² 'Eurocentricity' is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

the overwhelming majority were not at levels of 'multicultural awareness' needed to work with diverse populations and were not competent in cross-cultural practice or in understanding (or acknowledging) structural inequities (see also Sleeter 2001). Grant et al. (2004) found that the majority of white teachers in their study even believed that racism was the 'victim's fault' and that most white teachers, upon viewing acts of racism, did not intervene.

Although some recommend recruiting more teachers of colour to remedy the black-white achievement gap and racial inequality more broadly (i.e. National Collaborative on Diversity 2004; Jordan-Irvine 2003), many more suggest that training teachers on multicultural education theory can alleviate the cultural gap between students and teachers (Banks 2004a, 2004b; Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 2004; Sleeter 2001). In addition, teaching multicultural education to students during compulsory and post compulsory schooling, has regularly been touted as the best educational means of addressing (and redressing) long-standing patterns of differential achievement for minority students (May 1998). It is to multicultural education - its proponents and opponents - that this chapter now turns.

3.4 MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Today in the U.S., as well as elsewhere, it is almost impossible to walk into a school and find no representations of multiculturalism and celebrations of diversity. In 'multicultural America' (Ladson-Billings 2003), these representations often take the form of characters in reading books, school corridor and classroom displays and within assembly programmes for example. At secondary level, there are often an array of courses (typically electives) and clubs that acknowledge the cultural combinations of the groups often ignored by the formal school curriculum.

Multicultural education began as a movement to reform various school curricular to better reflect the diverse experiences of all races, ethnicities, nations, genders, and religions (Good 2009). James Banks, one of the earliest scholars of multicultural education, defines the goal of multicultural education as helping students “develop cross-cultural competency within the American national culture, within their own subculture and within and across different sub-societies and cultures” (Banks 1994:9).

Beginning with African American scholarship of the late 19th century, multicultural education progressed into the intercultural movement of the 1930's-1950's and became popular during the civil rights era of the 1960-70's (Banks 2004a; Sleeter 1996). Scholars, including James Banks, Gwendolyn Baker, Carl Grant and Geneva Gay, built on ethnic studies³³ to create rubrics for curriculum designers and teachers, who then took on the task of aligning school curricula with emerging scholarly evidence about the histories, cultures, lives and experiences of various people. Collectively, their work challenged traditional perceptions of America as a ‘white’ country (Ladson-Billings 2003).

Proponents of multiculturalism have argued that pluralism can accomplish all manner of things. A central claim has been that multicultural education can foster great “cultural integration, interchange and harmony”, both in schools and beyond (May 1999:1). Although authors have come to a broad consensus regarding major principles, concepts and directions, multicultural education is still an eclectic field. Scholars such as Geneva Gay have consistently drawn reference to the “shifting contours of multicultural education” (Gay 2004:193). Whilst it is impossible to rehearse the voluminous ranges of definitions of multicultural education since the civil rights movement in this chapter, it is important to point out, however briefly, three major definitions.

³³ See scholars including - Carlos Cortes, Jack Forbes, Asa Hilliard, Barbara Sizemore

3.4.1 Banks' Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education

James A. Banks, who is widely considered a leading scholar in the field, has advanced a definition of multicultural education which notes it as a broad concept extrapolated on five dimensions (see Banks 1979, 1991, 2004a, 2006) – 'content integration', 'knowledge construction process', 'prejudice reduction', 'equity pedagogy' and 'empowering school culture/social structure'³⁴. 'Content integration' deals with the infusion of various cultures, ethnicities, and other identities to be represented in the curriculum. The 'knowledge construction process' involves students critiquing the social positioning of groups through the ways that knowledge is presented e.g. scientific racism or the Eurocentric 'discovery' of America. 'Prejudice reduction' describes lessons and activities that teachers implement to assert positive images of ethnic groups and improve intergroup relations. 'Equity pedagogy' concerns modifying teaching styles and approaches with the intent of facilitating academic achievement for all students. 'Empowering school culture/social structure' describes the examination of the school culture and organisation by all members of school staff with the intent to restructure institutional practices to create access for all groups (Banks 2004a).

3.4.2 Nieto's Seven Characteristics of Multicultural Education

Another leading scholar, Sonia Nieto, offered a definition in 1992 that continues to influence discourse in the field today (Nieto 1992, 2000, 2004). Nieto focuses on seven characteristics of multicultural education – 'anti-racist', 'basic', 'important for all students', 'pervasive nature', 'education for social justice', 'multicultural education as a process' and 'critical pedagogy'.

³⁴ Multicultural education research and practitioners have largely focused on Banks' first four dimensions; See for example - investigating curriculum issues (Gay 1994), delineating culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 1995; Gay 2000), analysing the knowledge construction process (Banks 1996), and synthesising the research on prejudice reduction techniques and programs (Stephan 1999).

'Anti-racist' education makes anti-discrimination explicit in the curriculum and teaches students skills to combat racism and other forms of oppression. 'Basic education' advances the basic right of all students to engage in core academics and arts; addressing the urgent need for students to develop social and intellectual skills to expand understanding in a diverse society. 'Important for all students', challenges the commonly held misunderstanding that multicultural education is only for students of colour, multilingual students, or special interest groups. The 'pervasive nature' of multicultural education emphasises an approach that permeates the entire educational experience, including school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationships. In 'education for social justice', teachers and students put their learning into action and learn that they have the power to engender changes in society. 'Multicultural education as a process' highlights the ongoing development of individuals, and educational institutions. It also points to the intangibles of multicultural education that are less recognisable than specific curriculum content, such as expectations of student achievement, learning environments, student learning preferences, and cultural variables that influence the educational experience. 'Critical pedagogy'³⁵ draws upon experiences of students through their cultural, linguistic, familial, academic, artistic and other forms of knowledge. It also takes students beyond their own experiences and enables them to understand perspectives with which they may disagree, as well as to think critically about multiple viewpoints, leading to praxis or reflection combined with action.

³⁵ Nieto's emphasis on critical pedagogy draws on the work of Freire ([1970] 2000), linking multicultural education with wider issues of power, including socioeconomic and political equality, in what May calls 'critical multiculturalism' (May 1999). Critical pedagogy and critical multiculturalism are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

3.4.3 Sleeter & Grant's Five Approaches to Multicultural Education

Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant connect the role of sociopolitical power to define multicultural education. Sleeter and Grant (1987) provide an extensive review of the literature on multicultural education and outline five approaches to multicultural education: 'teaching the exceptional and culturally different', 'human relations', 'single group studies', 'self-reflexivity (dubbed multicultural education)', 'education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist'.

The goal of 'teaching the exceptional and culturally different' is to equip students with the academic skills, concepts, and values to function in American society's institutions and culture. 'Human relations' consist of developing positive relationships among diverse groups and individuals to combat stereotyping and promote unity. The goal of the 'single-group studies' approach is to engage in an in-depth comprehensive study that moves specific groups from the margins by providing information about the group's history (experiences with oppression and resistance to oppression), with the aim of to reducing stratification and creating greater access to power. 'Self-reflexivity dubbed multicultural education's approach stresses "the importance of cultural diversity, alternative life styles, native cultures, universal human rights, social justice, equal opportunity [in terms of actual outcomes from social institutions] and equal distribution of power among groups" (Leistyna 2002:12). Drawing on Brameld's 'Reconstructionism' (Brameld 1956; Kridel 2006), Sleeter and Grant's final approach - 'education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist' - describes a complete redesign of an educational program. Such a redesign recommends addressing issues and concerns that affect students of diverse groups, encouraging students to take an active stance in challenging the status quo and calling on students to collectively speak out and effect change by joining with other groups in examining common or related concerns (Sleeter & Grant 1987, 1998).

3.5 A CRITIQUE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Traditionally directed at improving the schooling experiences of students of colour, multicultural education is not an uncontested concept (see McCarthy 1995; Rezai-Rashti 1995; Sleeter & Grant 1987). Educationally, the concept 'multicultural' pulls in two directions, one toward a celebration of diversity and individuality and the other toward the creation of a national curriculum that is paradoxically both pluralistic yet culturally unifying. Multiculturalism has typically been focused on either teaching the 'culturally different' to assimilate into the mainstream, or focusing on increasing the sensitivity of the dominant group in order to help individuals get along (Rezai-Rashti 1995; Sleeter & Grant 1987).

The literature on multicultural education generally divides itself into three theoretical frameworks: conservative (sometimes referred to as corporate), liberal and critical (see McLaren 1994; Webster 1997). Perry (2002) however argues there are only two types of multicultural practices present in schools - conservative and liberal multiculturalism. McLaren (1994) further contends that these forms of multiculturalism have moved the concept away from the ideals of liberation and social justice proposed by Banks. It should be stressed that the categories 'conservative' and 'liberal', as utilised in the subsequent sections of this chapter, are not intended to serve as essentialised or fixed categories, but utilised only as categories in which to discuss the range of thought and practice evident in schools and society more broadly, today.

3.5.1 Conservative Multiculturalism

In conservative multiculturalism, schools assimilate students into the mainstream culture and its attending values, mores and norms. Frequently utilising language such as 'success for all', 'inclusion', 'empowerment' and 'equity', conservative multiculturalists do so within the context of an assimilatory educational process in which 'differences' are

expected to largely melt away. The conservative agenda is typified by a commitment to academic standards for *all* students and the belief that cultural differences need not play a significant role in educational achievement (or underachievement). Differences between students are therefore recognised *only* with the intent of assisting minority students to conform to Eurocentric schooling norms (Jenks et al. 2001).

In a conservative multicultural classroom, the experiences of specific cultures are often marginalised, ignored or even excluded (Kozol 1991). Like King's (2001) description of 'marginalising knowledge', conservative multiculturalism is a "form of curriculum transformation that can include selected multicultural curriculum content [which can] simultaneously distort the historical and social reality that people actually experienced" (King 2001:274). So, even though students see representations of various groups in curricular texts for example, *how* people and groups are represented may be conservative or marginalising. Ladson Billings (2005) illustrates frequently used textbook strategies for distorting and marginalising knowledge, suggesting that many textbooks place information about racially and ethnically subordinated people in 'special features' while the main text (which carries the dominant discourse) remains 'uninterrupted' and 'undisturbed' by multicultural information about the culturally different (Ladson Billings 2005:53). By ignoring the importance of difference in favour of cultural hegemony, conservative multiculturalism posits "white [as an] invisible norm by which other ethnicities are judged" (McLaren 1994:49).

In addition to reinforcing the hegemony of whiteness, conservative multiculturalism simultaneously avoids a critical analysis of institutional forms of racism. Platt (1992) argues that conservative forms of multiculturalism in schools, present race in ahistorical, universal terms, devoid of any economic or class analysis. Hence, most multicultural programs do not link racism to economic injustices which foster amongst modern students the false notion that racism can be overcome without any structural alteration. This in turn implies that minority groups simply need to "pull

themselves up by their bootstraps” (Jenks et al. 2001:91). In this case, social mobility - leading to greater equality - can only come from assimilation into the mainstream, which requires the elimination of differences or deficits in knowledge, skills and values, deemed barriers to the acquisition of better paying jobs. The teacher’s job in conservative multiculturalism is to bridge the gaps that exist between mainstream culture and that of the ‘culturally different’ (see Grant & Sleeter 1998).

Many elementary and secondary school teachers in the U.S. support the conservative approach, believing that rapid assimilation into the mainstream culture is in the best interests of minority students (Jordan-Irvine 2003). The argument that a conservative multiculturalist approach is in the best interest of the minority children can at times, deceptively, appear enlightened. The conservative multiculturalist’s message, like that of Glazer (1997), is that we are all multiculturalists. Harvard Sociologist Nathan Glazer named his book *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* because in his opinion “we all now accept a greater degree of attention to minorities and women and their role in American history and social studies and literature in schools” (Glazer 1997:13-14).

As a leading CRT scholar, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2003) argues that conservative multiculturalism is a dominant strategy for disavowing racism and prejudice, without conceding any of the power or privilege that dominant classes enjoy. Conservative multiculturalism therefore has a veneer of diversity without any real commitment to social justice or structural change (Ladson-Billings 2003). In many ways, conservative multiculturalism is a contradiction in terms, especially since its goal is, in effect, ‘uniculturalism’.

3.5.2 Liberal Multiculturalism

The liberal approach to multicultural education emphasises the need for diversity and cultural pluralism and the acceptance and celebration of difference. Equity and excellence in schooling are therefore achieved through “acceptance, tolerance and

understanding” (Banks 1994). Liberal multicultural education and its practitioners see the root of cultural or ethnic conflict in schools as a misunderstanding of differences, rather than inequitable power relations. In U.S. schools, the liberal multicultural agenda is most apparent in curriculum content such as African-American History Month and the celebration of different world cultures (Jenks et al. 2001).

The teacher’s role in liberal multiculturalism is to assist the ‘culturally different’ to live together harmoniously. Different groups are therefore studied with the intent of establishing acceptance, mutual respect, and friendships amongst members. Focus upon cultural differences, repression and struggle against great odds typifies the liberal multicultural education approach, complemented by the celebration of the uniqueness of individual characters (Jenks et al. 2001).

Liberal multiculturalism attempts to link unity with diversity. For example, Guttman (2004) argues that “individuals should be treated, and treat one another, as equal citizens, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity... or religion” (Guttman 2004:409). Culture - often equated to, or merged with, ethnicity - is therefore seen as a ‘characteristic’ of individuals, and as a set of stable practices that can be described and taught (see Soudien 2001). Rather than ignoring differences (the conservative approach), liberal multicultural educationalists actively teach tolerance and an understanding of “the role that cultural differences have played in shaping society” (Kirmani 2008:410; see also Soudien 2001).

This type of multiculturalism has been likened to a type of “cultural tourism” (Perry 2002:196) and scholars warn that such ‘tourism’ has great potential to exoticise the other (McLaren 1994). Liberal multiculturalism is arguably the most prevalent version of multiculturalism in social studies today (Nylund 2006). Although humanistic and progressive in intent, liberal multiculturalism reifies minority groups into “tightly bound fictive identities that reproduce notions of inherent, durable, and unbridgeable differences between people” (Perry 2002:197). Grant and Sleeter point out that liberal

approaches promote simplistic conceptions of culture and identity (Grant & Sleeter 1998).

Liberal multiculturalism also masks the conflicts and contradictions inherent in society, ignoring what at times seem like irreconcilable differences revolving around race, class and ethnicity. In addition, framing everyone as 'equal' citizens directs attention away from the material inequalities identified in the opening chapter of this thesis (Guttmann 2004; May 2010). Moreover, under liberal multiculturalism, insufficient consideration is given to power constructs and 'official' knowledge, which stand in the way of achieving equity and excellence by denying political power. Grant and Sleeter (1998) assert that the liberal approach detrimentally includes only a limited analysis (if at all) of why inequalities exist in the first place. A focus on 'getting to know each other' all too often evades a critical examination of the root causes of racism and racial inequality. Rather than barriers to equality of opportunity being dealt with as part of a potentially transformative curriculum, liberal multiculturalism's emphasis is primarily on humanistic affirmation of democratic ideals and the naïve belief that a curriculum committed to such ideals will bring about change.

In King's (2001) analysis, liberal multiculturalism may be thought of as "expanding knowledge", representing a kind of curriculum transformation. But, the "rotation in the perspective of the subject [expands multicultural]... knowledge without fundamentally changing the norm of middle-classness," rarely calling into question the way white middle-class norms, prevail (King 2001:275). The liberal multicultural education approach thus pays no attention to the role of the dominant culture in preventing equality and excellence for all (Jenks et al. 2001). Honouring 'differences' in such an essentialist way leaves whiteness as the "unmarked norm against which other racial and ethnic groups are compared" (Perry 2002:197).

Scholars have noted that we know very little about the multicultural social studies curriculum as enacted in schools and classrooms (Gay 2004). An important addition to the previously stated RQ6 should therefore be:

- **RQ6 What role do social studies teachers see for schools in a multicultural society and what versions of multicultural education are being enacted in their classrooms?**

3.6 RADICAL APPROACHES - EDUCATING ABOUT RACE AND RACIAL INEQUALITY

McCarthy (1988) suggests traditional manifestations of multiculturalism in schools were limited in their ability to create long lasting substantive social change. From McCarthy's perspective, multicultural education represents a "curricular truce" that was designed to pacify the insurgent demands of African Americans (and other minority groups) during the 1960s and 1970s (McCarthy 1988:267). McLaren (1994) therefore calls for a restructuring of the social order through a radical approach to schooling.

As seen above, multicultural education as taught in schools tends to de-politicise questions of race and racism. Contemporary manifestations of multicultural education in the classroom tend to foster a celebration of difference, tolerance, understanding, an acceptance of diversity and empathy for minorities (Dei & Calliste 2000), whilst simultaneously perpetuating white dominance (Bedard 2000). The next section of this study explores other curricular approaches that seek explicitly to challenge white dominance, white cultural norms and racism: anti-racist education, critical pedagogy and critical multiculturalism.

3.6.1 Anti-Racist Education

In a series of provocative and thoughtful publications, proponents of anti-racist education have developed a critical perspective of schooling within the broader

framework of contemporary 'race relations'; advocating a form of political education which directly addresses the impact of racism on students lives (see Brandt 1986; Gillborn 1990, 1995; Troyna 1987, 1993; Troyna & Hatcher 1992 for example). Beginning from the premise that racism exists, anti-racist education includes a specific focus on systemic racism; a "structural analysis, [which] emphasises racist economic, political and cultural systems and [explores] how minority groups can challenge domination" (Hladki 1995:45). Anti racism shifts the talk away from "tolerance of diversity to the pointed notion of difference and power" (Dei & Calliste 2000:21). Whilst British commentators have dominated the anti-racist movement (see Brandt 1986; Troyna 1987, 1993 for example), it has also been articulated in the U.S. by the likes of Apple (1986, 1996), Goldberg (1994), McCarthy (1990), McCarthy and Crichlow (1993), Nieto (1992), Perry & Fraser (1993) and Sleeter & Grant (1998) ³⁶.

British anti-racist scholars were among the first to criticise and dismiss the culturalist emphases of multicultural education on offer in schools as both naïve and actively counterproductive to its promoted social justice aims (Lee 2009). Critics, notably the late Barry Troyna, have argued that multiculturalism is an irredeemably 'deracialised' discourse of schooling; an educational approach which reifies culture and cultural difference and yet fails to address the central issue of racism within society (Troyna 1987). Anti-racists have argued that multicultural education had failed to ameliorate, let alone contest, the wider patterns of racial discrimination and disadvantage faced by minority students. Anti-racist scholars have however made this their central concern (May 1999). Anti-racists charge multiculturalists with an over-optimistic view of the impact of the multicultural curriculum, on the social and economic futures of minority students as outlined in the previous two chapters.

³⁶ See also the work of Dei (1996) and Ng (1993, 1995) in Canada and Rizvi (1991, 1993) in Australia

Anti-racist scholars confront systemic racism directly and explore the organisational structures of institutions' policies and practices, which, directly or indirectly, operate to sustain the advantages of people of certain social races (Henry et al 2000). As defined by Lee (2009:10), anti-racist education is a:

“Perspective that... addresses the histories and experiences of people who have been left out of the curriculum [helping individuals] deal equitably with the cultural and racial differences that you find in the human family [by exploring] explanations for why things are the way they are in terms of power relationships [and] equality issues.”

Anti-racist educationalists assist students in acknowledging race as a central axis of power and equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to challenge racism and discrimination.

Starting with race, whiteness and white privilege, in the perpetuation of racist discourses and practices, anti-racist educators critique the construct of whiteness, specifically the practices and ideas that establish and promote white hegemony over others (Dei 1996; Epstein 1993; Manglitz 2003; Sleeter 1995). Anti-racist educators recognise the intersecting forms of inequality and racism's role in the interlocking system of social oppression in the U.S. (Dei 1996:25). Proponents of anti-racist education (e.g. Lee 2009) stress that not taking anti-racist education seriously is to actively promote a mono-cultural or racist education. That said, scholars such as Carrington & Bonnett (1997) warn that the boundaries between antiracist education and multicultural education are clearer at the level of rhetoric than that of pedagogical practice.

Anti-racist education, like conservative and liberal multiculturalism, is not without its critics. The inevitable hostility of the 'Right' to antiracist principles and the privileging of racism, over other forms of inequity, have resulted in a preoccupation with 'colour racism'. Critics suggest that anti-racist pedagogy subsumes other factors such as class, religion and gender, and fails to adequately address postmodern accounts of identity as multiple, contingent and subject to rapid change (see Gilroy 1992; Hall 1992).

The monistic conception of black-white relations adopted by many anti-racists is also said to have proved inadequate in addressing new ‘multiple racisms’ and the historical and contextual dimensions that underpin them (see McLaren & Torres 1999; Rattansi 1992).

3.6.2 Critical Pedagogy

Democracy and freedom from oppression are the cornerstones of critical pedagogy (Hinde 2008). Critical pedagogy examines the role that educational institutions play in sustaining social stratification and the potential to bring about change via schooling. McLaren (2000) defines critical pedagogy as a “way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationships among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge [and] the institutional structures of the school” (McLaren 2000:345). Critical pedagogy theorists argue that the gap between theory and practice is a major weakness of both multicultural and anti-racist education and thus seek specifically to offer praxis (see Brown & Kysilka 1994; Cole 1986; May 1994a, 1994b; Wihelm 1994).

Critical pedagogy, like anti-racist education, views education as political (Kirova 2008). Freire (1985) highlights the role of schools in helping to create and re-create the existing culture, beliefs and practices, suggesting that there is no such thing as an impartial educational process. For example Freire ([1970] 2000:34) suggested:

“Education... either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes ‘the practice of freedom’ the means by which [individuals] deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

Dewey ([1938] 1997) more specifically explored how the structures within schools (i.e. the subject matter and organisation) contribute to a hegemonic society, acknowledging that the education system did not serve the interests of minority groups. As Apple argues, education is not a “neutral enterprise [as] schools act as agents of cultural and ideological hegemony, [and] of selective tradition and cultural incorporation” (Apple

1990:1). Whether conscious of it or not, according to critical pedagogy, teachers *are* involved in a political act. Ira Shor asserts that it is naive to see the classroom as a ‘world apart,’ where inequality, ideology, and economic policy do not affect learning (Shor 1987).

Michael Apple and Henry Giroux have both appropriated or applied the works of Herbert Marcuse (1964, 1972) and Paulo Freire (1970,1973) to the situations of marginalised Americans, many of whom they perceived as ‘blocked’ from fulfilling their realisation for happiness and freedom due to their race, class and gender (Apple 1990 1993, 2000, 2012 [1995]; Giroux 1992; Giroux & Freire 1989; Giroux & McLaren 1989). For Marcuse and Freire, the initial step in achieving a change in existing inequalities in any society is raising the ‘consciousness’ of individuals. Both held that it is possible to overcome the inequalities outlined in the opening chapter of this thesis *only if* the oppressed become aware of their blindness of the true situation; a ‘situation’ which Marcuse and Freire claim holds them captive. Thus, both theorists suggest that members of the dominated group are enslaved by the dominant belief system which is an integral part of dominant culture. Once the oppressed become “conscious” of their situation they can then critique it to determine what is wrong and what should be, then make decisions and take actions toward the perceived needed change (Marcuse 1964, 1972; Freire 1970,1973).

Peter McLaren explains that critical pedagogy, as a classroom approach to eliminate racial inequality, is adopted by progressive teachers who aim to eliminate inequalities on the basis of race (and other measures) (McLaren 1989). Critical pedagogy requires that educationalists first become aware of the world in which they live. As argued by Dlamini (2002), teachers should dedicate time to studying the constructs and power structures within society, to determine how these impact educational policies, curriculum, testing, accountability, teaching methods and materials; teachers need to reflect upon what they are doing and why they are doing it. Developing critical thinking

skills is crucial for the transformation of societal structures and the transformation of teaching as currently conceived (Dlamini 2002). Common questions for the critical educator include: What knowledge is of most worth? Whose knowledge is most important? What knowledge should be taught, and just as important, what knowledge is not to be taught? How does the structure of the school contribute to the social stratification of society? What is the relationship between knowledge and power? What does this imply for students? What is the purpose of schooling - to ensure democracy; maintain the status quo; support big business? How can teachers enable students to become critical thinkers who will promote true democracy and freedom?

Critical pedagogy is associated with the phrases 'student empowerment,' 'student voice,' 'critical thinking,' 'sharing power in the classroom,' and 'interrogating knowledge' (Dlamini 2002). Critical pedagogy teachers aim to provide students with means to resist oppression, improve their lives, and strengthen the democratic process for everyone, thus insuring progressive social change and social justice by engaging students in critical questioning of their own beliefs and assumptions (DeMarrais & LeCompte 1992).

3.6.3 Critical Multiculturalism

The work of critical race, anti-racist, and critical pedagogy theorists has led to the development of a more critical conception of multicultural education theory and practice; one which draws attention to broader structural questions of racism and disadvantage as well as questioning how to include majority students as well as minority students in educating for a multicultural society (May 1999). McLaren introduced the notion of 'critical multiculturalism' to interrupt the diversity discourse that emerged to undermine the original intentions of theorists such as Banks, who set out to create a pedagogy of liberation and social justice (McLaren 1994, 2000). Critical multiculturalists call for some of the same practices and efforts as proponents of anti-racist theory;

notably, a critique of whiteness and white privilege and relating differential educational treatment to issues of institutionalised racism and power (Epstein 1993; Sleeter 1996).

Critical multiculturalists, like anti-racist and critical pedagogy theorists, explore how the mechanisms of domination and power relations work to reproduce and legitimise the entrenched nature of race, class and gender hierarchies in education (Ng 1995). Nylund (2006) argues that critical multiculturalism acknowledges the socio-historical construct of race and its intersections with class, gender, nation, and capitalism. Critical multiculturalism creates pedagogical conditions in which students interrogate conditions of 'otherness'; challenging the traditional social studies curriculum as an apolitical, trans-historical practice, removed from the power struggles of history, making visible the historical and social construction of whiteness. Thus, critical multiculturalism is *more* inclusive of white students than other approaches and arguably, may have the most profound effect on their group more specifically. White students are encouraged in a critical multicultural classroom to critically reflect and deconstruct what 'being white' means to them. According to Perry (2002:197), this type of critical reflection would:

“Help [both] white and students of colour, move productively through times when different interpretive frameworks are hindering cross-understanding, such as when African-American students need to express pain and anger about slavery, but white youth won't listen because they cannot see how the 'past' matters. It would also offer white students a means of moving past immobilising feelings of guilt or denial and towards reformulating their identities in ways that challenge dominant interests, cross boundaries, and help develop a range of personal connections and political coalitions.”

According to Ladson-Billings (2003) and McLaren (1994), critical multiculturalism enables individuals to see through the veneer of inclusion to the ways in which traditional multiculturalism is being “manipulated to maintain and justify the status quo” (Ladson-Billings 2004a:55) and also “affirm the construction of a common, monolithic and hegemonic culture” (McLaren 1994:57). Curriculum policy, for example,

is one aspect usually committed to white, middle-class values that deny the powerless and disenfranchised equal access to knowledge.

Good (2009) usefully provides an example of such manipulation common to modern social studies textbooks. To summarise, Good (2009) suggests that the first three pages of most American history textbooks tell a story of a vast land populated as a result of the whims of the last Ice Age. These pages explain that American Indians enter the American picture before everyone else, *but* from “somewhere else,” and directly into the “distinctly American picture”; the same essentialised picture that protestant pilgrims, African slaves, Irish potato farmers, Chinese railroad workers, Jewish refugees, and Mexican migrant labourers will enter in subsequent chapters. The simplistic, untroubled portrayal of the first people to inhabit North America (as well as later groups) shifts them into “the conceptual box of the mythical and normative American story” (Good 2009:49). In Good’s (2009) example, the ‘American Story’ is perpetually recreated and reified in history classrooms today, through not only what is taught, but also how it is taught and from whose voice it is taught. Wound up in this master narrative are normative assumptions about who can be considered American and whose version of history is heard and privileged.

Critical race theory reminds us that the telling of American history in social studies is firmly situated within the hegemonic power structures of American society. In other words, those in power foster a narrative that legitimises and further facilitates their own privilege. Critical multiculturalists however believe that by adopting a critical framework in schools and classrooms there is the capacity to both decipher and dismantle such white hegemonic narratives (Ladson-Billings 2004b; McLaren 1994). Jenks et al. (2001) argue that issues of racial equity and excellence cannot be effectively addressed without posing difficult, but essential questions: i.e. under what conditions and by whom are concepts of equity and excellence constructed? What do these concepts look like for different groups and in different circumstances? Can all groups benefit

equally from a particular construction of these concepts? What happens when different groups and individuals view these concepts differently? How can equity and excellence be achieved in a society in which, historically, the dominant culture has determined meaning?

For the critical multiculturalist, knowledge is not value free but shaped culturally, historically, ethnically, and linguistically. In Giroux's understandings, knowledge never speaks for itself, but rather is constantly mediated through the ideological and cultural experiences that students bring to the classroom (Giroux 1988). Therefore, histories and narratives of subordinate groups *must* be part of the school curriculum if their members are to engage in personally meaningful learning and if equity and excellence are to be properly served. Any multicultural curriculum *must* be transformative, and educators - as critical multiculturalists - *must* enter into democratic dialogue with each other and their students to develop programs that promote critical reflection and inclusionary knowledge (Jenks et al. 2001).

An important final perspective to address in RQ6 is, in light of the various critical and radical alternatives outlined above (which carry the promise to improve upon the education of minority students in particular), how much of a teacher's teachings are conditioned by the curriculum and the often-mandated materials available to them. RQ6 can thus be revised as follows:

- **RQ6 What role do social studies teachers see for schools in a multicultural society, what versions of multicultural education are enacted in the social studies classrooms and how does the social studies curriculum and available supporting textbooks condition their teachings?**

3.7 THE AFROCENTRIC SOLUTION

One of the more radical theoretical solutions offered as a specific remedy to the black-white achievement gap, one that is inclusive of both minority and majority students is “Afrocentric Pedagogy” (Dei 1996). Afrocentrism is a movement on the left of the political spectrum and is distantly related to multiculturalism insofar that it seeks to make the curriculum less Eurocentric by decentring European history, culture and civilisation (Assante 1991). Afrocentrism’s most prominent difference from multiculturalism however is that it seeks to centre Africa in world history and culture, whereas multiculturalism generally seeks to teach pluralist history and cultural foundations.

According to Afrocentricity’s proponents (Molefi Asante, Ama Mazama, Leonard Jeffries and Asa Hilliard, to name a few), school curricula are biased towards Europe and are harmful to the self-esteem and performance of African American students. The solution, Afrocentrics believe, is to reorient African American children toward their African past. The movement for African-centered education is therefore based on the assumption that a school immersed in African traditions, rituals, values, and symbols, will provide a learning environment that is more consistent with the lifestyles and values of African-American families. Critics who disagree with African-centered education note the achievements of many African Americans educated according to contemporary United States and European standards, such as W.E.B. DuBois and other intellectuals of the early 20th century, as well as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and others of the later 20th and 21st century.

Molefi Asante (1991), widely considered the leading proponent of Afrocentricity, (and author of numerous works on the subject), argued that because of the virtue of protection provided by society and reinforced by the Eurocentric curriculum, the white child is ahead of the African American child by 1st grade. Asante contends that African

American children's needs are as much cultural as they are academic and suggests that if the proper cultural information is provided, academic performance will follow.

Carter Woodson's ([1933] 1993) *The Mis Education of the Negro*, harshly criticised the absence of black history in the curriculum and argued that black students were being 'mis-educated' because they were learning only about European cultures and civilizations. Woodson contends that African Americans have been educated away from their own culture and traditions and attached to the edges of European culture. Dislocated, African Americans "valorise European culture to the detriment of their own heritage" (Woodson [1933] 1993:7). Woodson argues that if education is to be substantive and meaningful, it must address the African's historical experiences both in Africa and in America. Woodson places on education the burden of teaching the African American child to be responsive to the long traditions and history of Africa as well as America. Woodson's recognition, eight decades ago, that something is wrong with the way African Americans are educated provides the principle impetus for the Afrocentric idea in education (Asante 1991).

Asante developed a "centrist paradigm": "centricity refers to a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural heritage so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives" (Asante 1991:171). The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the centre of the context of knowledge (Assante 1991). For white students in America this is easy because almost all of the experiences discussed in American classrooms are approached by the standpoint of white perspective and history - a Eurocentric approach and experience. Non-white students are made to see themselves and their groups as the 'acted upon'. Assante claimed that American students only rarely read or hear about non-white people as being active participants in history i.e. most classroom discussions

concentrate on the activities of whites rather than on the resistance efforts of blacks (Assante 1991).

Eurocentricity, according to Afrocentrics, is therefore based on white supremacist notions of schooling whose purposes are to protect white privilege in education, economics, politics and so forth. Unlike Eurocentricity, Afrocentricity does not condone ethnocentric valorisation at the expense of degrading other groups' perspectives. For example, Eurocentricity presents the particular historical reality of Europeans as the sum total of all the human experience, imposing Eurocentric realities as 'universal' (Asante 1987). Afrocentricity conversely is a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. In education, Afrocentricity mandates that teachers provide students the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts and history from an African worldview. In most classrooms however, whatever the subject, 'whites' are located at the centre perspective position.

Critics of Afrocentricity claim that Afrocentricity is 'anti-white' and a black version of Eurocentricity, but supporters argue that if Afrocentricity as a theory is against anything, it is against racism, ignorance and monoethnic hegemony in education. For example, Asante (1991) argues that few teachers discuss with their students the significance of the middle passage; little mention is made of either the brutality of slavery, or the ex-slaves' celebration of freedom. American children have little or no understanding of the nature of the capture, transport, and enslavement. Few have been taught "the true horrors of being taken, shipped naked across 25 days of ocean, broken by abuse and indignities of all kinds, and dehumanised until a beast of burden, a thing without a name" (Asante 1991:175). If students knew the Afrocentric perspective and the full story about events since the Great Enslavement, i.e. the constitutional

compromise of 1787³⁷; the 1857 Dred Scott decision³⁸; the dismissal and non-enforcement of Section 2 of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution³⁹; and the as-yet-un-received '40 Acres and a Mule'⁴⁰ repatriation for enslavement; *all* which have served to constantly dislocate African Americans, behaviour would perhaps be different. Asante (1991) argues, that if the curriculum were enhanced to include: readings from the slave narratives (i.e. Feldstein 1971), the diaries of ship captains, the journals of slave-owners, the abolitionist newspapers, the writings of freedmen and freedwomen, the accounts of African American civil rights and civic and social organisations and numerous other individuals more broadly, both African American *and* white children would be different (Asante 1991). Asante (1991) further argued that America itself would be a different nation, one where *all* children were more willing to work to transform it into a better and more equitable place for *all* races and ethnicities. Ultimately, he concluded that hegemonic education could only exist so long as true and accurate information is withheld from students. Or rather, hegemonic-Eurocentric education can exist only as long as whites maintain that Africans and other non-whites have never contributed to world civilisation (Asante 1991).

Lundy (2003) contends that black students rightfully yearn to be culturally centred (Afrocentric) and academically successful – arguing that these two goals ought not to be incompatible (and are indeed not incompatible). Lundy believed that black students did not reject academic success but rather were rejected by white cultural hegemony, a sentiment proponents of Ogbu's oppositional culture and acting white theories fail to understand (Lundy 2003). Lundy stated that, "when black students

³⁷ Which decreed that African Americans were, by law, the equivalent of but three-fifths of a person (see Franklin 1974)

³⁸ In which the Supreme Court avowed that African Americans had no rights whites were obliged to respect (see Howard 1857)

³⁹ Passed in 1868, the amendment stipulated as one of its provisions a penalty against any state that denied African Americans the right to vote, and called for the reduction of a state's delegates to the House of Representatives in proportion to the number of disenfranchised African American males therein

⁴⁰ As promised to each African American family after the Civil War (see Oubre 1978)

express a preference for their own culture... they have, in effect, chosen to be the subject in the creation and telling of their personal narrative rather than the object in the European experience – the other” (Lundy 2003:464). It is therefore important for this study to add a final research question, one that pertains to literature presented in both Chapters 2 and 3:

- **RQ7 - When a black student stands within their own cultural location, and use that location as a reference to interpret their own reality, are they being ‘oppositional’ or are they embracing agency in the rejection of the Eurocentric experience of education?**

3.8 IN SUM

As demonstrated in this chapter, there is little doubt that multicultural education has been institutionalised within social studies. Multicultural goals and content are present in social studies curricular and social studies standards. The ability of multicultural education to become a vehicle for achieving justice, liberty and equality for all races has however been challenged since its inception (Giroux 2001).

Approaches to multiculturalism that reflect a conservative or liberal approach, the two types of multicultural practices present in schools, by themselves are said to be inadequate to the task of teaching students to be ‘cross culturally competent’ (Perry 2002); they are no more than cosmetic efforts that fail to address the culpability of the dominant culture in perpetuating inequity, and do not provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to work for racial equality.

Multicultural educators often play down structural explanations in favour of explanations about cultural differences (Pon 2000). This shift from ‘racial’ to ‘cultural’ is viewed as serving the ideology of colourblindness; consistent with the notion that the

U.S. is today 'post-racial,' as introduced in Chapter 1. Forgetting about the salience of race in schools is not merely a passive letting go. A conservative or liberal multicultural approach to education sanctions the supposed ignorance of racialising systems (i.e. the production of white identities and the taken-for-grantedness of racial dominance). Traditional multiculturalist approaches in modern schools therefore, fail to question the norm of whiteness and the domination of white culture, making it in effect invisible; as a result, white supremacist relations of power are maintained, as is the stratification of American society more broadly. As a result, cultural difference rhetoric then connects the educational failures of black students to black students' own failings, by de-emphasising how dominant white identities are implicated in the production of difference.

3.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Below are the proposed research questions that will guide this study, as derived from the literature presented in this and the previous chapter:

- RQ1 – The persistent pattern of racial disparities in education achievement is evident in the literature: What is the quantitative manifestation of the achievement gap in one diverse high school? And if present, what relationship does the 'gap' have with race, gender, free/reduced lunch eligibility and enrolment in standard or accelerated curriculum classes?
- RQ2 – To what extent are the participants aware of achievement gaps (if any) between White and Black students? And, what are their understandings and experiences of the 'gaps'?

- RQ3 – Who (if any) are the children ‘left behind’ by the No Child Left Behind legislation and its high-stakes standardised testing requirements? And, who are the children that have benefitted most from the legislation?
- RQ 4 – To what extent are the participants aware of ‘whiteness’? And, how are the contours of whiteness understood and/or identified?
- RQ 5 – What evidence is there of an oppositional culture to that of the dominant culture in the school? And can black students be found to be ‘acting white’.
- RQ6 – What role do social studies teachers see for schools in a multicultural society, what versions of multicultural education are enacted in the social studies classrooms, and how does the social studies curriculum and available supporting textbooks condition their teachings?
- RQ7 – When a black student stands within their own cultural location, and use that location as a reference to interpret their own reality, are they being ‘oppositional’ or are they embracing agency in the rejection of the Eurocentric experience of education?

CHAPTER FOUR

Designing a CRT Study in Education

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in Chapter 2, critical race scholars have worked to explore the theoretical and methodological significance of critical race theory (CRT) and its role in, as well as its links to, education, theory and practice. Critical race scholars utilise CRT frameworks in education to highlight the prominent role of race and racism in education systems and institutions that impact the educational trajectories of black students specifically (i.e. Huber 2008). Utilising a critical race methodology therefore allows for, and enables researchers to work towards, the elimination of racism through understanding the multiple ways black students in schools experience subordination, as defined by race and other forms of oppression.

CRT approaches challenge traditional Eurocentric methodologies and require researchers to develop “theories of transformation, wherein knowledge is generated specifically for the purpose of addressing and ameliorating conditions of oppression, poverty, or deprivation” (Lincoln 1993:33). CRT is therefore used not only as a theoretical underpinning for this study (as outlined in Chapter 2), but is also employed as a methodological framework as will be outlined in this Chapter.

Section 4.2 begins with an introduction to the case study school and the broader county it is situated in. Section 4.3 explicates the research design of this study, and 4.4

outlines the approaches adopted to analyse, interpret and present this collated data. The chapter concludes by identifying the positionality of the researcher in this study.

4.2 CASE STUDY

As outlined in Chapter 2, one of the central tenets of CRT is that scholars acknowledge that racial designations have complex historical meanings (Lynn & Parker 2006). A CRT study should therefore not be ahistorical, but should instead consider particular social contexts. CRT purports that data, considered in the absence of context, are misperceived, misconstrued, and mismanaged (Lawrence 1995). A researcher, in considering data in the abstract devoid of any historical context, will inexorably supply a forged setting based on a researcher's own experiences or background; a forged setting that can often contradict the context of the subjects from whom the data were gathered (Matsuda et al. 1993).

This study acknowledges that the lived realities of participants are sensitive to local history, and as such the historical context of the case study school should also be explored. This section therefore seeks to consider both Hurricane and Central High School's⁴¹ histories, such that the information presented in this section will offer ways to contextualise participant's narratives in the empirical chapters, ensuring the perspectives of participants are positioned and understood from a historical context.

⁴¹ Both anonymised with pseudonyms in accordance with common ethical practices.

4.2.1 Hurricane County & Central High School

Central High School⁴² (hereafter CHS) is located in Hurricane⁴³, Florida, and like many areas in the ‘Deep South⁴⁴’ today, Hurricane has a troubled history. The secessionist sentiment was strong in 1850’s Hurricane, as was said to be the fear of blacks, a ‘fear’ so rife that the white residents ran a well-organised (and armed) militia.

Black slaves historically populated Hurricane County, although very few blacks resided in the City of Hurricane itself. Following the Civil War, troops from the United States Army actively encouraged freed men⁴⁵ to settle in the area. Soon, black residents outnumbered whites, and several black men were elected to local office positions during the Reconstruction⁴⁶ era. However, the newly found relative freedoms were to be short lived. Following Reconstruction, the black residents of Hurricane were disenfranchised⁴⁷, subjected to Jim Crow laws⁴⁸, and Hurricane itself became fraught with racially aggravated violence and lynching.

The end of World War II brought rapid and diverse growth to Hurricane. The historic 1950’s and 1960’s saw the segregation in U.S. public schools declared ‘unconstitutional’ by the U.S. Supreme Court (Brown v. Board of Education 1954) and the remaining Jim Crow laws were largely overruled by the Civil Rights (1964) and

⁴² Pseudonym

⁴³ Pseudonym

⁴⁴ ‘Deep South’ is generally taken to include the seven states that seceded from the United States and originally formed the Confederate States of America (In order of secession - South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas).

⁴⁵ A freedman is a former slave who has been released from slavery, usually by legal means, either by manumission (granted freedom by their owner) or emancipation (granted freedom as part of a larger group).

⁴⁶ Reconstruction Era (1865-1877)

⁴⁷ Efforts made by Southern states of the former Confederacy at the turn of the 20th century to prevent their black citizens from registering to vote and voting. For example, Florida Legislature imposition of a *de facto* literacy test in 1889, requiring voters to be able to read labels on the boxes in order to vote correctly (which effectively disenfranchised most blacks).

⁴⁸ Jim Crow laws were state and local laws (of the former Confederacy) enacted after the Reconstruction period, which mandated the segregation of public schools, public places and public transportation, and the segregation of restrooms, restaurants and drinking fountains for whites and blacks. Jim Crow laws started in 1890 and continued in force until 1965.

Voting Rights (1965) Acts; but as seen in Chapter 1, challenges and inequalities still persist for many black people.

Today, Hurricane remains racially and economically diverse. According to the latest U.S. Census (2010), approximately 58% of the population of Hurricane are white (non-Hispanic), 23% black, 10% Hispanic/Latino(a) and 9% 'other' (US CENSUS 2012b). The median household income in Hurricane is \$32,492 (2009-2013) and 35% of its residents have an income below the poverty level (\$23,850 or less). There are also an estimated 394 homeless children attending Hurricane public schools (see 'Quickfacts,' US Census Bureau, 2013)

For over 100 years CHS had been the 'main' public high school in Hurricane. Initially dubbed "*the white school*" (field notes), CHS was instructed⁴⁹ to integrate in the mid 1960's following the protested planned closure of the local 'black school', which ultimately closed its doors in the early 1970's. CHS has remained a diverse school to this day. In 2010-11 CHS had approximately 1,800 students enrolled with 48% of the student body classified as white, 37% black, 8% Hispanic/Latino(a) and 6% categorised as 'other' (NCES 2011). 38% of its student body was eligible for the free or reduced price lunch program.

CHS sat in the centre of Hurricane occupying a "*grey area*" (field notes) where the wealthier-whiter west met the poorer-blacker east (see Figure 1 over). Public schools on both sides of the divide mirrored the demographics of the local communities and were locally identified as the 'white' school (Westside High School⁵⁰) and the 'black' school (Eastside High School⁵¹), which were also referred to as the 'rich', and 'ghetto' schools respectively. CHS was unique in that its boundaries enrolled students from both sides of town, but also accepted students from outside its boundaries *if* they had been

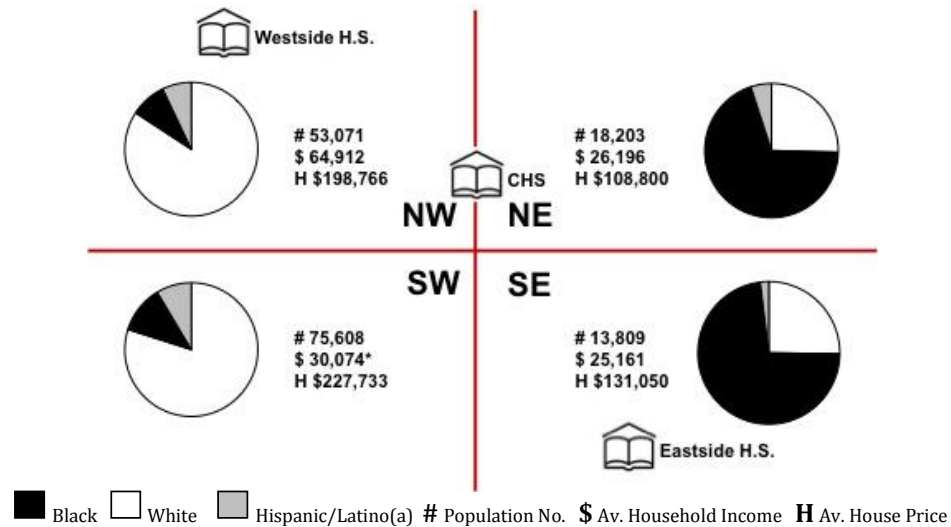
⁴⁹ Brown v. Board of Education 1954

⁵⁰ Pseudonym, in accordance with common ethical practice

⁵¹ Pseudonym, in accordance with common ethical practice

accepted onto the CHS' competitive-entry accelerated curriculum program ('gifted' and 'talented' and 'magnet' schooling is discussed further in Chapter 6). An infographic of Hurricane and the three city schools is provided in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: HURRICANE CITY SCHOOLS INFOGRAPHIC



4.2.2 Gaining Access to Central High School

Yin (1994) and Stake (1995) contend that the first priority for a researcher is to obtain an 'easy' and 'willing' subject. However, obtaining access was not at all 'easy' when conducting overseas fieldwork in the U.S. This study's research agenda required; a U.S. based host university willing to act as a visa sponsor (and pay for the visa petition); a U.S. Embassy approved 'J1' visa (which was a complex, personally costly, and lengthy process); and both domestic and host university ethical approvals.

After meeting all the requirements outlined above, 92 high schools within a 4-hour commute radius of the host university in Florida⁵² were contacted via email, and after several weeks (and after physically arriving in the U.S.), four high schools agreed

⁵² With whom the researcher had agreed to spend two days a month 'checking in' at, conducting lectures, seminars and/or workshops as requested by the faculty, in order to satisfy U.S. visa requirements.

to meet and discuss the proposed research. However after closer consideration, Hurricane's history and its racial and economic diversity (as outlined earlier in this section), teamed with a quick Hurricane county school board approval to conduct research in its state funded public schools, secured Central High School (hereafter CHS) as the case study site above the other potential options.

4.3 METHODS

CRT's "pragmatic politics ensure that no one methodology is privileged" and dogma is challenged (Hylton 2012:4). What makes a methodology identifiably CRT in nature however, is a commitment to challenging racialised power relations, and an impenitent focus on race, racism and structural inequality (Hylton 2012).

Section 4.3 will explicate the critical race methodological approach utilised in this study, reflecting upon the strengths of each methodological choice and the potential challenges each presented. This section will commence with documentary analysis, as much of this study's early data was generated prior to arriving in the U.S., before discussing; participant observation, sampling of research participants, narrative interview, and survey methods, each in turn.

4.3.1 Document Analysis

Speaking to this study's first research question (**RQ1**), document analysis was utilised to critically examine the quantitative manifestation of the 2010-2011 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) test data for CHS by various groups:

- **RQ1 - What is the quantitative manifestation of the achievement gap in one diverse high school? And if present, what relationship does the 'gap' have with race, gender, free/reduced lunch eligibility and enrolment in standard or accelerated curriculum classes?**

The Florida Bureau of K-12 Assessment has a fully searchable, open-access database of every public school's FCAT results from 2003 to date. The data can be sorted and split by, subject and grade level, by a number of demographic factors⁵³, and also by individual school, district and state. In responding to **RQ1**, the Grade 10 Math and Reading FCAT data for CHS, the two other city limit schools (Westside and Eastside⁵⁴), and for the state of Florida, was accessed for each group outlined in **RQ1**. The reason Grade 10 testing data was selected specifically is because grade 10 is the terminal year for all standardised testing in Florida's public schools. Passing grades for both Grade 10 FCAT Math and Reading are mandatory for graduation from any Floridian public high school (discussed further in Chapter 6). Without a passing score, students are denied both graduation, and a standard high school diploma at Grade 12 (unless there are provable extenuating circumstances – decided on a case by case basis).

In speaking to **RQ2**, this study compiled an FCAT 'data sheet prompt' from the 2009-2010 testing period results for both Math and Reading⁵⁵, which was utilised to stimulate dialogue with participants and others encountered during the fieldwork - but *only* after first establishing existing levels of achievement gap cognizance:

- **RQ2 - To what extent are the participants aware of achievement gaps (if any) between White non-Hispanic and Black students? And, what are their understandings and experiences of the 'gaps'?**

The FCAT data sheet prompt was presented to participants, and others involved in the process of schooling, in single sided printed format (see Appendix 2), and outlined the 2009-2010 Grade 10 test data for CHS, WHS, EHS, and the State average, by group. Consistent with the aims of CRT, the use of FCAT documentary data assisted many black participants to tell a counter story about the differing experiences of black students and their dominant peers and teachers; which not only humanised the published FCAT data

⁵³ See <https://app1.fldoe.org/FCATDemographics>

⁵⁴ Pseudonyms, in accordance with common ethical practice, hereafter WHS and EHS.

⁵⁵ As these data were made available during this study's overseas fieldwork

by exposing the ‘voices’ behind the statistics, but also challenged neutrality in the form of taken for granted majoritarian assumptions (Solórzano & Yosso 2001).

Other advantages of utilising document analysis in this study included it being possible to conduct a critical examination of broader FCAT testing scores and patterns, by group, prior to commencing participant observation, which provided important background information on the education performance of each group identified in **RQ1**. In addition, documentary data specific to CHS were also available prior to interview (section 4.4.5), which assisted by corroborating or refuting the narratives generated (Yanow 2007).

FCAT testing data was not however available for all groups outlined in **RQ1**. Standard/accelerated program participation data was not available specifically⁵⁶, but alternate group data was available for ‘gifted’ and ‘standard’ curriculum students. Utilising this study’s survey data (see section 4.3.4) the researcher was able to establish a relationship between students categorised as ‘gifted’ and enrolment in the competitive entry magnet program at CHS (discussed further in Chapter 6). As such, in responding to **RQ1** and **RQ2**, FCAT testing data for ‘gifted’ students was utilised instead and proved a good proxy for ‘magnet’ students (discussed further in Chapter 6).

A critical reading and analysis of Social Studies textbooks was also conducted in order to address the last section of **RQ6**:

- **RQ6 - What role do social studies teachers see for schools in a multicultural society, what versions of multicultural education are enacted in the social studies classrooms, and how does the social studies curriculum and available supporting textbooks condition their teachings?**

During the critical examination and reading of textbook data, not only what is taught, but also how it is taught, and from whose voice it is taught was examined. Particular attention was given to the supporting imagery and presence of ‘special’ or ‘highlighted’ features; comparing those images and features to the main body of text.

⁵⁶ A questionable omission from the Florida Bureau of K-12 Assessment discussed further in Chapter 6).

4.3.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation was conducted through the entire school year. However, no formal interviews were conducted before Christmas 2010. Taking the first four months to entirely immerse in the day-to-day realities of CHS was essential for the depth of enquiry demanded by this study's theoretical underpinnings and research questions. Given that CRT requires a researcher to foreground race and racism in all facets of the research process (Creswell 2007), it took those essential first months to identify, illuminate, and reflect upon, possible systems of oppression, and of perceived 'oppositional behaviours' at CHS. Through extensive participant observation and numerous informal dialogues, the researcher came to better understand the social contexts that created and/or perpetuated inequalities at CHS that mediated the experiences of black students in particular. The data collected during those initial months was primarily utilised to contextualise the field, and inform and supplement later formal interviews (DeWalt & DeWalt 2002).

Observation data was utilised to respond to **RQ5** and part of **RQ6**:

- **RQ5 - What evidence is there of an oppositional culture to that of the dominant culture in the school? And can black students be found to be 'acting white'.**
- **RQ6 - What role do social studies teachers see for schools in a multicultural society, what versions of multicultural education are enacted in the social studies classrooms, and how does the social studies curriculum and available supporting textbooks condition their teachings?**

The researcher's original intention was to adhere to Delamont's (2004) suggestion to 'write feelingly' and 'help occasionally', a mid-ground on the continuum of pure observation to complete participation during both phases (Glesne 2006). However, the reality was mostly participation; in any and every way it presented itself. Holliday (2003) points out that all qualitative research is concerned with relations between people, and for a researcher, creating a good relationship with 'the observed' is fundamental. Utilising a fieldwork journal, the researcher carefully described daily encounters at CHS, providing a systematic description of the situations, dialogues,

events, behaviours and objects under study (Erlandson et al. 1993). Contact was made with many individuals involved in the process of schooling; teachers, students, administrative staff, resident police officers, community volunteers, school pastors, school guidance councillors, canteen staff and groundsmen, to name a few.

The researcher tried to experience as many daily encounters as possible, and 'live' (as far possible), the realities of schooling alongside the participants of this study (Marshall & Rossman 1989). Activities engaged in included, but were not limited to: 'walking to class' with students; sitting through 100's of hours of social studies lessons; taking lunches and breaks with students and teachers alike; riding into school with students on an iconic yellow bus; volunteering, planning and fundraising with the student government; debating with the Young Republicans Club; joining the pep (rally) club dressed entirely in school colours⁵⁷; becoming an honorary (white) member of S.I.S.T.A.S⁵⁸; attending cheerleading try-outs (as a participant!); selling cakes for the International Club; collecting tins for local food drives (food banks); donating blood to help CHS 'beat' the rival city schools (in terms of litres of blood donated); competitively eating chicken wings for the American Childhood Cancer Society; attending numerous 'home' varsity football, basketball, track, lacrosse, baseball and softball games; attending staff meetings and training; attending local planning meetings and community government events; holding a 'honk for the working class' banner at a busy intersection in solace with teachers over proposed salary changes; the researcher even attended a high school prom and 'graduated' with the 2011 CHS seniors.

There were a number of distinct advantages to utilising participant observation in this study. Firstly, participant observation permitted the researcher an opportunity to

⁵⁷ An organised group that: wears the school colours; promotes school ethos; makes support posters and banners; organises pep rallies that raise funds for various teams; and, cheer for team sports during games.

⁵⁸ S.I.S.T.A.S. is a pseudonym for a student led group at CHS. The acronym (Sisters, Inspiring, Supporting, Teaching, Achieving, and Success) was fabricated for the purpose of this study, however the actual group name did utilise an acronym of a similarly motivational nature). The S.I.S.T.A.S. are discussed further in Chapter 5.

develop 'trusted person' status (Glesne 2006). Developing a quality of trust with the participants is essential to any CRT study, so that participants feel safe and able to elicit hidden or controversial sentiments, beliefs, and feelings, that would likely remain concealed or sanitised (Glesne 2006). In addition, conducting participant observation exclusively for the first four months, then in conjunction with other methods for the remainder of the school year, greatly reduced altered participant behaviours caused by 'new researcher syndrome'. Early altered behaviours progressively disappeared the longer the researcher was in the field (Waddington 1994), thus taking the full ten months was an important step in demystifying the researchers role to the students in particular. The researcher's visual presence throughout the entire school year (but especially in those early months) also greatly aided participant recruitment (as discussed in Section 4.3.3).

A potential criticism of participant observation is 'familiarity' (Shaw & Gould 2001) and as such the relationships fostered between the researcher and participants in this study could raise questions for those who believe it is important for researchers to locate themselves outside of the research process, detached, objective and neutral (i.e. McMillan 2000; Shulman 1986). However, as argued in this chapter, and in Chapter 2, CRT demands a more central positioning of the researcher *inside* the research process. The resulting 'insider dialogues' as experienced during the field work, far from being restricted by the researchers presence, retained an element of heuristics. Locating the researcher *inside* the research process was ultimately a more inclusive approach to data collection (discussed further in Section 4.5).

4.3.3 Research Participants (Sampling)

Convenience sampling, or non-probability sampling based on selecting participants because of their convenience or proximity to the researcher, was utilised to recruit this

study's participants. Nearly all of this study's participants, with the exception of Dante⁵⁹, volunteered themselves, and the social studies teachers (and their respective classes of students) were also selected based on accessibility.

Given that this single-site, in-depth case study utilised critical race theory to explore participants' understandings and experiences of 'oppositional culture' and 'acting white', and critically examine the academic gaps between groups, it was necessary to identify key variants within the prospective sample population to ensure representation from each group i.e. Black/White/Hispanic or Latino(a)⁶⁰, male/female, mainstream/magnet (gifted) enrolment, eligible or ineligible for free/reduced school meals, student/teacher. As the most effective purposive samples aim for maximum variation (Seidman 1998), the researcher specifically sought participants with differing levels of racial cognizance and differing perspectives and experiences of schooling.

The chosen 'core sample' consisted of three black students, three white (non-Hispanic) students, one black university student and two white teachers; who are all fully introduced in Chapter 5. The entire core sample group participated in at least two in-depth interviews, plus a large number of informal conversations. The core sample are also joined by a 'peripheral sample' in this study, who were made up of participants that did not attend any in-depth interviews, but did take part in a number of shorter informal conversations, and were encountered on many occasions during observations. The peripheral sample consisted of two black students, two white students, one "*Argentinian-American*" (self-classified) student and one white teacher, all of which are again introduced in Chapter 5. Whilst it is acknowledged that the sample size is relatively small, its size is fully justified on the basis of the depth of the data generated and analysis thereof.

⁵⁹ Each of this study's participants are introduced fully in Chapter 5

⁶⁰ Although this study did not set out to examine the experiences of Hispanic/Latino(a) students, the 'historically voluntary migrant' groups' academic scores are included in Chapters 6 and 8, as comparisons to the 'historically involuntary migrant' African American group (Ogbu 1987).

The clear advantage of convenience sampling to this CRT study is that the researcher could avoid meeting participants as a ‘ruthless stranger’ (Rubin & Rubin 2005). Convenience sampling of largely volunteer participants that were already familiar and comfortable in the researcher’s presence (following several months of participant observation, discussed in section 4.4.2) was not only quick but desirable; the resulting narratives generated during the interviews were unreserved, and ethnographically rich (discussed in section 4.3.4).

Of note, with the specific goal of uncovering voices of black participants whose stories were otherwise restrained or out of reach in traditional research methods, this study tirelessly pursued dialogue with several young black participants that were largely unwilling to strike up dialogue with “*white people*” unless absolutely necessary “*like teachers and Principal Stewart*” (field notes). Dante⁶¹ had a dislike of speaking with whites, especially those that “*ask too many fucking questions about stuff they know shit about*” (field notes). However, whilst Dante was reluctant, it was during those scarce and brief dialogues with him (usually granted only when no one else was watching) that some of this study’s most powerful and controversial data were uncovered and recorded⁶².

The most obvious criticism of convenience sampling is bias, and that the selected sample are not representative of the population, and as such cannot speak for the population more broadly. The random selection of participants, or the selection of participants to reflect the broader population of students and teachers at CHS (or indeed Florida more broadly) was neither necessary, nor appropriate, for this study’s theoretical underpinnings and aims.

⁶¹ Dante is formally introduced in Chapter 5

⁶² The nature of presumed consent is discussed further in 4.3.4a

4.3.4 Narrative Interview

Narratives are said to be the “primary way by which human experience is made meaningful” (Polkinghorne 1988:1). Narrative data can be gathered from many different sources to include qualitative interview. Narrative approaches, as utilised in this study, can help to challenge common stereotypes and preconceptions by forcing the readers and interpreters of this study, to read stories and counter stories from the social groups being studied i.e. ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘mainstream’, ‘gifted’. Data in the form of narrative stories and counter stories were essential to exploring this study’s **RQ4** and **RQ7**, and ultimately essential in moving beyond the stereotype of ‘oppositional black youths’:

- **RQ 4 – To what extent are the participants aware of ‘whiteness’? And, how are the contours of whiteness understood and/or identified by the participants?**
- **RQ 7 - When a black student stands within their own cultural location, and use that location as a reference to interpret their reality, are they being ‘oppositional’ or are they embracing their own black agency in rejecting white cultural references?**

The narrative approach was also utilised to explore the first part of **RQ6**:

- **RQ 6 – What role do social studies teachers see for schools in a multicultural society, what versions of multicultural education are enacted in the social studies classrooms, and how does the social studies curriculum and available supporting textbooks condition their teachings?**

Consistent with CRT, this study utilised interviews to uncover the experiences and counter stories of black students in particular, but recorded stories generated by *all* participants (Bell 2003; Chapman 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Parker & Lynn 2002; Solórzano & Yosso 2001). Narrative, while a preferred method in CRT, is not unique to CRT.

As argued by Rubin and Rubin (2005), data should not be ‘extrapolated’, ‘elicited’ or ‘evoked’. The interviews in this study were therefore not approached instrumentally and narratives were given freely, unfolding naturally. The researcher minimally prompted participants on certain subjects or topics, which had the capacity to highlight a host of issues to include racism and structural inequality i.e. ‘Tell me about your

experiences of the FCAT?’ ‘What is your dream job and how do you feel schooling has prepared you for your future?’ ‘I’d never heard of magnet schooling before I came to the USA, how would you explain the program?’ ‘How do you feel you fit in at school?’ ‘Tell me something about your experiences of social studies at CHS?’ ‘When did you start thinking about your own education?’ ‘What do you think are the biggest problems with schools today?’ In addition, the researcher also asked participants to introduce themselves and tell their education ‘story’ (see Chapter 5), which often yielded rich narrative accounts in which participants spontaneously described personal experiences of many of the themes pertinent to this study’s research questions.

In response to many of the open questions outlined above, participants were witnessed utilising stories to communicate meaning to the researcher in concrete, rather than abstract, terms i.e. *“So there was this one class when I was in 10th grade where [etc.]...”* (field notes). Although the participant’s stories frequently contained digressions, their stories were distinguishable for analysis by their distinct arc from beginning to end, taking the researcher on a journey from one specific place to another (analysis is discussed further in section 4.4.1).

Participants were not informed of the broad focus of the interview prior to the meeting so that they could not think about the matter and pre-plan their response. Unlike previous experiences of interviewing, in which participants were asked a series of narrow targeted questions (that varied greatly in terms of relatedness to each other), in which they were expected to answer within a few seconds, participants in this study were allowed to elaborate at will; could speak at length uninterrupted; and could take the conversation in any direction they chose. There were also no time limits, and as such the longest interview, which took place over dinner, lasted just shy of five hours. As with all the interviews, every hour was recorded on a high quality voice recorder that was switched on at the beginning of the meeting (always with permission) and placed out of sight, removing any visual barriers to free dialogue. Keen to pursue “research *with*

people rather than *on* them” (Clark 2010:406), the researcher avoided treating participants like specimens (requiring notes be made on them as they spoke), by taking nothing other than the voice recorder, consistent with CRT’s desire to humanise research.

It became clear that rich narratives occurred *only* when student participants in particular felt ‘relaxed’ and ‘safe’, away from what was described in the field notes as “*the hearing school buildings*”. Formal interviews were therefore conducted in spaces chosen by the participants, whilst for likely convenience (and possibly comfort), teachers chose their own classrooms after regular school hours, students choose a multitude of locations to include: the canteen, the school guidance offices after hours, the library, the sports hall, the far end of school field, a local park in Eastside, a church ministry centre, and a whole range of local eateries. Every interview was conducted face-to-face and student participants in particular had to be assured (and reassured) that the data would be securely stored and anonymised, and that their opinions and stories would not be shared with the CHS teachers or Principal. The rapport the researcher had built with the students during the early months of observation was crucial to the students accepting, believing and feeling safe in the assurances of anonymity offered by the researcher.

Owens claims that one of the biggest challenges to qualitative interviewing is to expand the boundaries of conversation and the arena of topics that are tacitly deemed appropriate for discussion (Owens 2006). One unanticipated opportunity arose when several student participants asked independently if they could bring a friend to the meeting, and although initially hesitant, the researcher agreed on multiple occasions. In comparison to earlier one-to-one interviews, it transpired that for black female participants in particular, bringing a self-selected friend brought a greater sense of security, which resulted in distinctly richer data than when black female participants were interviewed alone. Permitting friends at the interview truly expanded the

boundaries of the interview, with new topics being generated, subjects debated, stories co-constructed, collective discovering and ascription of meaning, and important data-rich memories of events jogged. More often than not co-interview participants took the lead providing spontaneous, extended and detailed accounts of their experiences that often covered multiple research themes well beyond the RQ's, generating some of this study's richest and most unexpected data.

4.3.4a Dante – Presumed Consent

The inclusion of Dante's narratives in the final formulation of this study is an important ethical issue. Dante, unlike the other participants in this study, did not give informed written consent, nor did he give expressed consent during interview for the researcher to record the meetings. Despite this Dante, as identified in the previous section, provided some of the most powerful and controversial narratives amassed during the course of this study - but *only* after several months of actively perusing dialogue with him and *only* given informally when no one else was watching. The obvious question is did Dante consent to the inclusion of his narratives in this study? The central argument for obtaining consent from participants is that research is liable to be intrusive, and intrusion is *only* legitimate if consent is obtained. In the case of Dante it is believed such intrusion was legitimate in the sense that Dante determined for himself if, when, how, and to what extent, narratives were communicated to the researcher. Additionally, Dante was fully aware of the researcher's position in the field as CHS mandated the researcher wear a large lanyard each day that had 'RESEARCHER' and the host university logo displayed clearly on it. Therefore it is believed that Dante *did* permit the known-to-be-researcher his narratives, and as such his narratives *are* included in this study.

4.3.5 Survey

Finally, a survey was selected for its ability to collect multifaceted data from the larger population of students at CHS i.e. data concerning the behaviours, beliefs and attitudes and attributes of participants (Henn et al. 2006). The survey utilised did not pertain to a specific research question, but provided supplementary data for several of this study's research questions (**RQ1**, **RQ3**, **RQ4**, **RQ5** and **RQ6**). A copy of the survey utilised is included in this study's appendix (see Appendix 3), but is also briefly discussed here.

The CHS student survey included personal 'attribute' questions to include: school grade (Q1), gender (Q2), and race (Q8). With reference to Q8, students were offered predetermined racial categories (as adapted from the 2010 U.S. Census) but were also provided a blank area in which they could self-classify. 'Behaviour' questions included: 'Do you participate in sports, clubs or societies at school' (Q16), 'Have you taken/will you take any of the following classes' (Q19), 'Have you discussed the following at school or at home' (Q20), 'Since studying in high school have you had the opportunity to_____' (Q21). 'Belief' and 'attitude' questions explored how participants think and feel i.e. on a scale of 1 to 5⁶³ how would you rate the following statements: 'I am proud to be a U.S. citizen', 'I do not trust the government', 'My classroom is open to discussing issues', 'I do not respect adults in the community', and, 'I am aware of my rights and responsibilities' (Q22).

Employing a combination of questions such as those above is said to open the possibility of describing and explaining social phenomena (Henn et al. 2006). Although it is acknowledged that the survey was designed entirety with standard closed questions, with no spaces to identify contingencies associated with student answers, the data generated by the survey was primarily used to supplement observational data and support or rebut later interview data (Bryman 2004).

⁶³ 1 being strongly agree and 5 beings strongly disagree

Survey data was collected from 361 students in the space of one week during December 2010, which represented approximately 20% of the total CHS student body. Survey methods in this study had the clear advantage of being relatively quick, efficient and cheap to administer (Youngman 1982), and also could be analysed alongside observational and documentary data, prior to finalising the formulation of this study's broader narrative interview themes (discussed earlier in section 4.3.4).

The students completed surveys during regular social studies or student government classes (after securing the necessary permissions from the class teachers). Whilst it is accepted that distributing a survey during formal class time may be considered a form of forced participation, and thus a criticism of this study's approach, it is important to note that *all* students were read a statement about the study and survey prior to being provided a copy of the survey. In addition, the option to 'opt out' was also restated in print format at the top of the survey once received (see Appendix 3). Obtaining permission before collecting data is not only a part of the informed consent process, but is also an ethical practice (Creswell 2008:179); only three students exercised their decision to 'opt out'. The obvious benefit to administering the survey during class time was the perfect return rate, only eight surveys (above the 361 collected) were discarded for being incomplete or defaced; all were however returned (in exchange for candy).

4.3.5a The Survey Sample

43% of the surveyed sample stated 'female' and 57% 'male'. Females were slightly under-represented in the survey sample compared to total population of students at CHS (47%) and males were slightly over-represented (53%). 56.4% of the survey sample stated 'white non-Hispanic', which is again an overrepresentation compared to the total population (46.8%). 29.7% of the survey sample identified as 'black' and were under-represented compared to the total population of students (38.7%). 6.4% identified as

Hispanic/Latino(a) (7.5% total population) and 7.5% 'other' (7% total population). 33% of the survey sample were enrolled on the CHS magnet program and were therefore disproportionately represented compared to the total population of magnet students at CHS in 2010-2011 (24%).

4.4 ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION & PRESENTATION OF DATA

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) highlight the need for researchers to better explicate their use of critical race methodologies, specifically their approaches to analysis and interpretation. Making clear the researcher's assumptions that buttressed the process of analysis and interpretation, presented specific challenges due to the largely intuitive approach applied in this study. That said this section makes a conscious effort to make explicit as much of the process of analysis, interpretation and presentation as possible.

4.4.1 Analysis & Interpretation

As seen in Chapter 2 and section 4.3.4 (this chapter), CRT scholars focus their attention on the use of narrative. Although narrative approaches have an air of novelty, and there are numerous (often contradictory) ways in which to conduct such (see Bruner 1990; Feldman et al. 2004; Gee 1986; Mishler 1986; Riessman 1993; Young 1996), studying participant's 'stories' in this instance was particularly useful, given that participants in this study utilised narrative during interview (as outlined in section 4.3.4). This study's participants both refined and reproduced their own understandings of social relations and structures, and communicated their ideas using oral narrative (Barthes 1977); the information contained within each of the participant's narratives was of great value to this study. What was included, emphasised, and even excluded by the participants, not

only illustrated their versions of events and actions, but also offered an interpretive and evaluative commentary of these events and actions (Young 1996).

The analytical and interpretive approach adopted in this study largely repeats that of Feldman et al. (2004), who conducted a rhetorical analysis of stories contained within narrative. Feldman et al.'s study (2004) made a genuine attempt to bring to the fore underlying logics and assumptions that were often implicit in their participants' arguments, an aim which is essential to any CRT study. The researcher in this study understood 'narrative' to be the grand conception and 'stories' to be particular exemplars of that grand conception. Although they frequently contain digressions, stories can be identified within narrative by their arc from beginning to end, taking the reader on a storied journey from one specific place to another (Feldman et al. 2004).

Feldman's et al. (2004) approach was particularly relevant to this study's data in that they recognised a way to create meaning in discourse by paying particular attention to the 'opposites' embedded in the data (Feldman et al. 2004; see also Feldman 1995; Feldman & Skoldberg 2002). For instance, Feldman et al. (2004) demonstrated the ability of a participant to create a sense of what is right about something by talking about what is wrong with its opposite. On numerous occasions in this study, participants were keen to illustrate what they believed to be wrong or unfair with the 'opposite' by giving storied examples of their experiences in the school system (i.e. magnet/standard schooling), rather than discussing specifically what is right or what they thought to be right (examples of opposites are given in section 4.1.1a).

In addition to opposites, Feldman et al.'s (2004) study also urged researchers to uncover meaning or underlying structure by looking carefully at what was *not* said. A companion to 'oppositions' is a concept from classical rhetoric called 'enthymeme'. An enthymeme is described as an "incomplete logical inference" (Feldman et al. 2004:152). In the analysis of this study's data, the incomplete inference or missing part was often found to be the major premise of the story itself. By leaving unspoken the potentially

controversial or taken-for-granted aspect of the argument (the enthymeme), participants in this study could be seen to avert disagreement, particularly during the early months of data collection. Because participants avoided stating knowledge that was either taken for granted, or more often controversial (i.e. race, racism), many of the stories analysed in this study often-contained enthymemes. Analysis of enthymemes provided the researcher with a tool in which to transform the implicit parts of participant's stories and arguments into explicit and analysable data, which was a distinct advantage of this approach. Examples of enthymemes are provided in full in the following section (4.4.1a).

4.4.1a CRT Narrative Analysis Exemplified

Initial analysis of narrative data generated in the interview began with the identification and extraction of numerous stories contained within each interview. The broad criterion for identifying these stories was that they illustrated the grand conception (narrative) through specific (storied) exemplars i.e. “*so let me tell you about this kid...*” or “*so last year I was in U.S. History and...*” (field notes), consistent with Feldman et al. (2004). The interview data yielded 304 stories, ranging in length from a few sentences to a full page. An example of a story extracted from the original transcript is included here and will be used as an exemplar upon which to demonstrate the rest of the analysis technique:

SHANAYA⁶⁴ - “The FCAT is a barrier to success”

For my family, like college is a real big deal. My mom didn't graduate school she stopped. My daddy did graduate; it a real big deal. Like my brothers didn't neither. For me, them like, you gotta to do it, you gotta make it. But with the FCAT, you can't do it; just cos of one test. I passed the rest. Made my GPA. It stupid. It screws up your whole life, like 13 years in school. 13 years y'all, that's a long assed time for nothing. Ain't no one in my friends passed that stupid test. Ain't no one in my friends graduate school, ain't no one of my friends in college. They screwed, for the rest of they lives, they kids screwed for they rest of they lives, they grandkids screwed, all because the FCAT.

⁶⁴ Pseudonym in accordance with common ethnical practice.

Analysis took part on 3 levels for each of the 304 stories. The first level was the identification of the overall storyline; the basic point (sometimes points) that the interviewee was trying to make i.e. *“the FCAT is a barrier to success.”*

Constructing short summaries of the stories required conciseness and precision with regard to the argument or arguments presented. In summarising, the researcher kept in mind what was explicit, the CRT underpinnings, and the research aim of this study. The story line constructed from the above example read as follows:

#SHAN14 - The FCAT is perceived as a barrier to future successes measured by graduation, college admission, and employability. The narrator suggests that regardless of other school measures of success, the FCAT alone has the capacity to deny graduation.

In addition to the overall storyline, there was a ‘sub-story’ i.e. the narrator included ideas in her story about *who* was affected by the FCAT: *“Ain’t no one in my friends passed”*. A researcher could focus primarily on the central explicit theme of the story ‘the FCAT as a barrier’, however, it is often the sub-story and the extent to which the sub-story is developed that was believed to be a priority in this CRT analysis. The sub-story in this example formed the basis of an alternative analysis of standardised testing measures, an analysis that centres the voices and experiences of black participants. This sub-story was therefore also summarised and later explored through triangulation with FCAT testing data, as discussed in section 4.3.2 (triangulation is discussed further in 4.4.4).

The second level of analysis involved identifying and examining any ‘oppositions’ present in participant’s stories. Feldman et al. (2004) argue that looking at the oppositions present in a story allows the researcher to uncover the meanings of key elements of the discourse by analysing what the narrator implies by it. The main oppositions identified in Shanaya’s story are 1) that her friends are affected by the FCAT (#SHAN14/OP1 *“Ain’t no one in my friends passed that stupid test. Ain’t no one in my friends graduate school, ain’t no one of my friends in college”*), and 2) that she believes

high school failure to be perpetual (#SHAN14/OP2 “*They screwed, for the rest of they lives, they kids screwed for they rest of they lives, they grandkids screwed*”).

The third and most intuitive level of analysis assumes that a participant can identify and represent an argument in an inferential form (see Feldman et al. 2004). This assumption led the researcher to reproduce the oppositions outlined above to include any ‘enthymemes’. An enthymeme is an argument in which one or more parts were not articulated or were ‘problematic’ (controversial). Often, and most typically in the case of this study, the missing part *is* the major premise of the participant’s argument (Feldman et al. 2004).

Shanaya’s oppositions, for example, could be re-written to include any enthymemes [underlined in brackets] as follows:

#SHAN14/OP1 - *Ain’t no one in my friends passed that stupid test [the group she referred to as ‘friends’ were exclusively black]. Ain’t no one in my friends graduate school, ain’t no one of my friends in college. They [black friends] all screwed; got no money, no job, no future [sense of hopelessness for her and her black friends].*

#SHAN14/OP2 - *They [black] screwed, for the rest of they lives, they kids screwed for they rest of they lives, they grandkids screwed, all because the FCAT [perceives a perpetual failure specific to the black community].*

The above-identified enthymemes were utilised principally to reflect upon the original (whole) transcript, to compare within and across participants’ stories, and also to inform open questioning for subsequent interviews and informal conversation.

Combined, these three levels of narrative analysis demonstrate how a critical race focused approach to analysis allows the reader to ‘hear’ what Shanaya’s voice did not convey. Shanaya formulated her grand conception (narrative) and offered her experiences (stories) as examples. She articulated her argument (oppositions) and described what she perceived to be wrong with the system. She however left implied (enthymemes) the presence of race in those stories and oppositions. Leaving unspoken the potentially controversial enthymemes, choosing instead to utilise a race-neutral

language in her arguments, Shanaya could avoid the potential for disagreement with the white researcher, her white peers or indeed the schooling structure more broadly.

After completing the initial 3-stage analysis and interpretation of all 304 stories, the researcher became quickly overwhelmed by the need to synthesise and organise a large amount of data in a way that could usefully speak to this study's research questions. The researcher firstly decided to split each participant's completion of stories from a single lengthy document, to an individual document for each story, so that each could be indexed and sorted. The researcher then found it useful to categorise the oppositions and enthymemes with the major (and sometimes minor) premise through coding. The researcher did not attempt to further separate and sort each coded premise, because the coded premises only had meaning when situated within the whole story.

Coding data is said to increase a researcher's ability to see the links, pathway and intersections within and between narrator's stories (Huberman & Miles 1994). The codes utilised in this study were generated both inductively (data-driven) and deductively (theory-driven). Inductive codes were derived instinctively during the process of analysis of the data as outlined above. Deductive codes were adapted from the five key tenets of CRT introduced in Chapter 2⁶⁵ (p14) i.e. whiteness, privilege, colourblindness, meritocracy, normalised racism, interest convergence, intersection, majoritarian/minoritarian view. The critical race approach to coding allowed the researcher to fully explore this study's research questions and explore diverging opinions and/or commonalities between, and within, groups of storytellers, consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The analytic and interpretative process

⁶⁵ Briefly recapping: The first acknowledges racism as so pervasive and ingrained in societal structures, that it appears 'normal' and 'natural'. The second acknowledges the role and power of white supremacy in creating and reinforcing racial subordination and maintaining white privilege. The third states that effect of interest convergence does not motivate the white elite to end racism and points to the failure of notions such as 'merit' 'neutrality' and 'colour-blindness'. The fourth argues that racial inequality does not operate to the exclusion or disregard of other forms of injustice. The final tenet employs minority voice, in the form of storytelling, to counter the myths, presuppositions, and received understandings that make up the (white) dominant, majoritarian view.

took in excess of 24 months and the process did not change dramatically over the course of analysing all 304 stories.

There were numerous advantages to adopting a critical-race-informed, narrative-analysis and coding process. One of the distinct benefits of critical race narrative analysis is that it revealed a great deal of information about the stories embedded in the interviews, which ultimately enabled a greater depth on inquiry. Regular reviewing of the original transcripts enabled the researcher to make more apparent the way that the participants were making sense of their realities. The construction and interpretation of oppositions and enthymemes permitted the researcher to move beyond the popular (often neutral) terminology that participants used to describe their experiences, and experiences of others (and sometimes obscure them). For example, the participants often spoke in terms of group membership without naming its realities i.e. 'my culture', 'my group', 'us', 'my friends', 'my class', 'my community', 'they', 'they're', and 'them'. Critical race narrative analysis therefore provided a systematic way in which to explore what the participant intended when they used these words, privileging both explicit and implicit meanings.

Critical race informed coding was also useful in the management of large amounts of data and greatly assisted in the identification of similarities and differences within stories and across narrators. Critical race coding also helped to confirm intuitive conclusions that had been drawn through familiarity with the data and background reading in CRT.

4.4.2 Quantitative Data

The 'Statistical Package for Social Science' (SPSS) was utilised to manage and analyse this study's survey data. The analysis conducted consisted largely of descriptive statistics (cross tabulation and frequencies) and bi-variate statistics (mean and one way ANOVA). Each survey was coded and programmed into a blank dataset in order to carry

out statistical analysis, and where possible test for significance (significant at $p < 0.05$). Each question and category of the survey was assigned a numeric value. For example in the case of the Likert questions – strongly agree = 1 through strongly disagree = 5. Each question and statement response was assigned numeric values, so each could be subjected to separate statistical analysis. Where a survey response was deemed ‘not applicable’ it was coded with a ‘-8’ (see for example Q3 Appendix 3). Where a response was ‘missing’ it was coded with a ‘-9’.

When analysing student experiences such as ‘I have had the opportunity to:’ ‘discuss issues that are in the news’, ‘discuss/debate sensitive issues in class,’ or ‘vote in a school election’, the mean and frequency table functions were used. When examining reported experiences between different groups of students i.e. Grade 9 or those who are a member of the student government, cross tabulation and chi-square functions were utilised. Where a categorical variable such as race or program (magnet/mainstream student) was compared with a Likert scale variable i.e. ‘I am proud to be a U.S. citizen’ or ‘I do not respect the adults in my community’, the one-way ANOVA test was used to ascertain statistical significance.

4.4.3 Presentation

For all narrative researchers, a central question revolves around which voices, or even voice, researchers use as they represent the narratives of those they study. This question is particularly poignant for researchers who present the narratives of a very small number of individuals, or even a single person in their works (Chase 2005:652).

CRT seeks to construct knowledge of the workings of white supremacy by juxtaposing the narratives of marginalised groups against the dominant hegemonic narratives of whites (Yosso 2006), telling a counter-story. According to Yosso:

“Counterstories seek to document that persistence of racism from the perspectives of those injured and victimized by its legacy... [to] bring

attention to those who courageously resist racism and struggle toward a more socially and racially just society.”

(Yosso 2006:10)

CRT asserts that counterstories have a ‘destructive function’ in that they have the capacity to show the reader that what they “believe is ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel”. They can show the reader the way out of the “trap of unjustified exclusion”, and they can help the reader “understand that it is time to reallocate power” (all Delgado 2000:61)

Any critical race counter-story in education must begin with an understanding that inadequate educational conditions limit equal access and opportunities in the schooling of black children (consistent with the tenets of CRT). The choice of counter-stories as the most appropriate and desirable method of presentation in this study, is of a direct result of the researcher’s firm belief that counter stories afford the most empowering message, and the greatest opportunity to move toward the aim of “critique and transformation, [and] restitution and emancipation” (Guba & Lincoln 2005:194). Counter-stories maximise the potential for intimate, emotional and intellectual contact with the reader and are an effective way of achieving a common meeting place between this study’s participants and the reader.

4.4.4 Rigour

The construction of stories, oppositions and enthymemes during narrative analysis illustrates the importance of understanding the context in which the data were given i.e. not trying to perform analysis on stories that completely removed from their original context. In the case of this study, it is also important to point out that interpretations were not conducted to the exclusion of data collected by other methods i.e. from participant observations, informal dialogues, documentary analysis, and survey data. The contextual understandings when triangulated with data generated by other

methods provided greater confidence in the researcher's interpretation of participants' stories.

4.5 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

A CRT epistemology demands a researcher explores his or her own beliefs, experiences, and meanings because they influence "what, how, and why we research" (Ladson-Billings 2000:268). Researchers must be aware "of ways in which the researcher's identity unavoidably contributes to the kind and quality of the information we gather" (Bhavnani 1990:184). LeCompte and McLaughlin (1994) usefully explored how someone from white power and privilege can arrogate the ability to research those people who may not have it. The researchers own identification as a white British woman, outside the black American identity may raise questions. Authors such as Parham et al. (1999) argue that 'cross-cultural understanding' to be nigh impossible, presuming that a person must be originate from within a certain culture to truly understand it. Such authors also suggest that people from a certain background should not seek truth and understanding beyond their own reality.

Obbo (1997) discussed the importance of researchers being able to reach beyond 'territorial claims' of community so that the researcher may learn about a particular community or situation. In this case, the researcher was neither black, nor American, but was never the less open to other ways of knowing that were until very recently, foreign. In acknowledging one's own whiteness and white privilege; a task that has taken several years and was often uncomfortable, the researcher must ultimately be the one to adjust. The researcher cannot expect to understand the participants in this study stood firmly within (Eurocentric) perceptions and paradigms as a white British

female, this would do a gross injustice to those marginalised and hidden voices that this thesis seeks specifically to understand and expose.

Additionally, Bhavnani pointed out that researchers outside a cultural group can produce theoretical notions that an insider might not see because of one's own social difference from the group being examined. Therefore, being outside the black cultural group, and at a social distance from American culture more broadly, offered a significant advantage. The researcher was the 'other' in this study and was treated as exotic in the CHS environment. Participants from each group studied wanted to educate the 'exotic-other' in the norms, mores, values and beliefs of the school, community, education streams and racial groups. As discussed in this chapter (p86) the researcher took *every* opportunity offered to fully immerse in the lived realities of the participants, encountering everyday experiences alongside them: slowly but surely wedging open access to dialogues that would have been ordinarily unavailable. The narratives offered by the participants in this study are believed to be far richer and less reserved than if the researcher had been a white-American female.

Finally, prior to embarking on PhD studies, the researcher was working as a fully qualified teacher, predominantly in the post-16 sector (secondary/college of further education). The researcher's particular strengths were in teaching 'disaffected youths' with social and/or emotional behavioural issues. As such, fully immersing oneself in the lived realities of the teenage participant's (to include those activities listed on p.86) came naturally. The researcher was also very comfortable approaching those students who were more difficult to access, which greatly aided the researcher's desire to seek narratives beyond those 'choice students' that were 'recommended as good candidates' by the school administration (fieldnotes). Of note, only one of the 'recommended' students ultimately became a participant in this study (see Isaiah – Chapter 5).

4.6 IN SUM

As described and illustrated in this chapter, critical scholars *know* that CRT can be used to illuminate the oppressive realities which mediate the experiences of black students. A distinct advantage of utilising critical race scholarship is that it acknowledges the century-long struggle that black scholars have endured to understand the experiences of black people from a Eurocentric perspective. Utilising CRT as a methodological and theoretical framework, which centralises the experiences of black people, allows critical scholars to challenge the dominant ideologies and dismantle the Eurocentricity of traditional research paradigms (Huber 2008).

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) highlight the need to develop critical race methodologies that explicitly utilise a CRT lens to reveal the experiences of and responses to racism in education, a call that this thesis seeks to respond to. Utilising a critical race methodology to respond to this study's research questions, this study will make a direct challenge to dominant, Eurocentric beliefs and notions of objectivity, meritocracy and race neutrality that all function to justify social inequalities at CHS (Huber 2008); and also put forward transformative solutions to racial subordination in institutional structures (Creswell 2007).

Chapter 5 will introduce the reader to the empirical chapters of this study through vignettes of the 'main characters' of this study. The writing of participant vignettes was not only an effective way for the researcher to become familiar with the data, but was also an important way of reporting data that offered a holistic description of participants to readers of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Main Characters

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 4, narratives are the “primary way by which human experience is made meaningful” (Polkinghorne 1988:1 p90). Each of this study’s participants is introduced in this chapter, culturally situating each within the field. Not intended to be a comprehensive account of each, or indeed representative of all individuals encountered during this study’s fieldwork, this chapter aims only to highlight things that made each of this study’s participants distinctive.

Whilst it is acknowledged that anonymity is an important ethical, practical and epistemological issue, it is not believed that a blanket process of anonymising all background data is appropriate to this critical race study. Understanding participants’ agency, as complex social beings, is arguably impossible if the participant’s own stories are decontextualised through anonymisation. Thus, whilst the participants, school (to include the school colour) and county names have all been changed, all other data contained in the following vignettes are factually accurate.

5.2 THE 'WHITE KIDS'⁶⁶

5.2.1 Matt – The Young Republican

Matt was an intellectually ambitious and academic type, who was best known for his roles as President of the Young Republicans Club, and Treasurer of the Student Government. He was also heavily involved in the CHS debating team and was an enthusiastic member of the varsity Lacrosse team. Matt described himself as a “*moderate Christian... (raised in) a Jewish family... by two loving parents*” (field notes), and believed his parents to be “*true Republicans*” (field notes). Matt’s dad was a successful local realtor (estate agent), and his mum an administrative member of the Hurricane County School Board.

The researcher first met Matt before the new school year had commenced, during a welcome evening for the incoming cohort of accelerated education students and their parents. The evening was a celebration of those students who had successfully demonstrated the necessary academic prowess at middle school to secure places on CHS’s highly prized, competitive-entry program (hereafter ‘magnet program’ and ‘magnet students’). Matt, a magnet student himself was dressed in a navy suit with a golden tie that complemented the school’s official colour. He could be seen moving throughout the room encouraging new freshmen⁶⁷ to sign up for the CHS Student Government and Young Republicans Club. He also could be seen giving prospective students and their families a thorough account of the “*college admissions benefits in being a member of a high school student government*” (field notes), and being politically active; in addition to answering any questions new students had about the magnet program

⁶⁶ ‘The *white kids*’ was a phrase used by students and teachers alike, when referring to the white (non-Hispanic) students at CHS

⁶⁷ The four years of high school (and four years of college/university) are respectively referred to as ‘freshman year’ (Grade 9 of school), ‘sophomore year’ (Grade 10), ‘junior year’ (Grade 11), and ‘senior year’ (Grade 12).

itself. The researcher approached Matt towards the end of the evening and asked for a leaflet about the CHS Student Government.

Matt was then a high school senior, who had ambitions of attending an elite American university and enrolling on a double major in Political Science and Economics. He had a strong academic record but was not always popular amongst his mainstreamed⁶⁸ (non-magnet) peers. Matt was always quick to turn the conversation to politics, and considered himself a “*traditional supporter of the Republican Party...*” with a “*laissez-faire capitalist philosophy*” (field notes). Matt believed, “[that] *being able to understand and describe yourself politically, and your opponents... [was] essential to understanding goals and predicting tactics.*”

Matt described himself as “*fiscal libertarian*” who believed in free trade, low (or nonexistent) taxes, and minimal (or nonexistent) corporate regulation. He also claimed to be a “*social conservative*”, in that he was firmly anti-abortion, anti-same sex marriage (and relationships), pro abstinence (and abstinence only education), anti-divorce, and anti-pornography and promiscuity. He was a firm supporter of the First and Second Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and a passionate believer in the right to bear arms. Matt took great pride in ‘the American story’ and its symbols, to include the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

In response to the question, “*what do the CHS Young Republicans see as their mandate?*” Matt replied:

“That we be truthful about the Democrats and their dangerous ideas like Medicaid for all⁶⁹... [That we] inspire new members to join us... inspire students to be politically active... I don't think we (speaking now of the Republican Party more broadly) need to change the message of fiscal sanity, solid morals and character, but we need to get the leaders to rebuild and rebrand. We need them to listen to us (Young Republicans) about social media, about keeping up with ways to reach young people... get us involved.”

⁶⁸ Those on the mainstream academic track, who gained admission to the school via designated school zoning (or boundaries).

⁶⁹ Which later became known as the Affordable Care Act and commonly referred to as ‘Obamacare’

5.2.2 Bridget – The High School Cheerleader

Bridget was a high school movie stereotype. Bridget was a 17-year-old high school senior who was a varsity cheerleader and a former competitive gymnast. Bridget was also hugely proud of her Irish heritage (her great grandparents emigrated after the war). She was the picture of health and youth: her skin was luminous, her eyes a verdant green, her hair a mesmerising auburn; she had an enviable figure in her gold cheer uniform, and did not go un-noted by her male peers. Bridget drove a new style VW Beetle convertible, in a “*duck-egg blue*”, and came from an affluent family. She was raised a “Catholic girl” (field notes) who believed in “*good family values, the sanctity of marriage and the preservation of [herself] for her future husband*” (field notes), although rumours refuted her last claim. She had a disposition that was somewhat opinionated, but she had a strong group of friends and was a popular student.

Bridget did not achieve the necessary test scores to secure a place on the CHS magnet program, but that didn’t matter, she tried, and that was all that counted to her parents. Bridget did however achieve good enough results in grades 9 and 10 to be enrolled on a number of accelerated program courses (AP courses or ‘college prep’ classes) in grades 11 and 12.

The researcher first noticed Bridget whilst sitting high on the bleachers⁷⁰ before a CHS football game⁷¹; the CHS football team could be seen rehearsing their ‘plays’ and the cheer squad practiced their ‘cheers’ and formations. The majority of the cheer team were black, and several were overweight (some grossly), yet this posed no barrier to tricks, flips and kicks. The CHS cheer squad challenged every assumption the researcher had garnered from the movies. Bridget, dressed in a shimmering gold uniform, took up her spot in the front centre, and made an immediate visual impact with her now floodlit auburn hair and twinkling gold pompoms. The researcher turned to the Drill Team Chief

⁷⁰ Tiered rows of metal benches commonly found at sports fields and other spectator events

⁷¹ ‘Football’ in this study will always refer to American Football and not soccer. CHS did not have a soccer team.

(see 'Poppa' this chapter) and suggested that the CHS cheer squad was "*more inclusive than portrayed in a typical American high school movie*". He agreed, but added that:

"Times, they have changed... being a cheerleader is really not what it used to be... If y'all ask me, serious kids don't waste time with cheer; there will always be exceptions of course... Gone are the days where the cheer captains were good all rounders' athletically and academically; now it's just a social club that supports the footballers... most of them girls down there wont even finish school" (field notes)

The researcher waited until the game had finished to say hello to Bridget and her team.

5.2.3 Gabbi – The (Unlikely) Student Government President

Gabbi was a high school senior and popular amongst the mainstream students. Gabbi was mostly known for "*doin the impossible*" (field notes) by being democratically elected as President of the CHS Student Government despite being a mainstream student who was unlikely to graduate with a standard high school diploma. Gabbi became a mainstream student body champion overnight, and was very much an exception and not the rule when it came to CHS student body presidents.

The researcher met Gabbi during the first student government meeting of the year, after being invited to attend by Matt (section 5.2.1). She sat somewhat reservedly at the 'head table' in an overly large CHS volleyball jumper. Alongside her sat the 'vice president', 'the speaker', and Matt 'the treasurer'. Every student in the room had hand crafted a poster detailing their name and position (if they had one) and cello-taped it to the edge of their desk facing into the room, which was set up conference style. Gabbi had chosen a black piece of paper and scribed 'Gabbi' and 'Da Prez' in gold glitter glue and hung it off the edge of the desk.

Gabbi was 'voted to office' at the end of the 2009/2010 school year, and the researcher was informed by a member of staff during a 9th grade course meeting that it was "*the black and Mexican vote got her there*", suggesting that "*they don't usually vote*" (field notes). Gabbi had joined the student government at the end of her sophomore year

(some 10 months before her election), and shortly after she was elected, the school administrators decided it was unfair on those who had joined the student government at the beginning of their freshman year. The following year the rules were changed.

Gabbi remained quiet despite her evident popularity amongst the mainstream student body. What became quickly evident is that her election did not sit well with the other members of the student government (particularly the other elected members) who would frequently interrupt her. The researcher first spent time with Gabbi during lunch, after agreeing to help her on the CHS booster⁷² stall. The stall sold all sorts of golden merchandise; many items also included the CHS logo. Items included: jumpers, t-shirts, jewellery, wristbands, baseball caps, bags, badges, cooler boxes, mugs, cups, sports bottles, socks, cuddly toys, pencils, pens, towels, bleacher seat pads, clackers, pompoms and whistles. The table was a sea of CHS gold, all ready for the new school term and the incoming freshmen, which were easily the biggest audience that afternoon (spending \$1000s).

Gabbi described herself as coming from a *“loving... liberal Christian home... but nothing too serious”* (field notes). She lived with her mum, step dad and *“much older waster brother, who still lived at home”* (field notes). Her step dad worked for the local electric company and her mom was a Hurricane County school volunteer⁷³, normally spending most of her time helping out at CHS. Gabbi described herself as a liberal, both political and socially and *“hated the fact so many people think its ok to talk shit about the way other people live their lives... If y’all’s a good and kind person, that’s all that matters”*.

⁷² A ‘booster’ club is an organisation that is formed to support (e.g. coordinate events and raise money) a school-associated club, sports team, or even the school itself. Booster clubs are popular in American schools and are generally organised by parents and other external sponsors.

⁷³ Hurricane County Volunteers (pseudonym) are volunteers who work closely with school administrators and teachers in the county public schools. They assist with projects and activities, help keep records, help prepare instructional materials, interact with students, read books, listen to children read (in elementary schools), prepare AV equipment (in middle and high schools), assist with testing, review homework, and perform clerical duties and offer support to extra curricular activities, on a voluntary (unpaid) basis.

She was deeply passionate about issues of social justice and was outspoken and critical of the public school system.

Gabbi had her struggles in school, but she tried hard and maintained an average (but passing) GPA score. Gabbi hoped to be not only the first to graduate from high school in her family, but also the first to go to college. Gabbi's mum was very involved with her education and the schools she attended, and had high hopes for her daughter. Gabbi's mum had been saving money in a Florida Prepaid⁷⁴ account since Gabbi was a child. Following graduation, Gabbi hoped to get her "*associates*"⁷⁵ at a local community college, which had a transfer pathway to a "*full bachelors*" in social work (field notes). Gabbi hoped her involvement with the CHS student government would help her application to the local junior college.

5.3 THE TEACHERS

5.3.1 Bud – Teaching the 'Good Fight' (Against Republicans)

Bud was the very first person encountered at CHS, after kindly agreeing to meet with the researcher during the summer break to discuss research plans. Bud was a stout man who had thick grey hair, and a wonderful smile. Bud, a career social studies teacher at CHS, was due (more accurately overdue) to retire in 2012. He was well known, both

⁷⁴ At today's rate, a Florida prepaid plan for a 4-year undergraduate course will cost \$361 (£223) per month from birth to 18, a total investment of \$77,976 (£48,228). This will entitle the student to an estimated \$140,216 worth of education at age 18 (estimated future cost). Regardless of tuition rate inflation over the 18-year period, the student will receive 100% of the total education costs from 2030 through 2034, a promise protected by Florida statute (this however does not include room and board – \$881 per month would be required for all costs to be covered in 2030-2033). If a student does not gain entry to a 4-year university course, the plan credit can be transferred to a 4 year or 2 year community college course. If the student does not continue in education the plan can be transferred to another family member, or refunded less interest gained.

⁷⁵ An associate degree is an undergraduate academic degree awarded by community colleges, junior colleges, technical colleges, bachelor's degree-granting colleges, and universities upon completion of a course of study usually lasting two years. An associate degree is often equivalent to the first two years of a university degree and is comparable to a HND in the UK.

within and beyond the walls of CHS and was, for the most part, well respected. A former CHS student himself, Bud could recall the days before and after 'integration':

"The local 'Negro' school, as they called it then, shut its doors in the 60's and all the black kids in Hurricane were transferred to CHS. [It was] the first time in Hurricane, all the kids shared the same high school (field notes)"

Bud would recount the early days of public school integration at CHS, following the Brown decision⁷⁶. He described for example a scene where *"the black kids were forced to walk over a 12 by 8 mosaic confederate flag [that] spanned the whole damned front foyer... right where the kids walk in"* (field notes). He explained how the black students would walk around the narrow un-tiled edges to avoid touching the flag, a symbol many black students at CHS had come to hate⁷⁷. According to Bud, *"it was the first of many insults served to the new students during that time"* (field notes). The mosaic flag was removed several years later.

A self-confessed, *"screaming liberal"* who took his *"soapbox everywhere"*, Bud was a man who *"refused to play by the rules"* and was *"never afraid to cross the line"* (field notes). Bud loved teaching, it was his life, his passion, that and his extremely large family. During his life, Bud had fathered two biological children, had adopted 7 and had fostered more than 17. At one stage in Bud's life, his wife even moved into another house so they could accommodate more needy children.

Bud claimed that he had opted out of the capitalist game, arguing he *"wasn't in life for financial gain"*. He lived by choice in what was considered a poor area on the outskirts of the county, in a beautifully slumped colonial home that had succumbed to time and the local foliage. Bud considered himself to be a *"loose Christian"* (field notes), and he and his wife spent all they had on *"those more deserving"*. Every month Bud would

⁷⁶ Brown v Board of Education 1954

⁷⁷ Whether or not the confederate flag is a symbol of slavery, racism and discrimination is hotly contested. Some argue that the Confederate flag is a symbol of racism because the Southern states created the Confederacy in order to defend their 'right' to own slaves, whilst northern states wanted it abolished prior to the civil war. Others argue that it's simply a symbol of Southern heritage and symbolic of an alternate form of government.

order \$200 worth of pizza for students who had signed up to STAND⁷⁸; a student led club mentored by Bud that aimed to stand up for those affected by racism and prejudice. During the club periods (usually at lunch) he would explore with the group, issues to include: bullying, suicide, homosexuality, Islamophobia, “*Christian jihadists*” and religious fundamentalism more broadly. Regardless of origin, most of the time the sessions ended with Bud’s favorite polemics about “*the damned Republicans*” (field notes). For example:

“Republicans have always been on the wrong side of every issue concerning ordinary Americans. The only sensible conclusion is, that despite their Christian family values garbage, the damned Republicans are nothing more than a criminal organisation that betray ordinary Americans in favor of corporocrisy (defined by Bud as corporate-hypocrisy)”.

Bud went to great lengths to accommodate this study’s ambitions, and with his assistance the researcher was afforded an access-all-areas year at CHS; becoming part of the fabric of school life as one of the staff, one of the students, and so familiar that the researcher enjoyed many great freedoms within the school.

5.3.2 Jeb – Fighting Liberal Bias in Schools

Jebediah, known only as Jeb, was in his early 50’s and a very proud man, teacher and father to two teenage daughters. Jeb would say, “*a rising tide floats all boats,*” arguing that in a profession where his income was determined by the “*ability of the public to pay their taxes*”, it was vital to have a strong economy, and “*Obama will not deliver that*” he warned his colleagues (field notes). Jeb was a “*firm Christian man*” who cared about “*family values and the importance of strong and stable social structures in society*”. As a self-confessed staunch supporter of the Republican Party, he believed it was only the Republicans who could deliver those values.

The researcher met Jeb in the staff room before the first day of term, and Jeb stood

⁷⁸ Pseudonym

out for his unconcealed support for the Republican Party engaging passionately and openly in sometimes heated political discussions with Bud.

Jeb considered himself “*different to other social science teachers*” (field notes). He remembered his early experiences as a trainee teacher where he “*was placed with a woman that had so many inappropriate left-leaning pieces of propaganda and teaching materials in her room*”. He recalled that her students were surrounded by:

“Stickers and posters with political slogans and images that attacked them continuously... There was this sticker on her desk that stated ‘Hey Congress, Don’t let Bush Ruin Social Security’. What purpose does displaying this sticker to a classroom of kids have? She poisoned her kids and I vowed never to poison mine”.

Jeb strongly believed that liberal-left social studies teachers do not seek to enlighten and educate their students, but rather seek to destructively indoctrinate them. Jeb furthered that “*liberal students feel encouraged and safe, while non-liberal students are threatened and made to feel unsafe*”. He even suggested when he was training that non-liberal students were told their views were not Christian and were even evil. Jeb firmly believed that there were:

“So many liberal teachers in US schools, that I will struggle with it for the rest of my working life... If I can counter the current situation (liberal bias) by sticking to the mandate, teaching the facts and knowledge the kids need for their exams, I will have succeeded as a teacher.”

5.4 THE ‘BLACK KIDS’

5.4.1 Trey – The High School Footballer

Trevaris, better known as Trey, was a then high school junior. Trey was a strong young man who stood at 6’3” and weighed 210lbs (or so the team sheet said). Trey suggested that he did not identify as a ‘black’, stating, “*I ain’t black y’all, I’m midnight. That kid over there is black* (gesturing to a lighter skinned black male)!” Trey had a playful character

but proved to be very particular about his skin tone and ancestry. He was very proud of his midnight skin and believed himself to be a “*real black, not like Obama*”. Trey was a formidable young man to look at when he was not smiling, maybe due to his years of football training; he had a terrifying ‘psych-out’ stare. Trey was not one of the most popular students, despite having the revered footballer status at CHS.

Trey found the researcher sitting alone in the social studies staff room one afternoon as he made his way to the fridge to retrieve his lunch. The researcher presumed, given that his lunch was already *in* the staff fridge, that Trey had permissions to be there. He said “Hey” and was met with a typically British remark about the weather. Trey was quickly fascinated by the British accent and suggested a number of events and activities that may be of interest to the researcher, to include “*Auctioning the Boys*” (field notes), a fund-raiser for the CHS football program later that day.

Trey’s journey was (and still is) a complex one. Trey was abandoned by his parents and spent much of his early years being bounced around extended family members. Trey became a ward of state and was subsequently housed in a local children’s unit. Despite his relative years Trey had been abused and had fathered a child, who did not survive infancy. Upon closure of the children’s unit, he found himself alone – the only ‘ward’ to have not secured alternative accommodation. The then manager of the children’s unit ended up asking her sixty-something year old husband if she could bring him home, to which he replied, “*No! No more. Can’t we just get a dog*” (field notes)? Needless-to-say, two days later her husband came home from work to find Trey sat on their couch; and Trey was adopted a year later as their own. The only problem for Trey is that his new parents were old and white, leaving him alienated, “*too white to be with the black kids, and too black to be with the white kids*” (field notes).

In pursuit of acceptance Trey was a self-confessed chameleon that would adopt different personas depending on the situation i.e. “*speak ghetto*” with certain friends, and “*speak proper*” when competing on the CHS Math team. Depending on when and where

the researcher met with Trey, different responses could be offered to the same questions. Although this raises obvious concerns with regards to using him as a participant, the researcher proceeded with caution, because the white, sixty-something year old man that said “No! No more” was Bud.

5.4.2 Jameeka – The Entrepreneurial Teen Mom (to Be)

Jameeka rebuffed the idea she was just another ‘statistic’ (being one of the 67.9 black teenage pregnancies for every 1,000 Florida teenagers⁷⁹). The researcher noticed Jameeka during lunch where she was found fixing a friend’s braids. The researcher commented on how talented she was, and in a strong southern accent she said, “*Sweet Jesus, y’all can just keep on talking*” (field notes). The researcher was swiftly ushered to the table and told she could eat lunch with the group on the proviso they were taught how to “*speak English... like in the movies*” (field notes); a challenge the researcher honoured most Friday lunch times.

Jameeka lived at home with her ‘mom’, two sisters, a younger brother and niece, regularly helping her mum to care for them. Jameeka had a GPA of 1.9 and was unlikely to graduate from CHS with a standard diploma, but that didn’t bother her or her mom. Jameeka, despite her young years, had a creative talent for hair design particularly in Afro hair. Jameeka, according to her ‘BFF⁸⁰’ Shanaya, “*gave the best damn weave in all town... theys all’s waiting for Jameeka to do them a weave*”. Jameeka vehemently opposed the suggestion she was just a “*stupid black girl who had ruined her life... [and will] be stuck on welfare cos her baby daddy ain’t around*⁸¹”. Jameeka was a strong and fiercely independent young woman who seemed beyond the years of her CHS peers. Her mother, who was a single mother and licenced nail technician, always instilled in Jameeka and

⁷⁹ Compared to 30.8 white teen pregnancies for every 1000 Floridian teens according to the Guttmacher Institute (Pinault 2012).

⁸⁰ Best friend forever.

⁸¹ Jameeka’s version of how others considered her.

her siblings the importance of being self-sufficient, and not relying on any one for money. Her mother would state, *"Y'all gotta get your own job that can support you... I ain't gonna do it"*.

Although Jameeka claimed she *"ain't need no man"*, she also suggested that the only man she could depend on is her (maternal) *"Granddaddy"*. Jameeka's dad left the family when she was young, but she maintained a relationship with him and he was present in her life. Jameeka believed that it did not matter whether or not her *"baby daddy gets his shit together, cos y'all know I got my family and friends"*. She suggested that in black families and communities (moms, aunties, meemaws⁸², cousins, friends, neighbours and the church), it didn't matter how the baby comes, because black people see raising a child as a collective responsibility and that everyone is there to help with school, work and childcare. Jameeka felt that because so many young black girls come from big families and have large support networks, it is often not carelessness, but a conscious decision to have a baby in high school. Jameeka even suggested that she *"knows some kids"* that have consciously chosen to have a child in high school to *"better they futures"* explaining that being an unmarried single mother affords the maximum financial assistance, which made affording college is a reality for many. To be a licenced cosmetologist and realise her dream of being a salon owner, Jameeka too would need to attend the local community college after high school after her baby is born.

5.4.3 Isaiah – The Aspiring Preacher

William-Isaiah (known more commonly as Isaiah) was the most astounding young man. According to Isaiah his parents picked a *"good strong biblical name"* and a *"neutral name"*. I met Isaiah in his senior year and he immediately struck me as *"passionate, humble and having an eloquence far surpassing his years"* (field notes). The only child born to his parents, Isaiah was afforded all the resources and time his parents could

⁸² Common Southern term meaning 'grandma'

offer. Isaiah's father was a full time cashier and part time hospital porter, and his mum was a hospital janitor⁸³.

Isaiah's parents had high aspirations for their son and had paid for private tuition since he was 3 years old. Isaiah said that his parents "*sacrificed all they had*" and could remember times when his parents paid his tuition bill instead of running the air conditioning unit in their family trailer⁸⁴. His parent's investment and Isaiah's own determination to succeed were both rewarded in 2008, when Isaiah secured a place on the coveted magnet program at CHS⁸⁵. However, Isaiah acknowledged his 'prize' to be bittersweet, admitting that he had never travelled more than 50 miles from his home and had only seen the sea twice in his life due to a lack of disposable income. In addition, he recalled his parents spending very little time together as he was growing up, due to their relentless and often conflicting schedules and their unfaltering determination to pay for Isaiah's tuition. He recalled sleeping alone on several occasions, but assured the researcher that his community were like extended family, and that all the families in the neighbourhood all helped each other to "*survive*" (field notes). He spoke very fondly of his 'trailer park' community on many occasions.

Arriving from a majority black middle school, Isaiah quickly learned that he was one of very few black magnet students at CHS, and the sole black member of the student government, but that did not concern him; he viewed it as another challenge to be overcome. Isaiah considered himself a "*moderate independent thinker*" believing what is of "*ultimate importance is the truth, or at the very least, seeking the truth with the goal of achieving what is morally right*". He believed that what America needed is "*individuals who have the courage to question their government when... leaders are making questionable decisions*". Isaiah spoke passionately of justice and equality for the black

⁸³ Cleaner

⁸⁴ Mobile home (static caravan)

⁸⁵ He narrowly missed out on a competitive entry middle school magnet three years prior due to standardised test scores.

community and believed that it is time the “*black liberals and conservatives should unite [with] the goal of uplifting the black community as a whole [as both] face similar obstacles.*”

Isaiah aspired to be a pastor of a liberal church, and hoped to use his position in the community to inspire the next generation and unite divided communities – but only once he had secured an academic scholarship to an elite university to study Philosophy and Theology.

5.4.4 DeShawn – Founder of S.I.S.T.A.S

DeShawn was a college junior⁸⁶ who, although not a former CHS student, had a strong bond with many of CHS’s female students. The researcher first noticed DeShawn raising her voice to a small group of black female students. DeShawn was not in uniform, and appeared a little young to be a teacher at CHS. She was described as “*preaching at the group*” about “*the lord giving such great gifts*” (field notes). DeShawn was expressing real discontent with the student’s lack of interest in their “*God given talents*” (field notes). When the students had made their way to the buses, she remained and began typing something into her phone. The researcher approached and said “Hi”.

DeShawn was an attractive, well dressed and articulate young woman, who identified herself sharply using her credentials; a former high school ‘honor roll’ student with a GPA of 3.2, now training to be a nurse (3rd year). DeShawn was a member of the local chapter of the ΔΣΘ Sorority (Delta Sigma Theta⁸⁷) and founder of S.I.S.T.A.S. at CHS. I asked her to explain S.I.S.T.A.S., however she abruptly suggested that she had

⁸⁶ At a 4 year degree granting institution

⁸⁷ Delta Sigma Theta (ΔΣΘ) is a not-for profit sorority of college-educated women dedicated to public service with an emphasis on programs that target the African American community. Established in 1913 their mantra ‘Transforming lives, Impacting communities’ is accomplished via a sisterhood of more than 300,000 predominately Black college-educated women who use their “collective strength to promote academic excellence; to provide scholarships; to provide support to the underserved; educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy; and to highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities” (see <http://www.deltasigmatheta.org>).

"exhausted her volunteer hours for the day" and suggested I attend the next meeting if I *"really wanted to know more"* (field notes). The researcher agreed to attend, knowing nothing further about S.I.S.T.A.S.

The researcher managed to find S.I.S.T.A.S. on Facebook, and although not a member, it could be seen from the 'about' page that S.I.S.T.A.S. was an abbreviation for Sisters, Inspiring, Supporting, Teaching, Achieving, and Success, and DeShawn was listed the founder.

The researcher arrived early to the meeting, and went straight into the statement, *"You know S.I.S.T.A.S. is for Black women right?"* DeShawn seemed uncertain by the continued presence of the researcher, thus the researcher offered to leave. For the first time at CHS the researcher felt unwelcome. Taking a seat in the corner, 30 to 40 young black women could be observed spilling into the CHS conference room adjacent to the school library. There were more students than chairs, and they too were confused by the presence of the researcher in the corner. For many reasons no notes or recordings were taken during the meeting.

DeShawn conducted the meeting in a commanding style: register, items for discussion, items outstanding from last week, items for further consideration. On the agenda were college scholarships and applications, the upcoming Thanksgiving food drive and any other items as generated by the group. Following the meeting DeShawn appeared softer and talked passionately about her hopes and desires for the young women at her 'meet'. DeShawn's philosophy was *"ain't no one going to do it for you"*. S.I.S.T.A.S. was not about adjusting poor black kids who are at risk of become statistics (contrary to popular belief); it was instead about empowering young black women to make informed decisions and invest in their own destiny, the 'choice' to succeed. DeShawn believed the black community were *"happy to let their hopes and dreams fall second to men and their families"* (field notes). She stressed, *"a sister gotta use what the dear Lord gave her"* (field notes). What was distinctive about DeShawn was she felt

educational underachievement stemmed from within the Black community's psyche believing them to "*give up and give in [to society] too soon... we need to light a fire in our hearts (burning desire)*" she asserted (field notes).

5.5 OTHER IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS

The following empirical chapters also draw reference to a number of other individuals with whom the researcher did not conduct full interviews, but never the less met with on numerous occasions during the course of the fieldwork. They are here briefly introduced.

Chase (white) was Matt's friend, and a fellow member of the CHS magnet program and Young Republicans Club. Chase was the youngest of three siblings by nearly 19 years, playfully claiming his nephew to be "*weirdly older than him*" (field notes). Chase's parents got divorced when he was in middle school, and he now lived with his dad (a plastic surgeon) who later married a "*much younger woman*" (field notes). Chase hoped to either "*become President, or fly commercial aircraft*" but was going to wait and see how the former worked out. Chase's dad, a local celebrity ⁸⁸ was an overt supporter of the Republican Party campaign, and was rumoured to have made several 'sizable contributions' (in addition to donating cosmetic procedures for auction prizes). **Janelle** (white) was Bridget's lifelong friend and they remained close throughout schooling. Both girls attended the same local Catholic Church since birth and competed on the same gymnastics team until entering high school. Janelle was the only CHS cheerleader that enrolled on the CHS magnet program and she took cheering as seriously as academics.

⁸⁸ Medical doctors or MDs (especially cosmetic surgeons/dermatologists/dentists) were given celebrity status around town. Their faces splashed across high profile signs, billboards, magazines and flyers around Hurricane. 'Celebrity' doctors could be found in almost every restaurant in town eating lunch and/or dinner still wearing their surgical scrubs, stethoscopes and pagers. Wearing scrubs often permitted you to queue jump when waiting for a table.

She hated the assumption that “*all cheerleaders are dumb*” and that they only do it to “*get footballers*” (field notes). **Yana** (white-Argentinian-American) was Gabbi’s ‘BFF’, even describing her as being “*in my family*” (field notes). Even though the two had only met during high school, they formed an unlikely bond. Yana felt saddened that too many of her Spanish-speaking peers associated only with other Spanish speakers at CHS. Yana was a self-classified “*first generation Argentinian-American*” born in the U.S. to her doctor parents who emigrated from Argentina in the 60s.

NJROTC⁸⁹ Master Chief (white) was a strapping (although now somewhat overweight) military man. He *was* married with no children, although he would have “*loved a whole damned NFL team*” (field notes). ‘**Poppa**’ (as he was more fondly known by CHS students) like most naval science instructors⁹⁰, was a retired US marine who wore service medals each uniform day with great pride. Poppa had several ‘bumper stickers’ on his sedan, notably “Vietnam Vet”, “Freedom is not Free – Thank a Vet” and, “If you can read this... thank a teacher – If you can read this in ENGLISH thank a SOLDIER”. Poppa could often be found barking orders across the yard in a fashion worthy of a Full Metal Jacket⁹¹ scene: “*Come on now y’all... I am hard kids, but I am fair... There is no bigotry in the military, we are all equals, just as the good lord intended... 1, 2, 3, 4, CHS Junior Corps*”.

Shanaya (black) was Jameeka’s friend and had been for a number of years. They met in kindergarten and grew up a couple of streets apart. Shanaya was one of six children and her family was very involved with the church. Shanaya had ambitions of joining the ministry like her older ordained brother, and was presently a teen councillor at her church, and had even started an initiative collecting shoes for poverty-stricken families in Haiti. Shanaya described herself a “*God loving Christian*” and was a firm

⁸⁹ Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps

⁹⁰ Those who teach on the NJROTC courses

⁹¹ Full Metal Jacket is a 1987 war film directed and produced by Stanley Kubrick. The story follows a platoon of U.S. Marines through their training, and then the experiences of two of the platoon in the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War.

believer that “*humans are flawed... here to love and to learn*”, and most importantly “*Jesus loves*” (field notes). Shanaya did not criticise Jameeka for having a child out of wedlock, or that the baby’s father was already out of the child’s life prior to birth, because “*God loves Jameeka and her baby... [and] welcome[s] them both*”. Shanaya believed firmly that God had chosen a special path for her.

Dante (black) was the most fascinating, but additionally the most challenging participant in this study. The researcher knows nothing of his background, he would not permit such information: “*What the fuck that to you?*” The researcher would have wholeheartedly embraced an opportunity to conduct a full interview with Dante, but he would only allow brief informal conversation sporadically throughout the year (often when no one else was looking). Dante was an aggressive student, but was also popular amongst the black student body. Dante truly frightened a number of the teachers, but the researcher pursued dialogue with him on numerous occasions over the course of the school year. Why? Because he fully and unreservedly espoused his “*hate [for] white people*” and “*white man’s society*”:

“I hate the fact that everything that I do is judged by you (whites)... I hate that no matter where I go, the police will be in my face cos of y’all’s stupidity... I hate that I cannot live a free man cos y’all’s scared of the black man. I mean shit, if I walk pass the front of y’all house and say hi to y’all’s kids in the yard, or pick up y’all kids in the street cos they fallen off they damn scooters, y’all be reachin for your guns and callin the fucking cops... I hate that y’all don’t even have to think about these things... I live y’all’s hate every damn day. I angry, so fucking angry y’all....”

As far as Dante was concerned: “*you them (white) and they you (white)... so no, I don’t got shit to say (to a white person)*”. The researcher tried again a few weeks later, and a few weeks after that, and again after that.

5.6 IN SUM

The writing of vignettes was not only an effective way for the researcher to become familiar with the background interview data for each of this study's 'characters', but was also an important way of reporting data in its own right, offering a holistic description of the participants, so that the reader can better accept or refute the analysis and interpretation of the data presented in the subsequent four empirical chapters. As outlined in this and previous chapters, each of the characters presented here, will be utilised to 'narrate' the findings of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

No (White) Child Left Behind

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 2, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB 2001) contained the promise to raise the achievement of *all* school age students and enclosed the specific aim of ‘closing the gap’ by race, poverty, disability and language proficiency (U.S. Department of Education NEAP 1998). This chapter, the first of four empirical chapters, contributes to the project of scholarship aspired to by Critical Race Theory (CRT) in considering the role of the No Child Left Behind Act, and Florida’s response to it in the active structuring of inequality in schooling.

Chapter 6 addresses the first three research questions of this study. Section 6.2 speaks to **RQ1** and explores the **quantitative manifestations of the achievement gap at Central High School**. Section 6.3 investigates **RQ2** by exploring **student and teacher awareness’s, understandings, and experiences of, the reported achievement gaps in RQ1**, and the final section (Section 6.4) addresses **RQ3** by examining **who are ‘left behind’ by the current NCLB legislation?**

6.2 QUANTITATIVE MANIFESTATIONS OF ‘THE GAP’

Section 6.2 addresses **RQ1** by exploring the **quantitative manifestations of the achievement gap at Central High School** and **the relationship ‘the gap’ has with gender, free or reduced lunch eligibility, enrolment in standard or accelerated**

curriculum classes, and race. As outlined in Chapter 2, the No Child Left Behind legislation (hereafter NCLB) mandated that each state, district and school, annually collect and publically report data on their students' academic achievement as measured by each own state's devised instrument. It also stipulated that the data collected be desegregated by race, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, disability, gender, and migrant status. As outlined in Chapter 4 the Florida Department of Education is responsible for collating data for the State of Florida, and its website allows public access to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (hereafter FCAT) database⁹², which can present results desegregated by a number of factors, to include race (see FCAT Demographic Reports⁹³). The data presented in the next two sections pertains to the 2010-2011 school year, the 'testing period' (FCAT 2011) during which the overseas fieldwork of this study was conducted.

As outlined in Chapter 4, in the state of Florida⁹⁴, successful scores on *both* the FCAT math and reading examinations are required for graduation from high school with a standard diploma. To be considered 'successful', a student needs to score 'at or above grade level' in both tests i.e. a level 3 or higher on a 5 point scale. The following two sections examine the 2011 FCAT results for Mathematics and Reading separately for reasons of clarity, but firstly, a brief word on terms that are essential to this chapter.

6.2.1 A Brief Word on Terms

As quickly discussed in Chapter 4 (p84), FCAT testing data were not available for all groups outlined in **RQ1**, and as such a proxy had to be utilised in this study. Questionably omitted, from the Florida Bureau of K-12 Assessment FCAT reporting database is group

⁹² Florida Bureau of K-12 Assessment website

⁹³ Report database available online at: <https://app1.fldoe.org/FCATDemographics>

⁹⁴ In addition to FCAT requirements, the student must also successfully complete a 24-credit program of schooling, or complete an accelerated curriculum program equivalent e.g. International Baccalaureate qualification.

achievement data pertaining to ‘accelerated curriculum’ program students specifically, e.g. students enrolled in the competitive entry magnet at Central High School (hereafter CHS). ‘Standard’ curriculum group data was available by school, city and state level, as was group data for those classified as ‘gifted’, but no such data existed for the ‘magnet’ group. Students that have ‘gifted’ certification⁹⁵ and/or deemed ‘academically talented’⁹⁶ at middle school were actively encouraged to apply for admission to the CHS magnet program. School level data, published in the CHS magnet admissions information, indicated that 96% of all CHS magnet students met *both* ‘gifted’ and ‘talented’ criteria in 2009-2010. Incidentally only 3% of gifted students were enrolled on the ‘standard’ curriculum track after failing to meet standardised testing requirements for entry onto the magnet program. Given the high percentage of gifted students enrolled on the CHS magnet, and the low percentage on the standard curriculum track, in responding to **RQ1**, **RQ2** & **RQ3** of this study, FCAT testing data for the ‘gifted’ group at CHS is utilised as a proxy for the ‘magnet’ group.

6.2.2 FCAT Math

Table 1 (over) outlines CHS Grade 10 FCAT math results for the 2011 testing period. The table provides the: 1) number of students who sat the FCAT examination at CHS, 2) ‘mean scale score’⁹⁷ of the reported group, 3) percentage of CHS students achieving each score point (‘level 1’ [low] through ‘level 5’ [high]), and 4) percentage of students in each group that are deemed to be performing ‘at or above grade level’ (achieving ≥ 3). For comparative purposes, and to contextualise CHS FCAT data, the table also examines the percentage of students achieving ≥ 3 at the two other city limit high schools (Westside

⁹⁵ ‘Gifted’ - “intellectual development as measures by an intelligence quotient of two or more standard deviations above the mean on an individually administered standardised test of intelligence [IQ test]”, Hurricane County Website.

⁹⁶ ‘Talented’ – “above average curriculum based test scores – i.e. Level 5 FCAT in Grade 8”, CHS’ magnet admissions material.

⁹⁷ The arithmetical average test score by group.

High School and Eastside High School), and at state level. As outlined in Chapter 4 (p80), Westside was a majority white school with a minority rate⁹⁸ of 28%, and Eastside was majority black school with a minority rate of 78%. CHS had minority rate of 51% in 2010-2011.

TABLE 1: FCAT MATH RESULTS – DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT 2011 (GRADE 10)

Group Name	Total Students	MSS	% Earning each score point					CHS	WHS	EHS	State
			1	2	3	4	5	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3
Black	164	1908	29	34	20	16	2	37*	45	43	50
Hispanic/Latino(a)	30	1994	13	33	20	23	10	53*	86	94	68
White	215	2090	6	3	21	51	19	91	92	94	81
Female	229	2011	15	17	21	38	10	68*	81	65	69
Male	210	2015	16	17	20	33	14	67	82	69	72
Free/Reduced Lunch	148	1932	22	33	22	21	1	45	48	41	60
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	291	2054	12	9	19	43	17	79	91	88	81
Mainstream Curriculum	344	2043	11	16	20	39	15	73*	85	75	76
Magnet Curriculum ⁹⁹	99	2166	0	0	7	58	35	100	100	100	99

* Percentages in the above table may not sum to 100% because of rounding errors present in the original FCAT data

Looking at the data contained in Table 1, there was little observable difference in the percentage of male and female students at CHS achieving ≥3 (1%). At the other Hurricane schools, and at state level, males slightly outperformed their female counterparts in FCAT math. The table also shows that CHS students were 34% less likely to achieve ≥3 in maths if they were in receipt of free or reduced lunches, a finding reflected at the other schools and at state level. 100% of magnet students ('gifted'¹⁰⁰) at CHS achieved ≥3, with 93% of all magnet students scoring ≥4; a trend again reflected in the other city schools and at state level. Students on 'mainstream' curriculum track at

⁹⁸ The minority rate is the percentage of students attending a school who are considered to be a member of a minority group (including black, Hispanic, Asian and Indian).

⁹⁹ 'Gifted' data is utilised as a proxy for 'magnet' in this study, as discussed in section 6.2.1.

¹⁰⁰ 'Gifted' data is utilised as a proxy for 'magnet' data, as discussed in section 6.2.1.

CHS were 27% less likely to have achieved ≥ 3 in math than their magnet counterparts, and just over half of the mainstream curriculum students scored ≥ 4 (54%).

Looking at a student's race, this study finds that: 91% of white students and 37% of black students at CHS achieved ≥ 3 and thus eligible for graduation pending successful completion of FCAT Reading, and other school based requirements¹⁰¹. Black students were 16% less likely than their Hispanic/Latino(a) peers, and 54% less likely than their white peers, to achieve ≥ 3 in maths. Additionally, the black-white achievement gap at school and city level, was also more polarised than state averages for both groups, with white students *outperforming* state averages by 10-13%, and black students *underperforming* state averages by 5-13%.

6.2.3 FCAT Reading

Following the same format as the previous table (Table 1 p131), Table 2 outlines the results of the 2011 FCAT Reading test for CHS, WHS, EHS, and the State of Florida.

TABLE 2: FCAT READING RESULTS – DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT 2011 (GRADE 10)

Group Name	Total Students	Mean Scale Score	% Earning each score point					CHS	WHS	EHS	State
			1	2	3	4	5	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3
Black	167	233	40	37	13	8	2	23	26	18	30
Hispanic/Latino(a)	30	242	27	37	7	17	13	37*	64	88	48
White	219	256	5	16	22	37	20	79	83	89	63
Female	230	246	19	27	17	26	11	53	69	52	52
Male	216	246	21	25	18	22	14	54	69	50	51
Free/Reduced Lunch	155	235	35	34	15	12	3	30*	31	21	39
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	291	252	12	22	18	30	18	66	80	78	65
Mainstream Curriculum	347	250	15	24	19	26	16	61	73	59	56
Magnet Curriculum	99	266	0	5	20	39	35	95*	97	93	95

* Percentages in the above table may not sum to 100% because of rounding errors present in the original FCAT data

¹⁰¹ To include successful completion of a 24-credit program of schooling, or an accelerated curriculum program equivalent e.g. International Baccalaureate qualification.

Looking at the data contained in Table 2, there was little observable difference in the percentage of male and female students at CHS achieving ≥ 3 in FCAT Reading (1%); at the other schools and at state level, females slightly outperformed males. CHS students were 36% less likely to achieve ≥ 3 in reading if they are eligible for free or reduced meals, a trend also reflected in other city schools and across the state. 95% of CHS magnet students achieved ≥ 3 , with 74% scoring ≥ 4 . Of those enrolled on the mainstream curriculum, a lesser 61% were considered to have achieved ≥ 3 , with 42% scoring ≥ 4 . Again, magnet students outperformed their mainstream curriculum counterparts by 24%-39% score points at school, city and state level.

In examining the data by race, this study finds that 79% of white students and 23% of black students achieved ≥ 3 and would have been eligible to graduate high school pending successful completion of FCAT Maths and other school requirements. Black students were 14% less likely than their Hispanic/Latino(a) peers and 56% less likely than their white peers to achieve ≥ 3 in reading. Consistent with the FCAT Math findings, the black-white reading score gap at school and city level was more polar than the state averages for both groups, with white students *outperforming* state averages (by 16-26%) and black students *underperforming* state averages (by 4-12%).

6.2.4 RQ1 – A Summary

In response to **RQ1**, there *were* measureable achievement gaps at CHS and the gaps *did* have a relationship with a number of factors (consistent with Adams 2008 p8; Aud et al. 2010 p7; Clayton 2001 p6; Haycock 2001 p6; Ipka 2003 p6; Jasnick 2012 p7; Morris 2009 p6; Vannerman et al. 2009 p7). Whilst there was no gap present in the FCAT math and reading scores of female and male students at CHS, the gap did have a relationship with: eligibility for free/reduced school meals, whether a student was enrolled on a competitive entry magnet program (classified as 'gifted') and a student's race. Students at CHS were *more likely* to be considered at or above grade level (≥ 3) if they were

enrolled on the magnet curriculum, were *not* in receipt of free/reduced school meals and were white. Students were *less likely* to have achieved ≥ 3 if they were enrolled on the mainstream curriculum, were in receipt of free/reduced school meals and were black.

As outlined in Tables 1 and 2, there was no 'gender gap' between female and male students at CHS. The 'socio-economic gap' between CHS students who were eligible and not eligible for free/reduced lunches was 34 percentage points for math and 36 percentage points for reading. The 'structural gap' between those enrolled on the magnet and mainstream provisions at CHS, was found to be 27% and 34% respectively. And, the 'race gap' between black and white students at CHS was found to be 54% and 56% respectively. Additionally, the 54% and 56% black-white gap at CHS was found to be greater than the 38% and 42% Hispanic/Latino(a)-white gap in FCAT math and reading.

As can be seen here, neither the 'socio-economic', nor the 'structural' percentage point gaps in FCAT scores, at school, city or state levels, can fully explain the existence of a much larger black-white percentage point gap, at each level. Results such as these can be seen to lend support to Ogbu's 'cultural explanation', in which the historically 'involuntary migrant gap' (black-white) is greater than the historically 'voluntary migrant gap' (Hispanic/Latino(a)-white) (Ogbu 1987 p31). These results also pose uncomfortable questions for the Hurricane County administration: Why do white Hurricane students *outperform* state averages by 16-26% and yet black students conversely *underperform* state averages by 4-12%? An important and necessary question to be explored in this and the next empirical chapter is whether Ogbu's cultural explanation is at play, or, does the data presented in this section indicate the presence of another, greater and more institutionalised factor.

6.3 CONSCIOUSNESS

Section 6.3 addresses **RQ2** by exploring **participants awareness of FCAT score point gaps** (as outlined in Chapter 4¹⁰²), **before articulating participants understandings and experiences of the identified gaps; paying specific attention in both instances to the experiences and counter stories of black students?** As discussed in Chapter 2, it has been argued that by statistically controlling for socioeconomic factors, approximately a third of the achievement gap between black and white students can be explained; leaving the question that motivated Ogbu's controversial cultural explanation: What explains the rest (Ogbu 1987; Phillips et al. 1998)?

What was evident during both formal interview and informal dialogue is that participants in this study *were* aware of "differences" (field notes) in academic achievement between black and white students at CHS. Arguably however, their 'awareness' came from visual information and personal experiences within the school environment (i.e. the participation of student groups in different academic tracks/classes), rather than from published state data. Without exception, participants in this study were *not* aware of the 2010 FCAT results for CHS¹⁰³ by group.

Participants' assumptions, experiences and understandings of the 'differences' in achievement between the races were divergent and although not a comprehensive discussion of all data collected, this section explores high frequency themes and fewer cited experiences and rationales that highlight unique or controversial perspectives. Section 6.3 is organised into four themes that address participants' reactions to, and understandings and experiences of, the 2010 published FCAT data for CHS by group.

¹⁰² The 2010 FCAT testing data was given to participants during the fieldwork, because the 2011 FCAT testing data (the testing period that occurred during the course of the overseas fieldwork) had not yet been administered by Hurricane County.

¹⁰³ But were aware of the CHS school grade (which is determined by student FCAT performance).

6.3.1 Surprise? 2010 FCAT Results

As identified in the previous section, without exception, participants were not aware of the 2010 FCAT results for CHS by group, although they were aware that “*CHS got themselves a ‘B’ grade y’all*” (field notes). The standardised testing data reported for each individual school, district and state in the U.S. allows for the generation of ‘Annual Report Cards’. These ‘cards’ are intended to inform parents, communities and officials about the levels of student proficiency at any state-controlled school (see Barker et al 2002) and report whether the NCLB mandated Adequate Yearly Progress measures (AYP¹⁰⁴) have been met. Although an outwardly positive grade for CHS and the communities it serves, the correctly identified ‘B’ grade is clearly a misnomer, as it obscures from view the disparate achievements of black students outlined in the previous section. Within the text of the 2010 report card, the report does stipulate that CHS “*ha[d] not met federal adequate yearly progress under NCLB because it need[ed] improvement in one or more areas*” and later identified that “*African Americans, Economically Disadvantaged¹⁰⁵, and students with Disabilities... [all] need[ed] improvement in Reading and Mathematics¹⁰⁶*” (CHS 2010 Report Card, FLDOE 2010¹⁰⁷).

During early conversations about academic achievement and standardised testing, participants in this study could readily recount CHS’s ‘B’ grade, with many believing CHS to do “*well overall (academically)*” (field notes). The well-published nature of CHS’s ‘B’ grade, may have been the reason a number of the participants were ‘shocked’ by the 2010 FCAT data sheet that was subsequently presented in later conversation (as

¹⁰⁴ NCLB requires schools to make annual Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is the government’s measurement of a school’s overall success and is determined by the percentage of students that performed at or above grade level on the FCAT. Every year, states set goals for the percentage of students that must perform on grade level in order for the school to make AYP. Student scores are divided among eight student subgroups including white, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners. A school only makes AYP if *every* subgroup meets the goal (PIRC 2011).

¹⁰⁵ As determined by free/reduced school meal eligibility

¹⁰⁶ Hispanic/Latino(a) students as a group, *did* however meet the adequate yearly progress requirements.

¹⁰⁷ See Florida School Grades website <http://schoolgrades.fl DOE.org/default.asp>

outlined in Chapter 4 p83). The 2010 FCAT participant data sheet presented to the participants took the exact same form as Tables 1 and 2 in Section 6.2 and is included in this study's Appendix (see Appendix 2).

DeShawn, (Founder of S.I.S.T.A.S. p122) whilst making explicit that she understood there to be a racial gap in achievement, described herself as 'shocked':

"Oh my lord! Really?... Hell no, I knew it was bad but (pauses)... You seriously tellin me it's just 9% is doin it¹⁰⁸? Damn y'all... I don't know what to say... I need to get on my girls' backs this year... I's shocked."

DeShawn in her role as mentor to the S.I.S.T.A.S took an obvious interest in the FCAT data presented to her and immediately asked where she could locate the information for herself; she was one of three individuals to do so.

Bridget (The High School Cheerleader p111) also explicitly acknowledged having an awareness of differential performance between the races, but like DeShawn was subsequently shocked by the size of the gap in the data presented to her:

"Wow, I knew there was a difference, but like, I didn't know it was that big... So many black kids are failing FCAT."

Shortly afterwards, a number of friends joined the lunch table, where one of Bridget's friends continued:

If y'all ask me, all that chart (FCAT data sheet) says, is that like only one in every 10 black kids take the FCAT serious – why take the test if you are not going to take it serious... it's like really?"

Bridget's friends "nodded; seeming to agree with her assessment" of the situation (field notes).

¹⁰⁸ In 2009-2010 65% of white students, 30% of Hispanic/Latino(a) and only 9% of black students achieved a level 3 or above in FCAT Reading. The black-white gap was thus 56%, which is equal to the 2011 black-white FCAT Reading gap identified in Table 2 p132.

Another lunch break was spent with Jameeka (The Entrepreneurial Teen Mom [to Be] p119) and her friends. After being passed a copy of the 2010 FCAT participant data sheet (Appendix 2), many of the group questioned what their parents would think. One friend suggested that her family would move somewhere else in Florida that had better prospects for black students:

Oh my days! My sweet Jesus (pauses) I'm telling y'all, I swear my momma'll go somewhere else where blacks kids do better. They say this [Hurricane] one of the best in schooling... We moved from Miami... That no joke?"

Another of Jameeka's friends agreed:

"Y'all know my momma would be pissed at county (referring to Hurricane school board). She always tellin me not to be all-worrying bout the FCAT. She proud. She know kids struggle. This bad y'all (pauses), this here is bad - Can I have this (2010 FCAT data sheet)?"

Jameeka would mock her friends frequently. She couldn't understand why "y'all is letting county rule y'all's life" and would frequently encourage her friends by saying, "y'all gotta get some skills", indicating that they should not worry about school (field notes). Jameeka would typically cite hair, beauty and nails to be the sort of skills she felt her friends needed. For Jameeka (one of few students who was unsurprised by the FCAT data presented to her), her awareness of the achievement disparity - now confirmed by published data - only fuelled her ambition to "find [her] own way": a way that did not rely on standardised schooling achievements or county mandates. Jameeka's decision to 'opt out' of formal education challenges many assumptions and stereotypes typically held of underachieving black students and is discussed further in Chapters 7 and 9.

Isaiah (The Aspiring Preacher p120) was also clear in his convictions. He, like Jameeka, was not surprised by the 9% of black students shown on the 2010 FCAT participant data sheet as satisfying the reading requirement for high school graduation (Appendix 2). Isaiah had been interpreting the visual messages he received during graduation ceremonies since commencing high school.

After slowly examining the data sheet, he stated:

"I ain't surprised... You already know it's bad when you look up at the graduands each year... [It] gives a clear message (to black students)... The black communities are already at the bottom and the FCAT is just making it worse. All it does is tell blacks that they are not good enough... not able to pass what the white kids can... The FCAT prevents them from graduating and going somewhere."

Whilst for the most part the student participants were willing to discuss racial disparities in FCAT achievement (and black students more willing to indicate racially discriminatory practices, as discussed later in this chapter), the 2010 FCAT data sheet caused an uneasy tension in the social studies staff room.

CHS teachers could be seen looking at the 2010 FCAT participant data sheets that were placed on the centrally located 14-seat table and with the exception of Bud, failed to engage in any open dialogue about the data. The atmosphere was described in the field notes as "awkward" and documented teachers "muttering to each other", "shaking their heads", "sighing" with some remaining "expressionless" (field notes). Although the presence of the researcher during this time is a plausible explanation for the uncomfortable atmosphere and lack of resulting open dialogues, it became evident during the course of the fieldwork that the vast majority of CHS's social studies teachers were not comfortable discussing race (discussed further in Chapter 8).

Bud (Teaching 'the Good Fight' Against Republicans p114) was the exception and was never afraid to voice his opinions on *any* subject. Bud was the last member of staff to lunch that day and was the only one who initiated open dialogue regarding the FCAT participant data sheet; almost triumphantly he claimed:

"See what I told y'all... This is just what the damned Republicans want. They want to shame the public school system... shame it so they can justify offering parents vouchers for private school fees..."

Jeb (Fighting Liberal Bias in Schools p116) responded, but suggested that Bud should calm down, as he will "give [himself] indigestion" (field notes).

Bud continued:

"I'm telling y'all. They (the Republicans) will leave just enough of the public school for the poor, blacks and Hispanics... You just wait and see; you remember this day."

'Coach'¹⁰⁹ responded this time, suggesting: *"It's all good by me Bud... If y'all's Republicans get they way, we'll have the best damned ball team in town."* Bud, as Coach's former social studies teacher, now colleague, concluded the conversation by asking: *"Have I taught you nothing, Coach?"*

Bud's *"staff room polemics"* (field notes) were frequently either ignored, or responded to by colleagues purposely adopting politically conservative or agitating stances. Many stances were not often a true representation of the teacher's personal ideology or political affiliation¹¹⁰, but adopted with the sole intention of *"winding Bud up for the amusement of the group"* (field notes). However, the ease in which the large majority of teachers dismissed (through silence or deflecting comedy) the glaring disparities contained within the 2010 FCAT data sheet in front of them raises serious questions for this study. Did the data present as 'unremarkable,' thus highlighting the pervasive normalcy of structural racism and a tacit acceptance on the part of educationalists (consistent with DeCuir & Dixon 2004 p21)? Or, could the observed silence be considered an attempt to blackout what was too 'painful to admit' and too 'hellish to absolve'¹¹¹ (Fordham 2008 p35)?

6.3.2 Teachers' Experiences and Understandings

During the 2011 FCAT testing period, the teachers were keener to discuss students achievement. However, when they did so, it was nearly wholly in the context of critiquing

¹⁰⁹ 'Coach' was a black, male, American-football coach, was also a former CHS student

¹¹⁰ It is worth however noting that the field notes acknowledged that on some occasions it was very difficult to decipher whether a teacher's actual belief system was being voiced under the guise of winding up Bud. Examples of such are highlighted in Chapter 7.

¹¹¹ Given the 9% of black students who would have satisfied the reading requirements for high school graduation in 2010 (Appendix 2).

how the NCLB legislation is structured, rather than discussing the disparities per se. For example, many of the teachers in this study were eager to discuss how the NCLB is structured in such a way that the “burden” (field notes) of individual achievement is placed directly on, and felt by, them. As outlined in Chapter 2, the State of Florida, Hurricane County and CHS are *each* accountable for improving the educational achievement for their students under NCLB: a mandate CHS teachers were all familiar with and very sensitive about, particularly as plans were well underway to evaluate and remunerate Florida teachers based on their students’ FCAT scores¹¹². Perhaps this is why Jeb had an aversion to teaching students on the mainstream curriculum track. During interview Jeb suggested that “*challenging material requires more experienced teachers,*” and that teaching higher-level classes was an ‘earned privilege’ (one that would seemingly be remunerated under the new proposal):

“I have taught [at CHS] for 17 years now, so I teach nearly all higher classes, whereas Dave (a recent graduate) has mostly 9th and 10th mainstream classes; he is great with the kids though.”

NJROTC Master Chief or “Poppa” as he was better known (p125), whilst neither a keen supporter nor critic of NCLB, also felt that teachers were judged unfairly as “*failing to do their part*” (field notes) in addressing the gaps in achievement. Poppa would argue that “*County (Hurricane) does not look at [a student’s] background as the reason for underperforming on the FCAT*” and would make frequent references to the high poverty index of CHS and its “*diverse student body*” (field notes). He furthered:

“Even the best dammed teachers with all the right resources would struggle to meet [FCAT] standards with some of these kids, and yet County still makes teachers responsible... I teach ROTC, I do what I can to instil values and discipline, but I can’t teach them how to count and read. Y’all got to look to the home for that.”

Jeb was quick to support the belief that higher test scores resulted in schools that were more “*effective*” (field notes). Jeb, like many of his colleagues, would conflate poor

¹¹² Race to the Top for Student Success: SB 736, signed into law in 2011

FCAT achievement with “*individual kids’ problems*” (field notes). Both Jeb and Poppa believed the student and their home lives were to blame for the achievement gaps seen between “*some groups*” (field notes). Jeb suggested that for NCLB legislation to be truly effective it needed:

“To hold parents accountable for their part in their child’s achievement ... [as] there is only so much teachers can do for some kids (field notes).”

On multiple occasions as seen here, both Jeb and Poppa could be heard referring to “*some kids*” or “*these kids*” without ever clarifying which kids, or groups, they were referring to.

Jeb and Poppa’s focus on a student’s background and the failure of policy to hold parents accountable for academic underachievement arguably perpetuates an inept and narrow understanding of the existence of institutional racism and racist practices, placing a forbidding barrier to the pursuit of racial equity in schools. Rather than attributing the blame for some of the gaps by race observed at CHS, to present and historical institutional inequalities and practices, Poppa and Jeb absolve themselves by myopically focusing on the student and their background.

Bud, although falling short of naming current institutional racism and racist practices as explanations for the achievement gaps between “*some groups*¹¹³” (field notes), he did acknowledge the historical significance of the gap. Bud argued that current legislation (NCLB) “*confuses measuring schools with fixing systems that has been broken for decades.*” Bud added that years-worth of educational inequalities were not just being placed squarely on teachers, but equally, if not more so, on students themselves. Bud claimed the problem is “*handed straight to them (CHS students) to solve, by simply improving their performances on FCAT tests... it’s ridiculous.*” Bud believed the “*problem*” (field notes) should instead be delivered directly to policy makers (preferably Democratic leaning ones).

¹¹³ Giving the examples of rich and poor, black and white, Spanish and English first language.

6.3.3 White Students' Experiences and Understandings

White students were generally open to discussing the 2010 FCAT data participant sheet presented to them (Appendix 2). One of Bridget's friends was especially keen to share her understandings of *why* the FCAT existed in the first place and *why* society needed an FCAT; she was only participant to do so:

"The FCAT is basically the bottom line to be at to pass school... Did y'all know the reason that the FCAT was even invented, was because there was this girl, like a couple of years ago, that graduated school, but like she couldn't read? Now like the FCAT is a test that literally tests how low you can be to still function as an adult."

For the most part white students were keen to pathologise other groups, offering explanations as to why they believed there was an achievement gap between white and black students or, more specifically, why they believed "*all the black kids fail[ed] FCAT*" (field notes). Like Jeb and Poppa in the previous section (section 6.3.2), many white students also focused on "*black kids' homes*" (field notes). For example, Bridget suggested:

"I blame it on the family (black achievement), I don't really blame it on the schools... I mean like going to school, they teach us what we need to know... These kids don't push themselves... Everyone could pass the test if they tried."

Another of Bridget's friends also pointed her finger in the direction of black families, suggesting she was 'disappointed' with the black community:

"Yea, I think it's more like within the black community, a lot of parents don't push their kids... they don't get any support... don't got someone saying do this, do that, do your homework, and like encouraging them... Any kid is going to fail if they don't get support... I am disappointed in the black community."

Several white students also contended it was black students themselves that were to blame for their academic shortcomings. One student, a 10th Grade steering committee representative, suggested:

"Blacks don't take school tests serious... Like none of them are taking school seriously, that's all this is (pointing to the FCAT data sheet)."

One student, who was paradoxically a senior member of CHS' 'STAND Club¹¹⁴', even suggested, "*after all they've (blacks) been through, y'all think they'd want to do well*" (field notes).

As seen here, standardised testing scores had a great capacity to leave white participants free to justify past and present racial discrimination on the basis of test scores. FCAT scores serve to excuse whites from accountability for past and present exploitations of power in education, allowing them to see the condition of black students today to be caused by individual failings and a perceived lack of will on the part of black students.

Chase, Matt's friend and fellow member of the CHS Young Republicans Club (p124), held particularly firm views on the FCAT. Whilst he did not dispute there to be a gap between black and white students' test scores, he refused to accept systemic racism as a possible, or even partial, explanation:

"It's not racist, period (full stop)! Some kids who work hard have the GPA¹¹⁵ they need, and then don't pass the FCAT. Some kids pass the FCAT, and don't have the GPA they need, it's just the way it is. It's not racist."

Like Chase, many other white students did not believe the education system to be racist and that "*schools and teachers should not be blamed for their (black) laziness,*" arguing "*they (blacks) are given what they need to pass the darn test... they just don't want to learn*" (field notes). Most of the white participants in this study believed that CHS *had* delivered the skills and information needed to pass the FCAT. Janelle, one of Bridget's cheer friends who was incidentally the only cheerleader enrolled on the CHS' magnet¹¹⁶ program

¹¹⁴ As introduced in Chapter 5 (p116), STAND is a student-led, issues-based club that is mentored by Bud, and explores ways in which students can 'stand' up against racism and prejudice in school.

¹¹⁵ Grade Point Average (GPA), is commonly calculated: 4 points for an A grade, 3 points for a B, 2 points for a C, 1 point for a D, and no points for an F. Each high school class is graded and each grade is averaged out over the 4 years of high school, cumulating in one GPA figure. A '4.0' GPA is traditionally considered to be the highest scoring mark.

¹¹⁶ 'Magnet' as outlined in Chapter 5 (p109), refers to CHS' competitive entry program.

(p124), suggested:

"You can't blame it (black failure) on the schools; if you go to school every day then you will be taught everything you need to know to pass FCAT. I mean it's given to you in the textbooks every single day... Teachers get you to write a paper like every single day. All these kids aren't pushing themselves (pointing to the 91% of black students who scored a Level 1 or 2 on the FCAT reading participant data sheet)."

Another of Bridget's friend agreed:

"The majority of the kids at CHS could actually pass it (the FCAT) if they tried. They teach you enough in class every day that helps you pass... [But] most (blacks) would rather party and do drugs (pauses), well not like all of them. But they are always joking and messing around... They do not take school seriously"

Again, the white students, like Jeb and Poppa in the previous section (section 6.3.2), did not verbally clarify whom they were referring to when they referenced "some kids", "these kids", "most", "them", "all of them" and "they", although several pointed to black students' FCAT results on the participant data sheet whilst talking.

Whilst the majority of white students were aware of a 'gap' between the races, white students were reluctant to entertain the potential link between FCAT data and institutional racism. Matt (The Young Republican p109) for example, strongly opposed institutional racism as potential explanation for the achievement gap, claiming, *"It is not a racial problem and it's wrong of you to suggest so."* To him, the 2010 FCAT data was little more than economics in action, *"White kids are failing it too; it says so on your sheet."*

During another conversation, Matt clarified his position:

"No, I do not accept it to be racism (FCAT results). There is definitely an economic divide, and the reasons it affects more blacks in Hurricane is because economically, they have always been more deprived. It is not racism, it's economics."

During the second conversation, Matt's friend also added that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds "[just] don't have the resources to do well in school." They both strongly believed that if the data had been collected in another, northern or eastern,

state (historically whiter states) the same disparate trends would be observable between whites by economic status.

Gabbi (The Unlikely Student Government President p112) was more accepting of the idea that institutional barriers (such as the FCAT) could be employed to oppress individuals and groups than her peers. Gabbi believed the purpose of the FCAT was not one of education betterment, but rather an attempt by policy to filter and sort people into their respective places in the future workforce:

"The FCAT is like a sifter: without it you can't get a [high school] diploma, and you can't go anywhere without that... It (the FCAT) sorts people... keeps some people at the bottom to do all the shit jobs rich people don't want to do."

Like her white peers however, Gabbi was unable to see (or unwilling to name) the contours of racism in that sifting process (consistent with Leonardo 2002 p27). For Gabbi, the FCAT was again *not* a racially divisive tool per se. Gabbi was however the only white student interviewed that expressly acknowledged that education policy had, albeit historically, the capacity to be racially divisive and harm black students:

"I mean, it (education policy) just started off like hurting the black kids... But now (pauses)... I mean it's hurting everyone y'all. Like poor kids, black kids, Mexican kids and that... We're all hurting now... Well, everyone that ain't rich."

Gabbi's Argentinian-American friend Yana (p125) also agreed and added that the FCAT was one of the biggest reasons for students dropping out of school:

"FCAT brings a lot of kids down... [It] keeps poor kids poor by failing them so that they don't graduate... Then like they don't get into college, and then they get shit jobs. Then like their kids go to school, fail grade because of one stupid test, and it all happens again. Their kids drop out... Like a circle."

Gabbi agreed suggesting that:

"... In (student) government we get the sheets¹¹⁷, so we see how many kids are dropping out every single week... numbers keep going down into 11th and 12th Grade... Kids are just walking out and not coming back... What's the point in school if a kid can't pass FCAT?"

¹¹⁷ The 'sheets' passed to the Student Government provide details on student numbers, class information and groupings, for the purposes of organising events and distributing information to the student body.

Both Gabbi and Yana were aware of the cycle of underachievement for certain groups, although they were not part of the cycle personally (but only just). When asked if they had passed the FCAT themselves, Gabbi replied:

"Yes Ma'am. I make good grades in school but I have low FCAT scores... I passed reading now, third time round¹¹⁸, but only barely... I think it should be your teachers, you know, the grades you do at school, and not like the FCAT."

Yana also passed both FCAT tests required for graduation, but added:

"It's like the stuff that the FCAT people test you on... [it's] not like the stuff we get tested on for school..."

Yana's sentiment was supported by several other mainstream curriculum students, but not by their magnet peers, an important difference in the reported classroom experiences of both groups that is explored later in this chapter.

6.3.4 Black Students Experiences and Understandings

Black students in this study understood that *"the FCAT affects us (their group) so much,"* with many recognising the FCAT to be *"a big deal"* in their *"life chances"* (field notes). Black students were keen to discuss with the researcher how they believed their 'chances' were being harmed by the FCAT specifically. For example, DeShawn explained that the *"FCAT determines so much of what you can, and cannot, do"*, suggesting that, *"from Grade 3 for the rest of school, all administrators care about is FCAT scores."* She also claimed that for most of the black female students in S.I.S.T.A.S., the FCAT was a very real barrier to high school graduation - a barrier that denied an otherwise successful student¹¹⁹ from graduating. One of the S.I.S.T.A.S. explained:

"13 years in school (pauses), 13 year y'all! That a long assed time if you gonna fail FCAT and fail school. You whole life screwed! ... I shouldn't need no FCAT to tell me if I got to the next grade, or graduate (high school)... My grades is good. I make a C+ average y'all. Hell, I pass school, but don't graduate cos of one dumb ass test... What the FCAT for anyways?"

¹¹⁸ Gabbi sat the Grade 10 FCAT Reading test in Grades 10, 11 and 12.

¹¹⁹ Defined by overall GPA score (see footnote 19 p20).

Many of the black students encountered during the fieldwork posed the same question: What is the FCAT for anyway?

Isaiah, like a number of his black peers, failed to find a valid justification for the FCAT tests in his education career:

"You study hard in school, pass four years of exams, get your GPA and graduate. You cannot graduate high school without English and math anyways. County requires four math credits and four English credits for graduation... [So then] you take like an ACT's or SAT to get into a 4-year college, or you look for a job, or go to a 2-year program. Nowhere will I be asked for my FCAT score, only my GPA, SAT or ACT. So, if the FCAT is not needed by anyone, and I have already passed eight credits of English and math in school, why the hell do we fail kids because of the FCAT?"

It later transpired during another conversation that Isaiah *had* indeed been asked for his FCAT scores, but only as part of the admission process for the competitive entry high school magnet program at CHS. Isaiah, in addition to being one of very few black magnet students (discussed further in section 6.4.1), was also one of the 9% of black students on the 2010 FCAT participant data sheet who passed the reading test (receiving a level 5).

Many black students struggled to comprehend how they came to fail the FCAT when they have an otherwise successful schooling record and passing GPA score. One 12th Grade student stated:

"I do great in school, but I can't pass the FCAT. I am always like a level 2, no matter how hard I work. I make B's in class you know. My report card is good. I listen and I don't talk... I don't get it?"

Another followed:

"Yes ma'am, like here (Florida) you can get yourself a good GPA but can still fail outta school... it BS (bullshit)."

Black students offered a number of reasons why they felt they failed the FCAT to include "test anxieties" and not "[having] the drive to see these people (county administrators) wrong" (field notes). The overwhelming reason cited however was unfamiliarity. Like Yana's sentiment (p147), many black students also claimed that the content of the FCAT

tests were not familiar, particularly math. One of Trey's (The High School Footballer p117) non-footballing friends claimed:

"It not like the stuff the teachers is teaching us (in school)... like the stuff the FCAT test you on, is not like the stuff we get tested on in school."

Another friend agreed, suggesting the content of the FCAT exam was more advanced than the level he had experienced in regular classes:

"I tried it loads (the FCAT)... I was like, what the hell is this. It like stuff I never seen with these eyes. I swear it to you, straight up. It was like Algebra II and I only just got myself through Algebra I. Hell I ain't even allowed on Algebra II, cos I don't got geo [geometry]."

At CHS, students were required to pass Algebra I and achieve a 'B' in Geometry to be eligible to enrol in Algebra II. Unfortunately however, establishing whether the Grade 10 FCAT Math test exceeded the taught content of Algebra I was beyond the scope of this study, as such is not further discussed.

Trey believed he understood the purpose of standardised testing. For him, the FCAT was nothing more than a racially divisive initiative that legislature utilises to prevent black people from succeeding in America:

"They (administration) don't want black people ruling America, that's how I see it.... They don't want to see how unfair the FCAT is for blacks... They don't want to see... They are happy with us failing... They keep us [blacks] down."

Trey thus did not accept the 'examination of the basic English and Mathematical skill levels a student needs to master before leaving school' to be the motivation behind the FCAT, like his white peers (p143).

Jameeka was also sceptical about the motivation behind the policy, suggesting: *"Y'all know the FCAT is just a way of keeping poor peoples poor."* A friend corrected Jameeka to the agreement of the group: *"Y'all mean black peoples poor."* Another of Jameeka's friends suggested there was *"something in that test (FCAT) that discriminates against black kids"* (field notes). Many black students encountered during the fieldwork

struggled to name other black peers that had passed the FCAT the previous year, often resorting to conferring with friends to compile a handful of names.

Dante (p126) was an 11th grader and a popular (albeit volatile) student among the black community. Dante suggested, *"like serious y'all, I don't know anyone in my friends that passed it (the FCAT)."* Dante was not averse to voicing his often uncensored opinions and could frequently be seen *"preaching"* (field notes) on top of a bench during lunch. Dante had a difficult relationship with schooling and was frequently absent. Dante however was unique amongst his peers in that he would explicitly accuse teachers, other students and Hurricane county of *"hating on blacks"* (field notes)¹²⁰ through policies such as the FCAT. He claimed that his diet was a *"spoonful of hate every single fucking day"* that was administered to him *"by white people"* (field notes). Dante's feelings of discrimination are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but during one rare lunch break Dante agreed to share his opinions on the FCAT:

"So many black kids here, they is like a 297, 298, 299 (pass mark of 300) so they's not graduating; It stupid, like you for real? This kid had like a 297 and failed! If y'all's asking me, county (Hurricane) ain't happy that any black is passin. Next year they (Hurricane administration) goin to be like makin a 320 pass so no black graduates¹²¹."

Dante was adamant that education policy was devised solely with the purpose of excluding blacks from *"y'all's (white) society"* (field notes). Dante insisted that there would be a black civil uprising, he didn't know when or where, but he was confident there would be one in his lifetime and that America would witness the biggest race war yet, suggesting, *"If y'all tell me my life is worth nothing, then why should I respect y'all's lives?"* Dante *"hated"* white people and *"white man's society"* (field notes) and was frequently excluded from CHS.

¹²⁰ Dante declined to be interviewed and formally participate in this research. Many of Dante's informal statements were however recorded.

¹²¹ FLDOE changed the scoring scale for the 2012 FCAT testing period, so it was difficult to assess whether Dante's prediction regarding the increase in the passing mark was accurate.

Isaiah, who was widely considered to be the “*smartest black at school*” (field notes), was another student who was especially vocal on the theme of education policy.

He stated:

“I heard that the FCAT costs \$50,000,000 a year. \$50 million! What a waste. That’s money they could spend on classrooms, computers, books, teachers, mentors and other enterprises.”

What was evident from the narratives of black participants is that they were all acutely aware of how their race shaped their education experiences and perception of life chances (consistent with Duncan & Jackson 2002 p22). Without exception, all of the black participants in this study believed the education system to be inherently unjust and had vastly different experiences of schooling than their white counterparts (consistent with Noguera 2003 p22).

Two of the most popular themes raised by black students about the differing experiences of schooling, was 1) a sense of unequal transmission of information, and 2) unequal access to learning on the mainstream curriculum and magnet curriculum. For example, one of Jameeka’s friends explained:

“I’m serious, if you ain’t on the magnet program, then you don’t get no chances; the [magnet] kids get all the chances... [and] we (mainstream) are treated like we’re not as good, like we don’t matter. All the school cares about is the magnet kids.”

Another friend also alluded to the way she felt teachers were differently qualified to teach the magnet students:

“They is definitely more qualified, like they went to school for-e-ver... Like they pure geniuses on Economics and all that. But like the regular teachers don’t care as much... they younger, like only just real teachers. If y’all asking me, that right there is why we’s gettin lower FCAT.”

The differing experiences of the magnet and mainstream curriculum student, is explored in greater detail in the next section.

6.3.5 RQ2 – A Summary

In response to **RQ2** this study found that white participants, when confronted with the quantitative manifestation of the black-white achievement gap (FCAT scores) to be largely unsurprised by its presence (consistent with DeCuir & Dixon 2004 p21) but somewhat shocked by its magnitude. However, it was difficult to assess whether the lack of surprise highlighted the normalcy of structural racism, or was the lack of reaction more accurately an instance of ‘blacking out’ what was ‘hellish to admit’ (consistent with Fordham 2008 p35). Although none of white participants believed the FCAT to be an inherently racist practice, the FCAT represented a significant obstacle in the lives of black students (consistent with Howard 2008 p21), and without exception, all were sceptical about the motivations behind the policy. The black students believed the FCAT scores to be the result of an inherently unjust school system that disproportionately affects them, consistent with the analysis of Noguera (2003 p22).

6.4 EDUCATION POLICY AS AN ACT OF WHITE SUPREMACY?

This final section speaks to this study’s third research question (**RQ3**) in exploring, **who (if any) are the children ‘left behind’ by the No Child Left Behind legislation? And who have benefitted most since its implementation?** As seen in the first section of this chapter, in accordance with NCLB, the administered, collated and published FCAT testing data are dramatically documenting the achievement gap between black and white students (consistent with Adams 2008). Table 1 (p131) and 2 (p132) show that magnet students outperform their mainstream peers and white students outperform black students at school, city and state levels. Ladson-Billings (2003 p58) has argued that these facts are not happenstance, but a direct result of students of the dominant (wealthier white) group disproportionately having access to ‘enriched’ and more

‘rigorous’ curricular (such as the CHS magnet program). She also claimed that black students as a group were usually ‘confined to the basics’ in schooling (mainstream curriculum). In order to explore the relationship between enriched curricular and the dominant group in this study, it is necessary to establish demographic information for the magnet group at CHS.

6.4.1 Who are the ‘Gifted’ at CHS?

As previously discussed in section 6.2.1., 96% of all CHS magnet students met *both* ‘gifted’ and ‘talented’ criteria for admission; but were they wealthier and whiter as implied by Ladson-Billings (2003 p58)? Despite the Florida Department of Education and CHS keeping records of FCAT scores by group, demographic data for each individual group was not publically available. In the absence of publically available demographic data for the magnet group, the data collected from this study’s survey were utilised to produce the following cross-tabulations (Q8 ‘Race’ and Q18 ‘Program’; Q3 ‘Zipcode’¹²² and Q18 ‘Program’ - Appendix 3):

TABLE 3: CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET/RACE CROSS-TABULATION

	Race/Ethnicity				Total
	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino(a)	Other	
Magnet	86.7%	5.8%	3.3%	4.2%	100.0%

TABLE 4: CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET/ZIPCODE CROSS-TABULATION

	Zipcode					Total
	NW	SW	NE	SE	Out of Zone	
Magnet	55.3%	17.2%	6.0%	6.0%	15.5%	100.0%

As seen in Table 3, despite forming just under half of the total CHS population (46.8%¹²³), white students dominated the CHS magnet program (86.7%). Conversely, black students who formed over a third of the total school population (38.7%) were under-represented

¹²² U.S. equivalent to U.K. postal codes

¹²³ Specific reference omitted to ensure anonymity of the research site (FLDOE 2011)

on the CHS magnet (5.8%, consistent with Oaks 2005 p18). Table 4 also suggests that nearly three quarters (72.5%) of the students enrolled on the CHS magnet program resided in a west ZIP Code; the majority of which should ordinarily have been 'zoned' for Westside High School¹²⁴ (WHS – see Figure 1 p81). Like many other magnet programs across the U.S., CHS students, upon acceptance into the magnet program, become exempt from school zoning boundaries and are provided funded transport to and from schools, often well beyond the city limits. For that reason some 15.5% of CHS magnet students resided in 'out of zone' ZIP codes according to the survey. Only 12.0% of all magnet students resided in an eastern ZIP code which perhaps unsurprisingly, were the areas with the highest poverty indexes and highest populations of black residents (as outlined in Figure 1 p81). According to the most recent census data, the average price of a property in an eastern city ZIP code was \$119,925 and the average wage \$25,679. Conversely, the average price of a property in a western city ZIP code was \$213,250 and the average wage \$47,493. The census also suggested that approximately 71% of eastern ZIP code residents were black and 82% of western ZIP code residents were white (U.S. Census Bureau 2011).

Therefore, in responding to 'who are the gifted at CHS,' this study's survey and CHS' admissions data suggest that gifted students are whiter and wealthier (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2003 p58). This wealthier, whiter demographic 'face' has important implications for the remainder of this chapter and study.

6.4.2 Is NCLB 'Closing the Gap'?

In order to speak to **RQ3**, it is essential to establish the trends in average FCAT mean scale score (MSS) by group since the implementation of NCLB in 2003. FCAT data for

¹²⁴ Pseudonym

Hurricane indicates that between 2003 and 2010¹²⁵ some groups *have* indeed made gains in their average MSS, but are those groups the ones the legislation sought specifically to ‘close the gap’ between (U.S. Department of Education NEAP 1998)?

The CHS graduating class of 2013, who sat the Grade 10 FCAT during the course of this fieldwork (and whose results are outlined in Tables 1 and 2 p131 and p132), were among the first to take the NCLB mandated FCAT tests in 2003, when they were in Grade 3. Although not a precise measure (as students would have inevitably moved into and out of the county school system) by tabulating the average MSS by group for students that were in Grade 3 and Grade 10 in both 2003 and 2010¹²⁶, the change in MSS can be established. Focusing specifically on FCAT reading data (as the test identified in section 6.2 to have the largest achievement gaps between groups), the following table of average MSS by group can be produced:

TABLE 5: HURRICANE COUNTY'S CHANGE IN FCAT READING MSS FOR GRADES 3 AND 10:

	Average FCAT MSS (out of 500)			Average FCAT MSS (out of 500)		
	Grade 3 in 2003	Grade 3 in 2010	Diff.	Grade 10 in 2003	Grade 10 in 2010	Diff.
Black	270	281	+11	273	272	-1
Hispanic/Latino(a)	312	324	+12	315	313	-2
White	329	346	+17	337	342	+5
Female	311	329	+18	318	323	+5
Male	300	311	+11	313	312	-1
F/RSM ¹²⁷	281	294	+13	279	281	+2
Not F/RSM	339	353	+14	330	339	+9
Mainstream	316	329	+13	327	328	+1
Gifted/Magnet ¹²⁸	375	389	+14	342	378	+36

Looking firstly at the Grade 3 data in Table 5, since 2003 there have been MSS gains made by *all* groups of between 11 and 18 points. Whilst black and Hispanic/Latino(a) students

¹²⁵ The MSS calculation was changed in 2011 with the introduction of FCAT 2.0, and again in 2014 with the introduction of the Algebra 1 testing requirements and End of Course (EOC) assessments.

¹²⁶ Provided by Florida Bureau of K-12 Assessment website (FCAT database).

¹²⁷ Free/Reduced School Meals

¹²⁸ Whilst there are children classified as ‘gifted’ in elementary schools, there are only a few dedicated accelerated curricular programs for elementary (Grades K-5) level in the State of Florida. Magnet schools ordinarily appear at middle (Grades 6-8) and more so in high school (Grades 9-12) levels.

have both made outwardly positive gains of 11 and 12 points respectively since 2003, white students saw a larger gain of 17 points during the same time, nullifying the net gains of the other groups. Female students saw the largest gain of 18 points, with their male counterparts seeing lesser gains of 11 points. All other groups received MSS gains of between 13 and 14 points respectively.

Looking this time at a crucial determinant of high school graduation (Grade 10 FCAT Reading), a concerning picture of MSS gains emerges. Whilst white students made gains of 5 points since 2003, black and Hispanic/Latino(a) students actually *lost* 1 and 2 points respectively. Females gained 5 points, whereas males lost 1 point. Those not eligible for free school meals made gains of 9 points, whereas those eligible made only a 2-point gain. Most alarming of all however is that whilst those enrolled on 'basic' mainstream curricular gained only 1 MSS point since the implementation of NCLB, those classified as 'gifted' (who, as demonstrated in section 6.2.1, are whiter, wealthier and dominate magnet program enrolment at CHS), have seen MSS gains of a massive 36 points. Table 6 summarises the changes in MSS 'gaps' between groups specifically since 2003.

TABLE 6: HURRICANE COUNTY 2003 & 2010 FCAT READING CHANGE IN MSS GAPS

	Grade 3			Grade 10		
	2003	2010	Diff.	2003	2010	Diff.
White-Black Gap	59	65	+6 points	64	70	+6 points
White-Hispanic/Latino(a) Gap	17	22	+5 points	22	29	+7 points
Female-Male Gap	11	18	+7 points	5	11	+6 points
F&RSM-Not F&RSM Gap	58	59	+1 point	51	58	+7 points
Mainstream-Gifted (Magnet) Gap	59	60	+1 point	15	50	+35 points

Table 6 indicates that since the implementation of NCLB, the MSS gap between white students and their black and Hispanic/Latino(a) counterparts have both in fact *grown* (by 6 and 7 points respectively). The MSS gap between female and males and those eligible for free/reduced school meals and their fee-paying counterparts have also both grown since 2003 and are 6 and 7 MSS points wider in 2010. Consistent with Table 5

(p155), the most significant MSS gap increase can be seen between the mainstream and gifted provisions with an increase of 35 points.

Tables 5 (p155) and 6 (p156) arguably illustrate the effects of what Roithmayer (2003) termed a 'locked in monopoly', in that early structural advantage feeds on itself and becomes self-perpetuating. For example, gifted certification at elementary level (which is usually determined by in-house school psychologists acting on 'teacher recommendation') brings specialist teachers and an accelerated math and English curricular for 'gifted' (wealthier-whiter) students, who in turn ensure higher FCAT scores in Grades 3-5 for their students. High FCAT scores in Grade 5, secure students' entry onto competitive middle school magnet programs, in which (wealthier-whiter) students are segregated from the 'basic' curriculum and taught an entirely separate curriculum, which further increases the FCAT score gap between 'gifted' (now magnet) students and their 'basic' curriculum peers. Participation in a dedicated middle school magnet again ensures higher FCAT results, which combine with previous elementary in-house 'gifted' certification to ensure wealthier-whiter students meets both 'gifted' and 'talented' entry requirements for accelerated-curriculum high school magnets such as CHS's. Participation in dedicated magnet high school programs again ensure higher FCAT results as required for graduations in the State of Florida and higher ACT and SAT scores necessary for college admission.

Early in-house, teacher-recommended 'gifted' certification clearly creates a perpetually increasing lead, a lead that ultimately becomes impossible to overcome by black students on 'basic' courses with access to 'basic' teachers (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2003 p58). In a locked-in education monopoly, being black is a cumulative disadvantage, whereas being 'whiter' is a cumulative advantage; 'whiteness' in the public school system of Hurricane has a 'property function' and is a resource that produces further relative gains, or in colloquial terms, the 'rich get richer' and 'success breeds success' (Harris 1993 p17; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995 p16).

As Gillborn has suggested, and as discussed in Chapter 2 (Gillborn 2008 p20), although inequity and increased racial segregation in schools may not be a premeditated goal of education policy, neither is it fortuitous. The patterning of white advantage through testing agendas to include FCAT is structured in domination and its continuation represents an inferred intentionality on the part of CHS, Hurricane and Florida. It is in this sense that the NCLB legislation, and the FCAT testing agenda it spawned, can be perceived as an act of white supremacy (Consistent with Gillborn 2008).

A sceptical reader may at this point raise important questions regarding the ‘demographic face’ of the mainstream student in comparison their ‘whiter’ magnet peers. Reproducing Table 3 (p153) to include demographic information about the students who did not identify themselves as ‘magnet program’ students in the survey (Q18, Appendix 3), the following cross-tabulation is produced:

TABLE 7: CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM/RACE CROSS-TABULATION

	Race/Ethnicity				Total
	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino(a)	Other	
“Gifted” (Magnet)	86.7%	5.8%	3.3%	4.2%	100.0%
Not “Gifted”	41.2%	41.7%	7.9%	9.2%	100.0%

Surely policy cannot be considered an act of white supremacy if an almost equal percentage of white students (identified in Table 7) are suffering the same pattern of ‘cumulative disadvantage’ as their black counterparts, who are confined to the ‘basic’ curriculum at CHS (as discussed in 6.4.2)? Before out-rightly rejecting the possibility of white supremacy in education policy¹²⁹, there exists another ‘tier’ of education at CHS: a tier that was muted in the interview data of this study, one that was described by Bud as a *“safety net for kids in grades 10 thru 12 who missed out on the magnet program, which only has a single access point in Grade 9”*. It is to this safety net, this chapter now turns.

¹²⁹ Or accuse the author of ‘going mad’ as outlined in Gillborn’s (2005) footnote.

6.4.3 Advanced Placement: The (White) “Safety Net”

The data presented in Table 7 (p158) suggests that in any typical 30-strong mainstream class at CHS, there should be approximately 13 black students, 12 white students, 3 Hispanic/Latino(a) students and 2 ‘others’ and yet the field notes of this study were inconsistent. In one mainstream social studies class (Economics) for example, the field notes identified the “*overwhelming majority*” of students to be black with the exception of “*one white skinned male w/American accent*” (field notes) and “*one who identified himself as Mexican*” (field notes). In another mainstream social studies class (World History) there were “*2 white skinned male students that spoke with American accents*” and two students who were “*continually reprimanded for speaking Spanish*” in class - the “*remainder were black*” (field notes). The field data therefore suggests the proportion of black students in mainstream classes to be approximately 90+% of the total class population (far greater than the 41.7% identified in Table 7 p158). The conflicting findings support the presence of another tier of education, a ‘safety net’ for those who did not meet magnet admission criteria, but are equally not being confined to the ‘basics’.

Advanced Placement, or ‘AP courses’ as they were widely referred to at CHS, are courses ordinarily available to non-magnet students in grades 10 through 12, who have “*proven academic ability*” (CHS course catalogue) and the support of and written recommendation from, required subject teacher(s). For example, the AP American History course has the prerequisite of two semesters of United States History with a grade B or higher and “*teacher recommendation*” (CHS Course Catalogue). The AP Environmental Science course requires Biology I (B or higher), Chemistry I (B or higher) and a “*strong former science teacher recommendation*” (CHS Course Catalogue). These AP classes were also referred to as ‘college prep’ (preparation) classes by participants at CHS, as the United States College Board accredits them. Jeb explained AP classes to be “*college level course[s] offered to high school students*” and furthered, “[students] who

obtain high scores on these tests get offered college places and also ‘credits’ that can be utilised in college and university applications” (field notes).

Although the data presented here may outwardly seem like a digression from the question posed by **RQ3**, it conversely speaks to the very heart of it. Since 2003, the year NCLB was fully rolled out, the number of AP exams being administered to high school students in the U.S. increased significantly. In 2003 for example, 175,860 English Language and Composition exams¹³⁰ were administered, however, by 2013 the number had increased 171% to 476,277 (Collage Board 2014). But who are the ‘safety net’ AP students at CHS?

Returning to the survey results of this study (Q8 ‘Race’ and Q18 ‘Program’; Q3 ‘Zipcode and Q18 ‘Program, see Appendix 3), we find the ‘demographic face’ cross-tabulations of those who identified as participating in AP classes to be:

TABLE 8: CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AP PROGRAM/RACE CROSS-TABULATION

	Race/Ethnicity				Total
	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino(a)	Other	
Advanced Placement	74.7%	11.1%	6.3%	7.9%	100.0%

TABLE 9: CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AP PROGRAM/ZIPCODE CROSS-TABULATION

	Zipcode					Total
	NW	SW	NE	SE	Out of Zone	
Advanced Placement	66.7	17.5%	1.5%	4.8%	9.5%	100.0%

The results in Tables 8 and 9 both support Bud’s notion of a ‘safety net’ and the observed demographic data presented in Table 7 (p158), and further argue that the so-called ‘net’ disproportionality catches wealthier (western ZIP code) whiter students, protecting them from the confines of the ‘basic’ curriculum endured by some 82% of black students.

¹³⁰ The ‘most taken’ AP exam is perhaps unsurprisingly, one that is widely favoured by college and university admission officers in the U.S.

6.4.4 RQ3 – A Summary

In response to **RQ3**, the data presented in Table 5 (p155) and Table 6 (p156) suggest that of *all* reported groups, magnet students, who are both whiter and wealthier, have benefitted most since the state level manifestation of NCLB (FCAT) was introduced in Florida. At both county and state level, black students have undoubtedly been 'left behind' under the NCLB legislation, despite being one of the groups that the law sought specifically to 'close the gap' for. In fact, black students fared less well in 2010 (compared to both their white peers and all other reported groups), than they did in 2003, the first year NCLB was introduced. The NCLB-mandated FCAT testing agenda, as manifested at CHS, Hurricane and Florida, has arguably served only to further privilege wealthier whiter families preserving the white-hegemonic racial pecking order (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2003; Oakes 2005).

6.5 IN SUM

This chapter offers a conceptualisation of white supremacy that goes beyond the usual narrow focus on extreme and explicitly racist organisations and individuals and focuses instead on a more extensive, powerful version of white supremacy - one that is normalised and taken for granted in education policy and practice. According to Critical Race Theory (CRT), the failure of black students to participate in CHS's magnet or AP classes is not by happenstance. The NCLB policy and its FCAT manifestation in Florida enable the supposedly merit-based infrastructure and practices of CHS to provide differential access to the school curriculum. NCLB ultimately ensures that whiter wealthier students get a superior education, which in turn ensures that as a group whites face less competition in the future workplace (as demonstrated by the disparate employment rates of blacks and whites as outlined in Chapter 1), preserving white

hegemony. The extent to which participants in this study were aware of whiteness and the preservation of white hegemony through education is further explored in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Oppositional or Rejecting Marginalisation?

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As identified in Chapter 2, “(individuals) *who are implicated in whiteness rarely... realise its existence, let alone acknowledge their own role in its repeated iteration and re-signification*” (Gillborn 2005:9 p29). “*When... whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white supremacist¹³¹ values and beliefs, they cannot recognise the ways their actions support and affirm the... structure of racist domination and oppression*” (hooks 1989:113 p29). This chapter, the second of four empirical chapters, addresses research questions four and five of this study, and considers whiteness theory, oppositional culture theory, and Afrocentric thought in relation to CHS, its students, teachers and administration.

In section 7.2, **RQ4** investigates to **what extent the participants in this study were aware of whiteness, and how the contours of whiteness were understood and/or embodied**. Section 7.3 speaks to **RQ5** in exploring **what evidence there was of an oppositional culture to that of the dominant culture at CHS. And could black students at CHS be found to be ‘acting white’?**

¹³¹ By ‘supremacist’ hooks does not allude to white supremacist groups or Neo Nazi ideology, but to the greater political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power, material resources and entitlement (see also Ansley 1997).

7.2 AN AWARENESS OF WHITENESS?

Section 7.2 investigates **RQ4** by examining **the extent to which participants in this study were aware of 'whiteness' and, how the contours of whiteness were understood and/or identified?** As outlined in Chapter 2, one of the most powerful and dangerous aspects of whiteness is that many white people have little-to-no awareness of whiteness as a construct, let alone their personal role in sustaining and playing out the inequities at the heart of whiteness (Gillborn 2005 p29).

As recognised in the previous chapter (section 6.3), participants in this study *were* 'conscious' of 'difference' in attainment between the black and white races. However, with the exception of Bud (but only to a limited degree¹³²), none of the white participants were aware of whiteness as characterised by the synthesised works¹³³ in Gillborn (2005 p29): an unwillingness to name the contours of racism; an avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or group; and, displaying behaviours and attitudes that minimise racist legacies. Although white participants were largely unaware of whiteness as a construct, there were numerous examples of whiteness being embodied by participants during both formal and informal dialogue, and more broadly during ethnographic observation. These 'examples' are discussed in the next three sub-sections, and are organised using the above-mentioned four characteristics of whiteness.

7.2.1 Naming the Contours of Racism (Downplaying White Privilege):

White participants, as they encountered their everyday lives at CHS, did not believe themselves to be dominating anyone else, at least not presently. The whiteness-privileging mechanisms established within this study's fieldwork operated in paradoxical ways. On the one hand, white privilege was normalised by the participants;

¹³² Bud was the only participant that 'struggled' with the colour of his own skin, and is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

¹³³ Including Leonardo (2002), Frankenberg (1993) and Roediger (1992).

it was taken for granted and therefore became invisible. On the other hand, often just moments later, 'white' was treated as a vulnerable status. This statement may seem counterintuitive and thus each will be considered separately for reasons of clarity.

7.2.1a Invisible (Protested) Privilege:

Generally, white teachers at CHS did not consider themselves to be of colour, suggesting instead they were 'race-less'. For example, Poppa stated:

"I don't consider race, I am an American, and a veteran. We are all just God's children... If I have to check a box on a monitor form, then of course I'll check 'white'."

Poppa's sentiment above was shared by a large number of CHS staff. Jeb also suggested he promoted colour-blindness and individualism in his own life and classroom:

"I don't think about it (his own race). I treat everyone as individuals. You know, 'judge people by the content of their character, not by the colour of their skin', like MLK¹³⁴ said."

Consistent with DiAngelo (2010 p22), the majority of white teachers (who represented approximately 95% of the teaching body at CHS¹³⁵) failed to acknowledge the significance of group membership. They also denied the reality that not all individuals had the same access to resources based on whether they were perceived to be white or a person of colour.

White students were equally oblivious to (or arguably ignored) the inequalities of group membership that influence an individual's "life chances" from birth (field notes). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, inequity in educational attainment was explained by referencing multiple alternative factors other than those attributable to white privilege consistent with Gillborn (2005 p29): i.e. *"I blame it on the family"* (p143), *"a lot of (black) parents don't push their kids"* (p143), *"[black kids] don't get any support"*

¹³⁴ Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

¹³⁵ In 2010-11, 84% of the U.S. teaching force was classified as white (non-Hispanic), with 7% classed as Black, 6% as Hispanic, and 4% as 'Other'¹³⁵. Of the 7% of teachers classified as Black, only 10% of those were male (see Feistritz 2011).

(p143), “blacks don’t take school tests serious” (p143), “[black kids] would rather party and do drugs” (p144), and “[blacks] are always joking and messing around” (p144).

Again, consistent with whiteness theory, white students in this study believed their (often privileged) experiences of the school system to be ‘normal’ for that of all students. Bridget suggested:

“Yes, but I believe everyone is capable in the beginning ... I mean we all start out the same way at elementary school – it’s the same curriculum, every kid gets a teacher... different people just make different choices.”

As demonstrated above, Bridget, like many white participants, readily assumed her ascendancy to be a product of hard work and determination in a ‘free’ America. Matt also agreed stating:

“We live in America, a land of great opportunity and freedom. Anyone who wants to be successful here is free to do so.”

The notion of taking up opportunities that are ‘equally’ available was frequently referenced by a number of white students. A member of the CHS student government suggested:

“I feel like we take advantage of the situations that America is providing, and we are going to be successful because we have taken advantage. But others, like the blacks and that, they don’t really care, they have the same opportunities but don’t use them. It surprises me”

The students enrolled in the CHS magnet program were especially opposed to the suggestion of white privilege. Many vehemently opposed the idea that their trajectory had been privileged in any way. One of Matt’s friends, and vice president of the Young Republicans, argued:

“I worked hard to get here (magnet program/VP Young Republicans). It has got nothing to do with our parents being white or having money. I worked everyday before [the magnet], and everyday since. Period. I’ve earned my place!”

Matt continued:

“If you are born into a poor family it is not your fault, you just got dealt that hand and I’m sorry. But everyone has to earn their place, fairly. Yes, we’re from decently well off families, but we are still working hard to make A’s... Its not

like it's easier for us because we have (pauses) - are wealthier. Our brains are all the same, so yes, in that sense I feel like we are equal."

The Horatio Alger Myth¹³⁶, that we are judged solely on our individual merit, pervaded the minds of many of the participants, white and black. Consistent with Matt's sentiment above, according to the Alger myth, accidents of birth, class and race are irrelevant to the potential for individual triumph, which is again consistent with the downplaying of privilege according to whiteness theory (Gillborn 2005 p29). Interestingly however, although black students endorsed the Horatio Alger myth, they simultaneously understood it to be deeply divergent to their experiences, a paradox that is explored further in Chapter 8.

7.2.1b Vulnerable (Visible) Privilege

While whiteness was the invisible backdrop to white students' understandings of life prospects outlined in the previous section (section 7.2.1a), white privilege was concurrently hyper-visible as a 'vulnerable' position. For example, white privilege was revealed as vulnerable when white students described the way they believed they were not free to move through proximate areas to CHS. During a conversation prior to a high school (American) football game, one of the CHS band conductors (a 12th grade student) stressed that it was important not to 'go east' following the game. She said:

"It's really scary (Eastside¹³⁷)... I should not feel uncomfortable or threatened walking down any street... because I am white.... But it is important you do not go east after the game... like they (blacks) all sit on sofas outside their doors¹³⁸ and stare... they don't want whites in their side of town.... It's not safe for you."

¹³⁶ Horatio Alger myth is the 'classic' American success story about the trajectory from "rags to riches" originating in the novels of Horatio Alger Jr. i.e. *Ragged Dick* (1867). The novels suggest that by leading exemplary lives, struggling valiantly against poverty and adversity, Alger protagonists gain both wealth and honour, ultimately realising the American Dream. See also Dalton (1995) who argues there is a fundamental tension between the realisation of the American Dream based on the Alger myth and the harsh realities of the racial caste system.

¹³⁷ Minority index (2010) see Chapter 4 on Hurricane ZIP codes (p80-81).

¹³⁸ Sitting outside on the porch is seen as a cultural divide between black and white families. In most cases however, poorer minority families residing on the east side of town often do not have access to central air-

Rather than being 'invisible' and 'unmarked' (consistent with hooks 1989 p29), the white students in this study better aligned with the sentiment of Giroux, who argued that white is "aggressively embraced to rearticulate a sense of individual and collective identity", especially when whites feel "besieged" by minorities (Giroux 1997:287). For example, many white students frequently accused black students and institutions of being "*reverse racist*" (field notes), due to perceived threats from minority groups. One of Bridget's friends suggested:

"Yea, but people always say it's like white people that are racist, but if y'all look round school, it's the black kids that are racist to us."

In this scenario, whiteness again becomes a visible, supposedly vulnerable, category.

As identified above, although teachers were largely unaware of whiteness and promoted colourblindness (consistent with Dyer 2000 p27), they could also be found simultaneously 'racialising' their students, particularly when they believed their high achieving (wealthier - whiter magnet and college prep) students were missing out on "*much deserved*" (field notes) spaces at university. For example, one mathematics teacher suggested:

"It's the middle classes that get punished in the USA. For many bright students their parents are considered 'too rich' for any assistance, so the kid gets rejected because they are 'not rich enough' to afford the \$50,000 a year price tag at elite universities (out of state). Sure they get Bright Futures (in Florida), but the brightest kids are forced to stay in Florida... If you're a minority, that's a whole other ball game. There are so many scholarships at elite universities available for minorities, based on them just being a minority."

As can be seen in the previous example, white privilege is again treated as a vulnerable category when whites perceive that they are 'under attack' and at risk of losing privileges and/or opportunities of which they are 'entitled' and/or 'deserved'.

conditioning, and with temperatures in excess of 90F for 6-8 months of the year, sitting outside is often a necessity, but one that is also considered to foster "*great communities*" (field notes).

White students also shared the mathematics teacher's concerns. One of Matt's friends unrestrainedly suggested that too many universities and colleges:

"Keep subsidising (black) failures. It's like blacks require an eternal crutch – it's not only insane, but criminal... it's a gravy train¹³⁹ that sucks billions from the tax payers."

Matt added that:

"Yes, but lowering standards for minorities only hurts them when they have to survive in the real world... we're not helping them by lowering admissions standards"

Bridget also agreed, suggesting that:

"[Scholarships] should be based on merit... [to] make sure taxes¹⁴⁰ are only helping those that are really committed to school (university), not those that just want to go and try it because they don't have to pay for it."

Preferential treatment for blacks (and other minority groups) has created a perception amongst many white participants that ending affirmative action will lead to a more fair and equitable society, when ending affirmative action would arguably serve only the hierarchical relations of power that privilege whiteness (consistent with Ladson-Billings 1998).

Gabbi was interestingly one of very few white students to not identify reverse racism as a type of racism, reference ending affirmative action, or indeed identify any perceived 'threat' from minorities. Perhaps it was her status as a "*poor white kid*" (field notes) or indeed her status as one of a handful of white (non-Hispanic) students enrolled on the mainstream track in majority black classes. Gabbi did not believe any group or individual to be more racist than any other (at least not presently – see Chapter 6 section 6.3.3), and deeply felt that black and white "*were are all in this (system) together*" (field notes).

¹³⁹ When questioned about the 'gravy train', Matt responded "*getting money for doing nothing*"

¹⁴⁰ What was interesting about this statement is that the scholarship Bridget later received, was not funded by the taxpayer, but by Florida lottery money. See 'Bright Futures – Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS)' which paid 100% of Bridget's program of study at a 4 year in state college
<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/>

Gabbi suggested:

“CHS is not a racist school, we all get along good. Like y’all get stupidness and kids being kids and that, but I think we all do good.”

For Gabbi, when divisions between student groups were apparent, it was a matter of economics and not racial privilege:

“The only thing I get sometimes is bitchiness, like the rich kids HATE that I got voted as school president... They all said it’s because the black and Mexican kids voted for me, which hurt. I had votes from ALL groups... One kid that I was up against’s dad, spent like 500 bucks on candy, buttons (pin badges), t’s (t-shirts) with her photo on, oh, and posters and flyers. She even had like 10 of her friends at the voting tables saying ‘vote for Tiffany’¹⁴¹. It ain’t racism that’s the problem (at CHS), it’s rich kids who get nasty when they don’t get their way... Rich kids parents try and buy the school y’all, like all the time¹⁴²”.

Gabbi, like the rest of her white peers, failed to acknowledge the significance of group membership and denied the reality that not all individuals have the same access to resources (consistent with Gillborn 2005 p29; DiAngelo 2010 p22). In addition, Gabbi also failed to identify that there had not yet been a black CHS student government president, and therefore avoided a critical examination of whether her white-skinned privilege may have still afforded her opportunities unavailable to other groups, irrespective of her family’s lack of wealth. DeShawn did however discuss Gabbi’s ‘unlikely’ election:

“In my opinion, the blacks wanted Gabbi to win because she was not your typical student body candidate. I mean, she’s not in the magnet, and she don’t come from money. Like she ain’t going to college, so she didn’t want it (to be elected) purely for her application (to college). She wanted it because she wanted it. I think many of the black kids can relate to that; she’s just ordinary girl... she a nice girl y’know? My girls (S.I.S.T.A.S.) saw it as a victory for them (black females)... I was pleased.”

¹⁴¹ Pseudonym.

¹⁴² One such family donated \$250,000 to CHS in 2010 – a ‘donation’ that is discussed in greater detail in section 7.3.2b.

7.2.2 Identifying with a Racial Experience of a Group (Making Whiteness the Norm)

As identified in Chapter 2, white supremacy depends on the devaluation of non-whites (Baffoe et al. 2014 p28). Therefore, white standards of achievement for example, rely on a tacit dichotomy between white success and black failure. Whiteness provides the very context for meaning-making by supplying the norms and categories from which other races stand apart, and in relation to which they are defined. Take for example dialogue from the previous chapter in which conceptual categories like ‘intelligence’, ‘gifted’, ‘achievement’, ‘magnet schooling’, ‘college prep classes (AP)’, ‘FCAT success’, ‘graduation’, ‘wealth’, and ‘middle-classness’, become normative categories of whiteness. Categories such as ‘dumb’, ‘mainstream’, ‘FCAT failure’, ‘drop-out’, ‘poverty’, and ‘underclass’ become the marginalised and delegitimised categories of blackness (consistent with Ladson-Billings 1998).

The formation of conceptual categories in this study (such as those above) is not a deliberate attempt to reify a binary, but instead intended to illustrate how in a racialised schooling system whiteness is positioned as ‘the norm’, and everyone is graded and categorised in relation to these points of domination. The conceptual categories outlined in the previous paragraph arguably create a hierarchy that black students cannot realistically overcome, as outlined in Chapter 6 (consistent with Ladson-Billings 1998).

Unlike the normative category of whiteness, blackness was visibly marked from the outset of this study and was frequently treated as departure from the norm. More often than not, this departure was perceived as a “*problem*”, a “*defiant act*” or as a “*deviant behavior*” by white teachers and peers alike (field notes). These (assumed) points of departure from the white norm, and the devaluing of behaviors perceived to be non-white converge greatly with the notion of ‘acting white’ (i.e. conforming to white norms) and this study’s 5th research question (**RQ5 What evidence was there of an oppositional culture, to that of the dominant culture, at CHS?**), and as such is not

discussed further here, but will be returned to in section 7.3. The remainder of this sub-section shall focus on a number of strategies utilised by white participants in this study to ignore and normalise their own whiteness.

One of the strategies white people use to ignore their own whiteness is to give precedent to their own condition and feelings, over the conditions and feelings of other groups (McIntyre 1997). Drawing from their own experiences (or in some cases from experiences of close friends/relatives), white students in this study cited many parallel conditions to illustrate how their experiences were 'comparable' to that of their black peers. Several white students were keen to discuss how they too have experienced discrimination. For example, Matt claimed:

"It's not like whites don't understand discrimination – fat, nerd, geek, gay, trailer park, you know? It's like they (blacks) forget about the Irish and like the Jews. My family are Jewish... they are not still complaining about Hitler or the Holocaust, they moved on... I'm not saying it is easy, but they (blacks) need to move on."

Whilst there is no doubt in the very real and important struggles of the Jewish community during WWII, Matt's above dialogue is both self-absorbing and disabling. For instance, the sentiment that we can all find points of human connection that allow us to understand and empathise with people who are different from us, or indeed empathise with experiences of different groups, serves to shift attention away from issues of race specifically. This shift in focus allows Matt (and others) to ignore their own whiteness and to construct themselves also as victims. Neglecting or ignoring the significant ways in which race discrimination is different than one's own again serves the interests of whiteness.

Another example of white participants turning a blind eye to their own whiteness was demonstrated when they compared their own beliefs and behaviors about racism with overtly racist friends and family. For example, when questioned about race relations, without exception all white students were quick to reveal information about racist family members or friends.

Matt suggested:

"My grandparents (pauses), like I guess they would admit to being a little prejudiced. But I think they just see blacks as a bit intimidating, rather than not liking them."

Bridget also agreed, suggesting her Uncle John¹⁴³ was *"pretty bad"* and that her *"meemaw"*¹⁴⁴ *doesn't really like them* (blacks). She joked with her friends that her 'grand poppa' would say that, *"if a black person came onto your land, you'd shoot"* (field notes). By identifying more racist significant others, the white participants of this study could be seen to remove personal responsibility through disassociation with their more racist friends and family members (consistent with McIntyre 1997).

It is important to note that there were a few white students encountered during the course of the research, that were unrestrainedly prepared to make racist remarks. When questioned about race relations at CHS, one small group spent approximately 15 minutes explaining how they believed blacks *"plagued the country"* (field notes). The group's views were uncomfortable and were aligned with the usual tawdry media-driven portrayal of black culture. Comments included: *"the only fucking good one is a dead one"*, *"I'm glad they is all shootin each other up for drugs, one less on the fucking street, cops should just leave em all to it"*, *"problem is they putting out too many kids bro... yea, [that] they don't pay for"*, *"they is lying, robbing... lazy assed... never trust one"*, *"shit, the only thing they good for is catching a ball and running for the endzone"* (all field notes). Whilst the students laughed through their unsettling muse, the notion that blacks were only good for athletic prowess was in fact widespread and deeply embedded in the overall school psyche. The perceived domination of certain high revenue sports by black (largely male) students is important, and thus returned to in section 7.3.2b.

Whilst the group's comments were overtly racist, for most students the pointing of fingers towards other racist individuals functioned to distinguish them from explicitly

¹⁴³ Pseudonym.

¹⁴⁴ 'Meemaw' is common (usually white) Southern term for grandma.

racist views, in effect showing how enlightened and open-minded they are by comparison. This extricating also served as evidence that race relations are far better now than they were in their parents' and grandparents' generations.

Bridget was keen to discuss a cheer friend of hers whose Dad went "*sooooo mad*" when he found out she was dating "*a black footballer*" (field notes):

"It was like she wasn't allowed to cheer, go to the mall, like nothing. The only thing she could do was go to school, but nothing after. She literally was not allowed to leave the house until she said it was all over. He took her phone and everything... He said that blacks kids are wasters and are only interested in one thing."

In this situation, the above student's father is perpetuating the popular (but fallacious) white-dominated media portrayal of young black men as having a culture of crime, and pathology of moral degeneracy¹⁴⁵. This false notion helps bolster the image of the 'besieged' white middle class (Giroux 1997) threatened by a people "who stand lower in the order of culture as defined by race" (Hall 1992:13). Of note, this particular footballer has since graduated CHS, attended a local 2-year junior college, secured funding, transferred to a 4-year college, and is on course next year to graduate with an honours degree, majoring in Business. Bridget concluded the conversation with the statement, "*Yes, but he didn't hate blacks, or anything like that, just didn't agree with whites and blacks dating.*"

In addition, the response "*yes, but*" (as demonstrated immediately above) foregrounded a number of other responses generated by white participants; interestingly however 'yes, but' foregrounded none of the black participant responses. 'Yes, but' had a distinctive application in white participants dialogue - usually discussions about the lived experiences of 'others'. Whilst claiming to cognitively understand the experiences of non-whites (the 'yes') for example, white participants did not fully appreciate (or in some cases believe) those experiences because they were inconsistent

¹⁴⁵ E.g. images of and convicts, crime, gangsters, ghettos, unwed welfare dependent black mothers, disease, and the breakdown of public order.

with the way they personally experienced the world (the 'but'). The 'yes, but' response was utilised on many occasions by white participants, to ignore their own whiteness and simultaneously privilege their own feelings and experiences. For example: *"yes, but it's not the same now"* (field notes), *"yes, but I mean they can't keep going there"* (field notes), and, *"well yea, but then President Obama was elected"* (field notes). There are also several other examples outlined in this chapter: *"yes, but I believe everyone is capable in the beginning"* (p166), *"yea, but people always say it's like white people that are racist"* (p168), and *"yes, but lowering standards for minorities only hurts them"* (p169).

Another technique utilised by white participants to ignore their own whiteness was to draw reference to certain 'honorary' black students that were treated by them as being *"like most whites"* (field notes). White students also looked to such students for their opinions, and considered those opinions to be representative of all black students. For example, Isaiah was widely considered across CHS to be a 'model (desirable black) student' and *"the smartest black kid in school"* (field notes). Magnet students, in absence of any other black faces in their classrooms, would look to Isaiah as an authentic or definitive voice/answer on certain issues. For example, if Isaiah believed in meritocracy for example (which he did not), then his words could be used to discredit arguments that meritocracy is an illusion. Isaiah always maintained he had to be *"mindful"* and *"measured"* in what he said in class (field notes). Whilst this study does not dispute that listening to non-whites is certainly important in learning about others' experiences and perspectives, it does warn that listening only to opinions of the sole black student in a magnet class (and treating these opinions as universal of the black group) can serve to simplify and tokenise the voices of non-whites.

Taking the above example of meritocracy, and Isaiah's caution over his expressed views in class, although he was a firm believer in hard work, ability and talent, he was also deeply aware of the tremendous sacrifices his parents made to *"supplement an education system they knew (from experience) to fail blacks"* (field notes). Isaiah was

frequently (mis)cited as being a supporter of meritocracy and as being a “*pin-up example of a gifted (black) student*” (field notes) that grasped every opportunity the American education system offered him. One magnet student suggested:

“There’s this kid Isaiah, he’s like super smart. Like he’s poor too, he’s from Eastside, but he’s like on the magnet program... It can be done you know... The rest of them (blacks) just don’t want it if you ask me.”

Another magnet student stated:

“Isaiah works hard, that’s all... he’s not special... He’s the same as us, he knows working hard pays off... It’s not magic... work hard, go to college, get a good job.”

What became clear through this study’s survey is that 42% of white students were attending or had attended tutors outside school, compared to only 2% of black students (Q17¹⁴⁶). According to the survey, of those students who were currently utilising or had previously utilised tutors, 85% were enrolled on the magnet program. Consistent with the findings of the survey, three in four of the participants in this study that are enrolled on the magnet program (Isaiah, Matt, Chase) also identified that they had utilised external fee-paying tutors at some stage during their high school career, suggesting that it may not simply be a case of taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by the American education system alone that ensures success.

In addition, white students’ extension of acceptance to a few ‘deserving others’ ensures whiteness remains invisible, with students like Isaiah being held up as firm evidence that an institution is colourblind; other blacks therefore “*just don’t want it*” as suggested by the magnet student above.

However, as Isaiah argued:

“You definitely have to pick your battles in (magnet) class and be careful with your words... many are not willing to open their eyes wide enough to see the truths in this world... They just laugh it off.”

¹⁴⁶ Q17 Do you/have you ever participate(d) in a club/team/activity OUTSIDE school? (see Appendix 3).

Far from the co-ethnic ridicule suggested by Fordham and Ogbu, Isaiah here alluded that if he demonstrated too much commonality or empathy with the experiences of 'the other' in class discussions he could more accurately risk disenfranchisement and ridicule from the whiter magnet group. Thus, if whiter magnet students are left unchallenged in the classroom, whiteness is again permitted to remain.

7.2.3 Minimising Racist Legacies (Historicising Racism)

White participants could be witnessed displaying attitudes that minimised racist legacies during the fieldwork, consistent with the characteristics of whiteness outlined in Gillborn (2005 p29, p163). Many white participants believed there was a line drawn under the past, and that society was now 'post-racial' as outlined in Chapter 1. For example: *"all this talking gets us nowhere, we started over already"* (field notes), *"that's all in the past"* (field notes), and *"schools are different today"* (field notes). The most notable example was recorded from a *"disgruntled white custodian, who overheard a conversation with a handful of students about disparate FCAT results in the dinner hall after school"* (field notes). The custodian argued: *"It's educated university people's like y'all that's continuing to push all this stuff. It's about time y'all backed up... Y'all creating problems that ain't here no more"* (field notes)!

Like the custodian¹⁴⁷ above, many white teachers at CHS could also be frequently found appealing to signs of progression, citing examples of societal change that 'prove' (often beyond doubt) *"things have moved on"* (field notes). For example, Jeb suggested, *"there's white kids in [Eastside HS] and black kids in [Westside HS] today. Like [Central HS], their student bodies all get along really well"* (field notes). In addition, Jeb also held on to the belief that race relations in society are, for the most part, *"there"* (field notes).

¹⁴⁷ In the U.S. a 'custodian' is a person employed to clean and maintain a building, similar to school, equal to a caretaker/janitor.

He argued:

"Like sometimes kids are just kids... kids tell each other they are dumb, fat, gay, or Jewish... they don't understand what they are saying. But, I think society more broadly is really (pauses)... united."

Bud, a former CHS student, could often be found recounting stories to his students about the first day and early years following the end of segregation i.e. the confederate flag that once spanned the front entrance of CHS¹⁴⁸ (previously discussed in Chapter 5 p115). For Bud, compared to *"those early years, kids have come a long way."*

White students were equally keen to provide evidences of personal progress and racial equality in society. Bridget suggested:

"I never really spoke to blacks until I got to high school and now like I cheer with them... like no one would of thought we'd have a black president... I thought we'd have a female president before a black one, but y'know it shows just how much times have changed."

The election of Barak Obama was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the most cited evidence of racial equality in American society, firm evidence that the civil rights project was essentially complete and that America is a post-racial society¹⁴⁹. One of Bridget's friends furthered:

"Like if black people can live in the White House, then they can achieve anything. They just have to want it enough... everyone has equal opportunity now."

The above white participant's discourse is very concerning because they once again suggest that black youths just have to 'want it', consistent with the fallacious Alger myth. The above discourses also lead whites into complacency, allowing them to believe that

¹⁴⁸ The Confederate flag is a source of great controversy and differing opinions at CHS. Some saw it as *"southern pride"* or *"southern heritage"* whereas others viewed it as a *"symbol of slavery"* and therefore believed it to be a racist symbol (field notes).

¹⁴⁹ Although outside of the remit of this study, this is also a useful example of how white (male) privilege in the U.S. society is both 'normal' and 'desirable' returning ideas in section 7.2.1a and 7.2.1b. CHS participants failed to identify the white-heterosexual-male nature of the U.S. presidency; it was taken for granted as a 'normal' condition. However, the election of the first president of colour (which also sparked dialogue about female or homosexual presidential candidates) demonstrated the widespread desire for a white, heterosexual, male president.

the efforts society has made to be sufficient in overcoming racism. In addition, such discourses are also disabling, when they get called upon as a way of resisting any suggestion that racism is still a significant problem (such as those in section 7.2.1a).

Restating Matt's dialogue presented in section 7.2.2 we find that he, like other white students, was increasingly frustrated by black collectives unwillingness to "move on" (field notes):

"My family are Jewish... they are not still complaining about Hitler or the Holocaust, they moved on... I'm not saying it is easy, but they (blacks) need to move on."

Like Matt's statement above, another magnet student suggested:

"It's like so annoying; they just won't let it go. It's like it wasn't them anyways, it was their grandparents and great-grandparents. I just don't get it y'all. It's as if they was there or something, the way they bring it up all the time."

Another continued:

"You just can't say anything to them (black students), whatever you say it's like because they are black.... Its dumb, like get over it... for real."

Neglecting and historicising the significant ways in which race discrimination is experienced, both historically and presently, again serves only to privilege whiteness and the white experience.

'Black History Month' (the modern version of 'Negro History Week' – see Woodson 1927) is an annual, nationally observable event across U.S. schools and other institutions¹⁵⁰. Designed (at least according to Bud), in remembrance of "*important people and events in the history of Africans*" (field notes), it was an event at CHS that was marred by controversy in 2011. For the most part CHS teachers were opposed to celebrating Black History Month specifically, as they believed it to be unfair to other groups, with many citing American Indians in particular. One such teacher even made the local headline news in 2011.

¹⁵⁰ And to a much lesser extent in Canada, the UK and Germany.

During Black History Month there were a handful of black motivational speakers booked to attend CHS and speak about their experiences, icons and inspirations. Given that the population of CHS and its teachers, which totalled well in excess of 2000 people, not all would have been able to attend each event due to seating capacity in the school's auditorium, which had an estimated seating capacity of approximately 650 persons. Given that the speakers were often booked within social studies class time and/or lunchtimes¹⁵¹, teachers were required to sign their class up and accompany them to the auditorium in place of their regular lessons or their lunch break. Whilst Bud was always enthusiastic about *"letting the kids have the opportunity to hear and learn from others' experiences"* (field notes), other teachers did not sign their classes up for a variety of reasons, to include *"being behind with schedules of work"*, *"I ain't using regular class time for extras"*, *"I don't agree with kids skipping lunch"*, *"I'm not missing my lunch period; it's my only break"*, or indeed because they *"disagreed"* with the premise of Black History Month altogether (field notes).

Ms. Rhind¹⁵² (a mainstream science teacher with a majority black class) was reported to have told her students that they could attend a Black speaker event *only* when there was a LGBT speaker, a Hispanic speaker and a Disabled speaker scheduled. Two of Ms. Rhind's black female students apparently became agitated that she had declined their request to attend the black motivational speaker booked by CHS as part of Black History Month. According to written statements, the students accused Ms. Rhind of *"being racist"* and said that Ms. Rhind became *"enraged, throwing her backpack off the table before telling the girls to get out of the room."* Following the altercation there was much resulting (often heated) dialogue across the school.

¹⁵¹ The student body observed two separate lunch breaks (referred to as Lunch A & B) to relieve pressures on the dinner hall and other school-wide amenities. Teachers' teaching schedules were also divided (usually by subject) to observe these separate lunch breaks; as such the social studies department were usually together during their breaks.

¹⁵² Pseudonym

For example, Jeb suggested:

"That's just how it is. You have to be correct. You can't just give your opinions.... I mean I am not a supporter of Black History Month because kids get it in history - in the curriculum - where it should be. We don't need these speakers. It wastes time, money and causes nothing but problems for the teachers."

Many of the white student body failed to find merit in the black girls' accounts of events, arguing that blacks already get 'special treatment'. One AP student suggested:

"Like I had Ms. Rhind last year, I can't see her screaming and throwing her bag... I mean like it is true (Ms. Rhind's sentiments), what about the Mexicans, there are loads of them, or like [American] Indians, like duh - the original Americans. Like they don't get any special treatment like Black History gets."

Another followed:

"Blacks just always want to instigate stuff, stirring up trouble. It's so annoying. Like y'all know county (referring to Hurricane school board) will terminate Ms. Rhind... they've gone too far (the black girls). It's not fair... It wasn't even a racist comment. It's true, like there isn't a white history month, gay history month, Indian history month. She was standing up against racism not being racist. It's so stupid."

When the two black students made their original complaints to the Principal, they both felt that their letters had not been taken seriously, and conversely felt that they had been reprimanded for calling Ms. Rhind "a racist" instead. Over the next 10 days members of the girls' families stood during daylight hours on the main (busy) road outside the school holding banners and boards demanding action from the school and county. One of Bridget's friends said:

"There were like people standing outside the school for like a month, it was like so embarrassing... They were holding up a thing saying they were being discriminated."

Another followed:

"Yea, like saying 'racist teacher'. It was such a joke. They (blacks) blow things way out of proportion."

Bridget responded:

"Yea like my dad said that's why there are so many lawsuits in this country... paid with taxes.... They just have to blame someone else all the time."

Another friend argued:

"If y'all ask me, all they want is money and TV time... every time they get a no, it's always because of racism, not because of them."

The disabling discourses outlined in the previous two pages are the result of a 'post-racial' mindset that is in very real danger of both denying and (where acknowledged) historicising racism from its everyday experiences and practices (consistent with Preston 2007a p28). Perceiving society as post-racial and the civil rights project as complete enables whiteness to serve as a form of amnesia, allowing white people to forget or ignore how they were (and more importantly *are still*) implicated in the maintenance of systems of privilege, notably those educational systems outlined in the previous chapter (consistent with Castango 2008 p29).

In addition, the tokenistic efforts at schools such as CHS, in the name of Black History Month, often serve only to keep marginalised groups further marginalised. Inviting local black 'hero' speakers, who arrive to tell the (largely white magnet) audience how they have "*dug themselves out of the ghetto*" (field notes), fails to critically examine, and more importantly dismantle, the system in which people of colour are presented as 'exceptions to the (black) rule' during Black History Month.

7.2.4 RQ4 – A Summary

In response to **RQ4**, the examples of individual whiteness, as embodied by a number of white students in this chapter teamed with the institutional whiteness documented in the previous chapter (Chapter 6) mutually reinforce one another. When meritocracy is assumed by white participants at CHS, the focus is directed away from the systemic inequalities noted in the previous chapter. Focus is instead shifted toward individual (white) successes and individual (black) failure as perceived by many of the white participants in this chapter. Meritocracy allows white participants to see themselves as 'innocent' in an institutionally white system that creates, maintains, and reproduces

social injustices. Student and teacher participation in this system clearly carries a significant influence. Through their discursive appeals to meritocracy, teachers and students at CHS further erase race and engage whiteness. By denying race, participants in the system of education are also able to deny the ways in which they participate in the legitimisation and perpetuation of individual and institutional whiteness, but are also all-too-often quick to point to those who oppose. The next section explores the 'oppositional culture' (i.e. lack of 'will' to succeed in school) noted by many of the white students in this section. Consistent with the tenets of CRT, section 7.3 will privilege the narratives and experiences of black students.

7.3 OPPOSITIONAL CULTURE?

Section 7.3 addresses **RQ5** by questioning **what evidence there was of an oppositional culture, to that of the dominant culture, at CHS, and could black students be found to be 'acting white'**. As outlined in Chapter 2 (p34) Gibson (2005), whilst analysing Ogbu's Shaker Heights study (Ogbu 2003), discussed four 'barriers' that were acknowledged by young black students as contributing to academic disengagement: 1) 'feelings of not belonging'; 2) 'a mistrust of teachers'; 3) 'peer influences that undermine academic striving'; and 4) 'missing connections'. These barriers were utilised to explore the evidence available at CHS that supports/undermine each, and also structure the discussion of findings.

7.3.1 Feelings of Not Belonging

Ogbu's Shaker Heights study noted "two different schools in one building". He argued that high achieving black students who were assigned to accelerated classes experienced social distance and described feelings of "discomfort", "intimidation" and "inferiority"

(2003:61 see Chapter 2 p34). As outlined in the previous chapter (Chapter 6), CHS could equally be described as two schools in one building, with the presence of the competitive entry magnet program. Isaiah's experiences as a black magnet program participant were however inconsistent with those of the black students of Shaker Heights.

Whilst Isaiah acknowledged cultural distances between himself and his largely white peers, Isaiah did not describe feelings of 'discomfort' or 'intimidation', and certainly did not believe himself to be 'inferior' (nor superior). Instead he spoke of his "*frustrations*" with "*closed minds*" (field notes) and the "*unwillingness of* (the all-white social studies) teachers to "*let kids speak freely*" and have sometimes "*uncomfortable conversations*" (field notes). Isaiah interestingly also excused the whiteness of others drawing attention to their life experiences:

"It can be challenging (being the only black student in several classes)... They'll (whites) want my opinions but then do not open their minds to hear... Most of them just accept what they have heard at home without really thinking themselves... It's not really their fault, just how it is... They haven't experienced life in black skin."

Isaiah was evidently comfortable (albeit disappointed) to be the sole black student in majority-white classes, and stressed that he had "*never believed for a minute that he shouldn't be there*" (field notes); on the contrary, Isaiah believed that he was a "*respected*" (field notes) member of the magnet group. In another conversation he did however imply that his presence sometimes chafed against the (white) magnet norm, suggesting that whilst *he* was not uncomfortable, his presence might "*make others* (whites) *uncomfortable*", adding that "*they* (whites) *would never admit to that*" (field notes). He again drew attention to white teachers' aversion to uncomfortable dialogues between students (an important observation that is returned to in Chapter 8).

Although Isaiah was accepted as a "*valued*" and "*respected*" member of the magnet class (Bud - field notes), as we have seen in sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3, he was equally held up as a 'model' black student: what a black student *could* look like if they just "*want[ed] it*" more (this chapter p176). Whilst Isaiah firmly believed blacks did belong

on magnet programs, he also argued that too many others feel they ‘belonged’ to lower stream classes because *“it’s all they have ever known”* (field notes). He felt that their experiences of *“school[ing] has taught them they belong there”* and not on magnet programs and that for the most part, they didn’t believe it to be an achievable goal (field notes).

Consistent with Isaiah’s understandings, Jameeka and her friends did express a sense of solidarity in lower classes, but also acknowledged that schools did not expect blacks *“to make it”* (field notes). Jameeka argued that, *“School makes us (blacks) feel like we aren’t meant to be smart... like we don’t got nothing to offer this world.”* She then implied her response to the school system was potentially a self-protective one:

“I know it don’t got nothing to offer me (school)... They can’t tell me I stupid if I ain’t listening to their B S (bull-shit)... I come to school to be with these bitches (gestures towards rest of group). Na, like serious y’all. I got my own thing goin on (hair dressing), so like I am just here for the paaaaarty. CHS! CHS! CHS!”

Jameeka, although acknowledging she was in a system that would *“chew her up”* (field notes), simultaneously felt a strong sense of belonging at CHS. Jameeka was also not alone in her feelings of belonging. According to this study’s survey, the black student body at CHS were perhaps surprisingly *the most likely* to ‘strongly disagree’ (61.2%) with the statement ‘I do not feel I belong in my school’ (Q22 Appendix 3), compared to their white peers (47.0%), or indeed any other CHS group. Consistently, given the racial makeup of the mainstream class identified in Chapter 6 (p159), poorer blacker mainstream students were also more likely to ‘strongly disagree’ (53.3%) with the statement ‘I do not feel I belong in my school’ than their wealthier whiter magnet peers (45.0%). Therefore, contrary to Ogbu’s (2003) findings, black mainstreamed students were *more likely* to say they felt they belonged at CHS than their whiter magnet peers.

Whilst firmly believing she belonged at CHS, Jameeka also championed the CHS school 'spirit'¹⁵³ and regularly wore only the school colours (often with a hair weave to match, which in turn got her cited and sent to the Principal's office as it was considered 'against' the dress code). Jameeka, whilst not an advocate of the education system (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1), was a very prominent CHS student and was even elected 'Miss.Spirit' by the student body in recognition of her over-the-top displays of school spirit.

Jameeka's frequent and overt displays of allegiance are noteworthy, in that they are arguably an example of Gibson's 'sense of solidarity'. Gibson argued that a sense of solidarity is especially important in the school lives of black students, due to the power differential that exists between their group and the dominant white group (Gibson 2005). Jameeka was not alone in her support of the CHS school spirit. This study's survey (Q22 Appendix 3) identified that black students were most likely to 'strongly agree' they had 'loads of [CHS] spirit' (35.7% strongly agreed) compared to their white peers (25.2% strongly agreed) or indeed any other recorded group. In addition, mainstream (poorer and blacker) students were significantly more likely to say they had loads of school spirit (mean 2.19) than their magnet counterparts (mean 2.40)¹⁵⁴.

As demonstrated above, both Isaiah and Jameeka 'belonged' at CHS, and although social distances between the races were evident, both within and outside of the magnet program, none of the black students encountered in this study described feelings of 'discomfort' or 'intimidation' at CHS. However, several mainstreamed black students did identify feelings of 'inferiority' in terms of differential neglect between academic streams, which is explored further in the next section.

¹⁵³ School spirit is defined as an emotional and physical support for one's educational institution (school or university level).

¹⁵⁴ ANOVA sig. 0.097

7.3.2 Mistrust of Teachers

The second barrier identified was a ‘mistrust of teachers’ (Gibson 2005 p34) in that black students at Shaker Heights believed their teachers did not care about them personally. Black students in this study provided wide-ranging accounts of their relationships with CHS teachers. For most, the relationship was one of caution and uncertainty (consistent with students in Ogbu’s 2003 study); however for others the relationship was one of trust and security. The two groups will be discussed separately for clarity.

7.3.2a Soft Bigotry of Low Expectation

Jameeka was one of a number of black students who believed herself to be “invisible” and unimportant in the eyes of CHS teachers. She stated:

“Like I’m serious, if you not on [CHS magnet] then ain’t no one care for you. It like damn, it wouldn’t matter if we there or not.... Like we invisible... the only time they see us is when they writing us up (discipline action).”

Jameeka’s good friend Shanaya continued:

I tellin y’all the truth. They don’t even wanna teach us. Like instead of teachin us they is playing another dumb movie¹⁵⁵.”

Shanaya was convinced of curriculum differentiation in subjects that are supposedly universal to all students regardless of stream. She claimed that the social studies curriculum was diluted by teachers for her largely black class, and believed it unfair that they were left to watch Americanised versions of historical events “*instead of being taught and debating and that, like dem other classes*” (field notes).

Contrary to white participant assumptions, many black students did believe education to be important, as can be seen above in Shanaya’s rejection of watching a movie when her whiter magnet counterparts are engaged in debate and dialogue. Like Shanaya, many other black students believed that CHS teachers’ did not care about them

¹⁵⁵ Shanaya even suggested that the teachers could be seen grading magnet students’ work at the front of the class whilst her group watched movies.

or their learning (consistent with Noguera 2003 p22). One of Trey's friends suggested that there were few, if any, expectations from his teachers:

"Teachers is just happy if we sit on a chair. County happy if we in school and not on streets... Shit, you can sleep in Mr. Johnson's¹⁵⁶ class. He don't care so long as we sit and quiet."

Dante, suggested that stereotyping of black students to be the cause of teachers' low expectations: *"they (CHS teachers) stereotype... they think we (blacks/black males¹⁵⁷) all stupid."* Dante believed that *all* teachers, regardless of school, county or state, viewed black students as academically inferior to whites, and that high achieving black students (citing Isaiah) were considered "*freaks*" by whites (field notes) rather than the norm:

"Having a black student do good is too much for them (teachers)... [It] mean they can't say ALL blacks are stupid... you can't trust them (teachers) to help you. Ain't one of them got your back... All you got is the Lord."

Dante had no trust in teachers and firmly believed that *"teachers want[ed] to see black kids fail"* (field notes). He believed that you could not rely on teachers because:

"... Unless you a freak, you ain't winning... school is pure wastin time. It ain't got nothing for you... [only] make you feel like you nothing, never be nothing, never be good enough."

One of Trey's friends equated being black with negative treatment from teachers, suggesting differential disciplinary practices for students of white and black races. For example he explained:

"Many teachers say that, like they see me [and] not my colour... but it ain't true.... Like they'all prejudice. They be like 'pull your pants up... where your belt at?', then when the white kids be all comin in with the baggy ripped pants y'all say nothing."

Many of the sentiments of the students in this section were confusingly not supported by data generated in this study's survey. For example, whilst the black students above believed that they could not rely on their teachers to help them succeed

¹⁵⁶ Pseudonym

¹⁵⁷ It was unclear from transcript if Dante was still referring to black males specifically, or more broadly to black students in general.

or treat them fairly, the survey results suggest that mainstream students were significantly¹⁵⁸ more in agreement with the statement 'my school¹⁵⁹ is caring and supportive' than their magnet peers (Q22 see Appendix 3). Constructing a cross tabulation that explored 'Race*My School is Caring and Supportive', showed that black students were almost *twice* as likely (20.4%) as white students (10.9%) to 'strongly agree' that CHS is 'caring and supportive'. Isaiah believed he could explain some of the divergent data:

"I don't think most of the teachers here would have thought of themselves as bigoted... But it's a fact. Blacks are never expected to be the doctor - always the nurse... never a mathematician - always the athlete... When I was in middle school I'd always get 'Isaiah you are so tall; you'd be great at basketball'. Black kids are only praised for athletics... If you can run, jump and catch, you're a high school hero."

To explore Isaiah's explanation for the seemingly contradictory evidences presented at the end of this section, this study now turns to a unique space in the American high school: a space where black students are dominant and are celebrated and hero-ised for that dominance; a place where they are encouraged and supported both academically and physically, and have close relationships with the CHS principal, teachers, and guidance councillors; a space where black students not only dream, but also realise ambitions of fully-sponsored college scholarships. So where is this place? This place is the high school athletics department, and given its uniqueness in the unequal milieu of schooling between the black and white races, this thesis will dedicate a larger body of discussion to it.

7.3.2b Soft Bigotry of Athletic Heroism

Agreeing with Isaiah at the end of the previous section, Trey claimed "*If it weren't for ball* (American Football), *like no one here* (CHS) *would give a care*" (field notes); a sentiment

¹⁵⁸ Mainstream mean 2.48, magnet mean 2.72 (ANOVA Sig. 0.046)

¹⁵⁹ 'School' for the participants in this study, was not synonymous with teachers per se, but more so with a sense of school spirit (an emotional and physical support for one's educational institution).

supported by many of this study's other young black athletes i.e. basketball, track and field, weightlifting.

This study's survey identified that a large number of black students at CHS participated in school sports (60.6%), or supported the school's sports associations in 'spirit clubs'¹⁶¹ (8.5%) (see Q16 Appendix 3). In agreement with Isaiah, this study contends that the apparent contradiction in the data pertaining to a sense of 'belonging' at CHS outlined at the end of section 7.3.2.a can in part be explained by the presence of high school sports.

Other than the election of the "*kinda black*" Barack Obama (field notes - student), no other area in the last 50 years has seen more sustained visible growth for blacks than high revenue-generating sports (i.e. 24/7 media bombardment typifying high-earning black athletes). A myopic obsession with high revenue-generating college sports was evident throughout CHS but particularly amongst black CHS males and their (largely white) coaches/teachers. Many young black students believed that "*playing ball brings you money and respect*" (field notes). Supporting the above student's belief, the survey identified that 47.5% of black students who participated in sports 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'the adults in my community respect me' (Q22 see Appendix 3), compared to 28.6% of black students that did not participate in sports. Similarly, of all groups surveyed, black athletes were *least likely* to agree with the statement 'I do not respect the adults in my community'; 60.0% of black CHS athletes 'strongly disagreed' compared to 22.2% of black students who did not participate in sport¹⁶².

CHS athletics and CHS team spirit were an awesome presence. CHS had many 'state title' contending teams (and many recent and historic wins). What was evident during the ethnography was the unrivalled support the black community gave to the high

¹⁶¹ Including cheerleading, game day marching band, 'pep club' (a organised group that wears school colours, promotes school ethos, makes support posters and banners, organise pep rallies that raise funds for various teams, cheer for team sports during games etc.), or display teams e.g. flag/baton associated with the CHS band.

¹⁶² Compare to 49.5% of white students that did participate in sport and 32.3% of white students that did not.

revenue sports varsity teams (football, basketball and track). Some Friday night football fixtures could attract up to 5000 supporters from the local communities. High school footballers were treated like local celebrities and were hero-ised by the coaches, the school, the community and the local media; CHS footballers were almost never seen wearing clothes that did not include their name and number. The CHS Principal did not miss a home game in 2010-2011, and he knew every member of the CHS football by name and number, and could be seen shouting 'plays' from the rear of stands (and where he thought necessary, he would loudly berate the referee and linesmen).

On Friday nights, whether playing football, cheerleading, rallying the crowd, or dancing with flags/batons during the half time show¹⁶³, black students 'belonged' (see section 7.2.1). And despite the black community totalling approximately 19% of the population of the City of Hurricane¹⁶⁴, they often dominated the audience in the stands.

Exploring the possibility of negative racial stereotyping through high school athletics was particularly difficult. Student athletes overwhelmingly perceived their teachers (coaches) to understand them and care about them; statistically speaking CHS student athletes were also more likely to complete high school (see Osterman & Freese 2000). Returning to a piece of transcript presented earlier (p188), Trey suggested:

"Shit, you can literally sleep in Mr. Johnson's¹⁶⁵ class... He don't care; so long as we sit and be quiet."

The transcript however continued:

"... But like, I gotta make a 2.0 (GPA), so I got to listen up or coach will bench my ass."

Students who were 'failing' were not allowed to play football as per the Florida State 'No Pass No Play Act'¹⁶⁶, which often provided enough motivation to *"make the*

¹⁶³ Of note there was not a single black student in the CHS band; it was suggested the years of private instrumental lessons needed to be 'band standard' were beyond the means of most black families.

¹⁶⁴ Hurricane's white population was approximately 59% (see Chapter 4 p80).

¹⁶⁵ Pseudonym

¹⁶⁶ No Pass No Play Act - Florida state law stipulates that in order to play competitive school sports (such as high school football), "students must have a GPA above 2.0 and must maintain satisfactory conduct to be eligible to

grade" (field notes). In addition, because it was in the school's interest to have their best team on the field each week, many black athletes were offered private one-to-one sessions with teachers and magnet student mentors (who were collecting volunteer hours for college applications), were allowed to re-sit tests, and were given other forms of academic assistance as required to ensure their presence on the field each week. The athletics program director was frequently witnessed having more authority than the students' subject teachers. Students were aware of this fact and deeply believed the athletic department to be their biggest advocates in their school career – they trusted them, they believed their intentions were good, and that the coaches will secure their path to a college scholarship.

Athletic staff and many teachers at CHS were perpetuating several common assumptions, often to the detriment of black students. One of which was the profiling of black students as being "*good*" at sport or having a "*natural*" (even biological i.e. "*fast-twitch muscles*") or "*God-given*" aptitude for sport (all field notes). For example Coach Joel, a black man himself, suggested:

"When I think of what our ancestors had to endure to survive, it was survival of the fittest... I tell my kids (both footballers), they are ancestors of the strongest people on earth."

The athletic director (highest paid employee) agreed with Coach Joel:

"Blacks are built in a way that allows them to succeed in sport: their height, their muscle mass, physical characteristics that allow them to jump higher, lift heavier weights and run faster for longer. The number of black kids here at the CHS sports program is testament to this fact."

CHS teachers, like Coach Joel's sentiment above, readily assumed black persons are naturally better at sports, and thus, to the detriment of many young black students, disproportionately promote participation in high revenue sport as an alternative (often

participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities" (see <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=1541>). This legal requirement has resulted in accusations of foul play on the school administrators across the state who go to great lengths to ensure their athletes are playable each week.

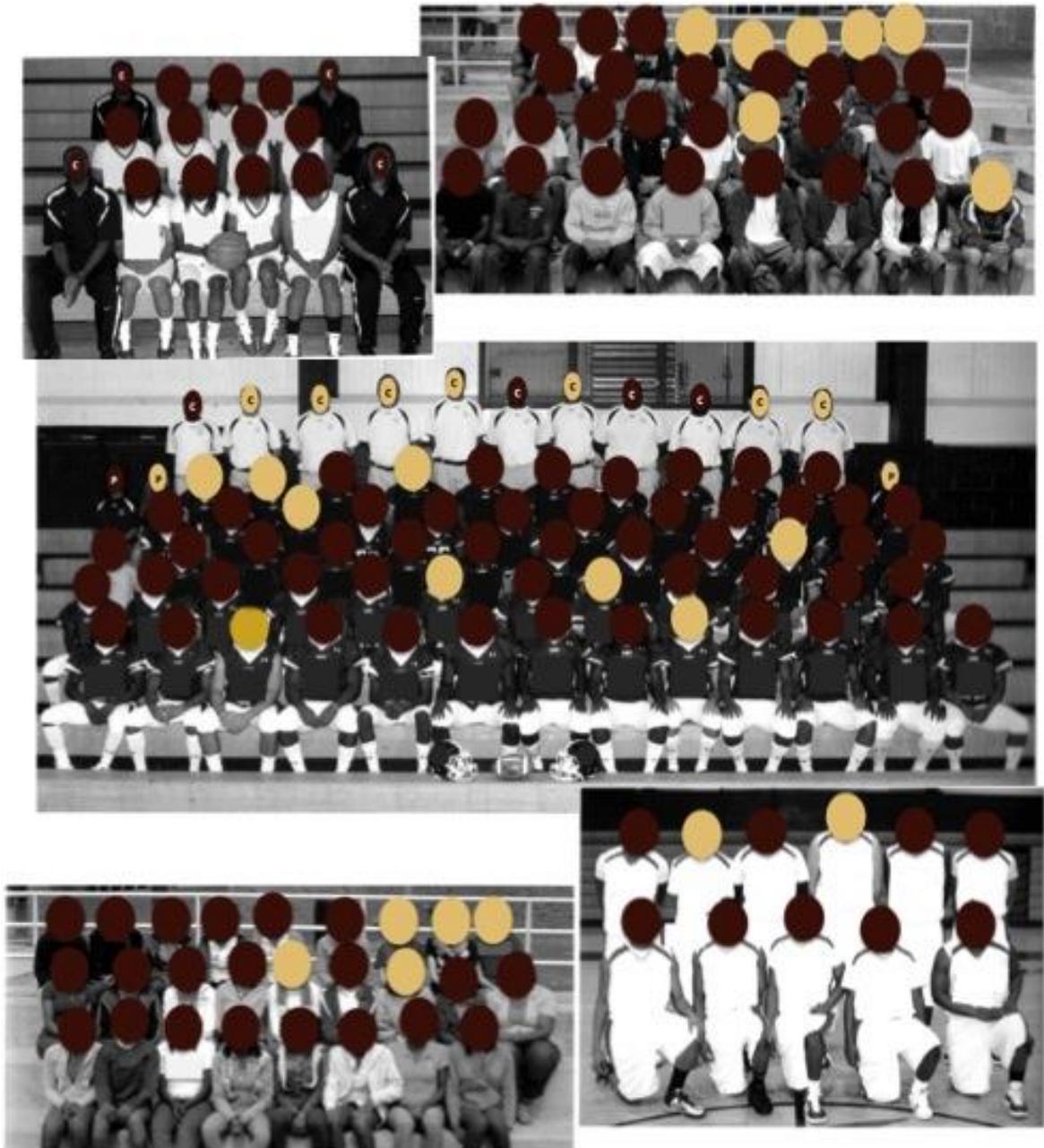
the only) success system for black students. Sport at CHS was utilised as a way of integrating black students into the school culture, gaining prestige for themselves and the school. However, this stereotype simultaneously serves white hegemony by reinforcing the idea that physical prowess is divorced from intellectual capacity.

Examining the team photos from the 2010-2011 CHS yearbook, we find that approximately 85% of the 139 student athletes photographed who participated in 'high revenue-generating' football, basketball and track teams were black, a disproportionately high figure compared to 38.7% of black student in the total school population (see Figure 2 over). Sport teams that are also popular in American high schools, but do not generate any income for the school's athletic program¹⁶⁷ e.g. swimming, baseball, softball and lacrosse, had a distinctly different racial makeup. Of the 103 student athletes photographed, approximately 88% were white (see Figure 3 p195). Both sets of team photos are presented on the next two pages. Coaches and physiotherapists were marked with a 'C' and 'P' respectively, and were not included as part of the demographic statistics provided in this paragraph.

¹⁶⁷ Spectators pay upwards of \$8 to watch CHS football events every week, with a large percentage of the ticket sales going directly to the CHS athletic program. Other 'whiter' high school sports often failed to draw any audience and did not charge entrance fees to view.

From left to right, top to bottom: women's varsity basketball, men's track and field, American football, women's track and field, men's basketball.

FIGURE 2: CHS 2011 YEAR BOOK PHOTOS - 'BLACKER' VARSITY TEAMS



From left to right, top to bottom, Teams include: female swimming, male swimming, female softball, male baseball, female lacrosse and male lacrosse.

FIGURE 3: CHS 2011 YEAR BOOK PHOTOS - 'WHITER' VARSITY TEAMS



Another damaging assumption being perpetuated by CHS teachers and coaches (who are given total trust by black student athletes) is that for black students, high revenue sports are an easier path to success, and that black students stand a far better chance of succeeding in sport than other professional careers. For example Trey suggested:

“Like it is important for us to perform on the field. High school ball opens up college ball and football scholarships... Coach is always making sure we get noticed and helps us with offers from college.”

There is a deeply racist ideology of high revenue-generating sports at school and college level: an ideology that disproportionately channels young black males in particular, into sporting endeavours as a means of upward mobility, *“Community Field”¹⁶⁸ is where boys play their way out of town* (field notes), said the athletics director. This one-way cultural integration at schools such as CHS devalues the black mind and further exacerbates a sense of failure when there is no college scholarship, and more often than not, no high school graduation at the end of high school (as presented in Chapter 6). When questioned ‘What will you do after school?’ (Q12 Appendix 3), 39.3% of black students said they would ‘Go to University/4-year College’ (compared to 61.6% of white students). However, when the same question was asked of those participating in high school sports the figure rose to 60.5%. The harsh reality however, is that only 6% of CHS footballers that made the CHS varsity team (typically grade 11 & 12) received a scholarship in 2010-2011¹⁶⁹. Trey said:

“We had like 65 athletes on the team (football)... out of those we had 4 sign letters of intent¹⁷⁰... 3 at division 1, and 1 sign a division 2 letter of intent.”

¹⁶⁸ Pseudonym

¹⁶⁹ That said Isaiah was the sole black student encountered in 2010-2011 to secure an academic scholarship.

¹⁷⁰ National Letters of Intent (NLI) are signed by prospective student-athletes to play various sports at 4-year division I or II NCAA colleges (National Collegiate Athletics Association). Student recruits who sign NLI’s must attend the schools they have signed with to receive the financial aid and full tuition scholarship. Once signed, NCAA rules forbid student-athletes from being recruited further.

Even when the 6% of CHS black student footballers do succeed in achieving college scholarships, they still face great challenges. According to the National Football League 87% of running backs were black, 87% of receivers were black, but only 16% of the most coveted position on the field – the all-star quarterback - were black (see Lapchick 2010). CHS was a microcosm of the college leagues in this sense, as despite being an approximately 85% black team, the CHS quarterback was indeed white. In addition, the chosen quarterback (QB) was not the '1st choice' QB. The 1st choice QB was a talented young black footballer¹⁷¹ and the decision to not utilise him was marred with controversy. The 'chosen' (white) QB's family (who had close involvement in local politics and a legacy in real estate) gifted \$250,000 to the CHS athletic program in 2009-2010. The 'gift' was seemingly a sufficient enough gesture to ensure the coveted QB position was given to their eldest son during his final two years in high school, a decision that enraged the black community who took every opportunity to jeer the white QB from the stands. The black athletes however unquestionably continued to support the CHS athletics department and their teachers; they even took pity on their teammate during the jeering: *"Ain't the kid's fault y'all, his parent do it to him... they don't show up and see the game, they don't care how it hurt him"* (field notes).

When educators and mentors encourage black students to join sports whilst simultaneously discouraging academics (often through silence), they fail to recognise the full potential and educational aspirations of many black students. Young black students begin to conform to the stereotypes allocated to them and give priority to their roles as athletes on the promise of upward social mobility. It is therefore arguable that black CHS students excel at these high revenue sports not because of supposed 'natural' or 'God given' advantages (as suggested earlier p192), but because they are encouraged to see sport as the only realistic path to success: a ticket out of poverty, or as Coach Joel would say, an opportunity to *"get yo mama outta the hood boys"* (field notes).

¹⁷¹ Who incidentally did achieve a college football scholarship that same year

Bud was unique in that he did not always believe CHS to be acting in the best interest of its black students, albeit just in the context of athletes. Bud argued that:

"Kids are slam dunking their way into the end zone every Friday night, but ain't learning and ain't graduating... If y'all's asking me schools are confusing education with commerce."

Bud suggested that administrators across Florida were "all aware" (field notes) that black students are being single-mindedly encouraged to pursue sports to the exclusion of academic interest, but were reluctant to act because of the large revenues generated for schools (to include CHS) in doing so. Isaiah likened his black male peer's situation to:

"Our enslaved ancestors eager to impress potential masters who they believe will be kind to them... They willingly display their strong black bodies on Community Field every Friday for the folk who are stupid enough to pay the 8 bucks to admire them and see how muscular, strong and fast they are - running head first into each other... Yes, one or two will make it all the way, but most are better buying a darn lottery ticket and getting themselves a education."

Ogbu (2003) came to the conclusion at the end of his study that black students should be less concerned with 'how they are treated' and with whether schools and teachers 'care for them', and more focused on the fact that their teachers were experts who had 'knowledge, skills and language' that (they) could impart to the students (Ogbu 2003:53). Ogbu however drew no attention to the soft bigotry of athletic excellence and the exploitation of young black students across the USA every Friday night - young black students who have placed their complete trust in their teachers and schools. Ogbu also failed to address one of the fundamental tenets of CRT 'Interest Convergence'¹⁷² (Bell 1980, see Chapter 2 p15), by which whites will tolerate and/or encourage racial advances (black athletics, academic 'no pass-no play' requirements), only when they also promote

¹⁷² One high profile example of Interest Convergence in sports particularly is from the State of Arizona, where the state cited 'high costs' as their reason to reject recognising Martin Luther King Jr. as a state holiday. However, when members of the National Basketball Association (NBA) and National Football League (NFL) proposed the NBA All-Star Game and Super Bowl not be held in AZ because of its failure to recognise the King Holiday, the decision was suddenly reversed (see Milner VI 2007).

white interest (i.e. school/county prestige, state championship titles, revenue generation from ticket sales).

7.3.3 Peer Influences (Acting White)

Ogbu suggested that being 'smart' in class was to be defined as 'acting white', and students who acted white risked being teased and even ostracised by their peers. 'Peer influences', the third barrier identified in Gibson (2005 p34), has already been briefly introduced in section 7.2.2, which argued that blackness, unlike whiteness, was frequently treated as a departure from the norm often perceived as a 'problem', a 'defiant act' or as a 'deviant behavior'. The notion of 'acting white' was highlighted by participants in various areas of this study's interview data, and again within the ethnographic field notes of this study. Interestingly however, there was a distinct difference in how the black and white students at CHS utilised the concept.

According to white student participants, 'acting white' was a term used "*by black kids*" (field notes) when they believed their black peers were "*trying to be like white kids*." White participants identified behaviours such as "*assisting teachers*," "*befriending teachers*," "*working up to [their] potential*," "*getting good grades*," "*always doing [the] school work*," "*being neat*," "*being in college prep classes*," "*dressing like a preppie*," "*talking proper English not ghettoish*¹⁷³," "*don't use slang (language) or curse*," "*be polite*," and "*hang out with white people*." Therefore, not only was blackness marked from the outset, normative white behaviours were also simultaneously constructed, albeit as an opposite behaviour to perceived blackness. Supposed white behaviours are here positioned as 'the norm' and all else are graded and categorised in relation to these points of domination i.e. to be seen as 'acting white' requires the engagement in activities that are perceived to be white cultural norms according to white students.

¹⁷³ Upon questioning what was meant by "ghettoish talk", the student responded "*like using half a word or like making up your own words... like slaughtering the English language basically*".

For black students conversely, academic achievement was *not* seen to be a primary marker of acting white. Primarily, black students believed acting white to be synonymous with being too serious, overly formal and lacking in soul (consistent with McArdle & Young 1970 p35). One black student suggested:

"Like white kids, man, like I'm serious, they is all pent up, like frustrated y'all. They always stressin about this class and that class... stressin about not making a 95... Like speaking all business in class - like they 20 somethin. They got no personality, no feelings y'all."

The student went on to clarify that by "*no feelings*" he meant:

"Like they all listen to music, but they don't feel it, they don't feel the words, the emotions y'know? They just singin it."

Isaiah admitted that he has been accused of acting white during his high school career, but stressed that this was a very infrequent occurrence and that it has not happened in the 11th or 12th grades. He also stated that the two black students involved were no longer in school, both dropping out before the end of 10th grade (consistent with Obgu [2003] who suggested students that engaged in co-ethnic ridicule were often at risk academically). Isaiah suggested he had been told he "*talked white... [and] acted preppy, or something like that.*" He also recalls being told that he "*forgot where he came from,*" a sentiment Isaiah vehemently opposed: "*I live where I come from every day, and I will wear it on me wherever God takes me.*"

"*Not being true to your colour*" (field notes) was one theme that was consistent in black students' ideas about acting white. Many black female students (as well as a number of black males) for example believed dating white girls to be an example of not being true to your colour¹⁷⁴. One student even explained that black students commonly have "*biblical middle names* (i.e. whiter names)... [and that] *some kids use they middle name to apply for a job,*" believing that stereotypical black names were less appealing to employers (citing Shaneequa as an example). The student suggested that "*using your*

¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, during the course of this ethnography not one black female-white male couple was encountered, however, there were multiple examples of white female-black male couples.

middle name instead of being proud of your real name" would be an example of black students 'acting white' and not being true to themselves.

Others students suggested that "*stuck up is acting white*" and gave the example of "*acting like Carlton*" (field notes) from the TV show *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. The Carlton character was 'pedantic' and 'preppy' and he was frequently known for dancing to Tom Jones' *It's Not Unusual*. An eventual student of Princeton University, Carlton was also a 'firm Conservative Republican' who was often portrayed as 'both friend and foe' to his co-star (cousin) Will Smith¹⁷⁵.

Finally, Jameeka suggested that having "*big poofie bangs*" was an example of acting white, and suggested that black girls should be proud of their hair as-is and not aspire to white notions of beautiful hair; "*black is b-e-a-utiful, ain't no dumb assed magazine tell you otherwise... all these pictures of skinny white blonde bitches all airbrushed anyways*" (field notes).

Academic achievement, as demonstrated here, was *not* seen as a primary marker of acting white according to black students (despite white students believing academic achievement to be a marker for black students). In addition, contrary to Fordham and Ogbu's (1986 p31) study and Suskind's (1995 p38) journalistic treatment of the black-white achievement gap, this study's data did not note a broad 'anti-intellectual culture' (Ferguson, Ludwig & Rich 2001 p33), or indeed note students lacking 'the right attitudes' (McWhorter 2000 p36), i.e. going out of their way to avoid academic achievement that may elicit accusations of acting white, or thwart the efforts of others.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, a former resident of the 'Philadelphia hood', was conversely portrayed as a 'scheming womaniser' with an outrageously coloured wardrobe. Smith could be seen 'constantly plotting schemes that will get him more money, more women, or both' (see 'Characters' www.freshprinceorbelair.com).

Isaiah, who should have been most at risk of accusations of acting white given his enrolment in majority white magnet classes (see Bergin & Cooks 2002 p37), also fervidly rejected the idea that black students ‘dumbed down’ solely to avoid negative peer sanctions:

“Blacks don’t dumb down. I would never be where I am today without the support I received... I’m not ‘gifted’, just had tutoring since I was small... All black kids want to do well, but life just isn’t fair... at some stage they just give up, the gap is too wide.”

As outlined by Isaiah, whilst there *were* examples of black students giving up on, and/or rebelling against a system they believed to be inherently unjust (discussed further in Chapter 9, as also documented in Chapter 6), evidence to support black peers purposely thwarting the academic success of other black peers was lacking. Students like Isaiah fly in the face of suggestions that black students are deterred from aiming high, because they fear negative peer sanctions. Consistent with Tyson et al. (2005 p40), O’Connor (2002 p39) and Bergin & Cooks (2002 p37), the threat of co-ethnic ridicule *did not* deter Isaiah from aiming high, nor did he avoid academic achievement to prevent supposed co-ethnic ridicule.

7.3.4 Missing Connections

The final barrier identified was ‘missing connections’ (Gibson 2005 p34) and included: a lack of adequate parental involvement in schooling, a lack of good study skills, and a general lack of knowledge about how the education system works (Ogbu 2003) i.e. a clear understanding of the connections between AP courses, school grades and getting into selective colleges.

Whilst it was beyond the scope of this thesis to examine parental involvement in education and whether or not parents had ‘good strategies for intervening’, what was evident is that black parents were not absent from the process. Bud, Trey’s adopted father, was obviously a teacher at CHS himself. Isaiah’s parents were not ‘too busy with

jobs outside the home' to give their child the 'constant guidance and support' that he/she needed. On the contrary, they were busy in order to provide their only son every educational opportunity they could afford him. Jameeka's mother had not taught her daughter 'abstract beliefs' about the value of school. For Jameeka's mother, her experiences of schooling were one of marginalisation, neglect and ultimate rejection. Perhaps Jameeka's mother did 'model concrete behaviours and attitudes that contribute to success,' not within formal education, but through her successful self-employed nail business (Ogbu 2003:147-148 p35). Black parents encountered during this ethnography, from the protestors to the football fans, all wanted success for their children, however they perceived it to be possible.

As previously identified in section 7.3.3, the 'acting white' thesis does not allow for the full engagement with the differential effects and influences that friends and peers exert on the academic strivings of black students. This study however noted numerous examples of black students - far from being oppositional - actively trying to encourage and promote success, none more so than 'The S.I.S.T.A.S.' (Sisters, Inspiring, Supporting, Teaching, Achieving and Success¹⁷⁶). DeShawn was a commanding young woman that was deeply passionate about the young women at her 'meets'. For DeShawn, S.I.S.T.A.S. was not about trying to tame impoverished black girls who were at risk of becoming 'the statistics', it was about empowering young women to take responsibility: making the conscious "*choice to succeed against the (white) odds*" (field notes).

DeShawn, as noted in Chapter 5, was unique in that she believed the fight for education equality loses its battle in the black community's psyche:

"School beats young black children, takes away their hopes and dreams, leaves them broken, lost, unable and unwilling to change their futures."

¹⁷⁶ S.I.S.T.A.S. is a pseudonym and the acronym is fabricated for the purpose of this study (the actual group name did utilise an acronym of a similar motivational and positive nature).

Black peers, from different grades and friendship groups were able to discuss freely and receive applause for, their academic achievements and aspirations at S.I.S.T.A.S. Many of the group demonstrated that being black and being smart are not incongruent, and all members were keen to achieve their goals and celebrate their victories, however humble or grand. Many young women shared their hopes and desires for the future, and the administration team of S.I.S.T.A.S. kept a log on each of the student's performances (grades, tests, re-sits, GPA, course choices, volunteering and community hours etc.). The S.I.S.T.A.S. even helped each other to select the best CHS courses and electives available to them (in addition to volunteer activities at school) that may enhance college applications later on. The S.I.S.T.A.S. could be found helping each other to revise, tutor those who were struggling, helping each other with good study habits, and offering general support for those who did not have a strong support network or who needed the additional energy and emotional support to persevere *"against the (white) odds"* (field notes).

Not only did young black members feel supported by their fellow S.I.S.T.A.S., they also possessed a strong racial identity as young black women. One student suggested:

"In school I haven't really learned anything about my culture. I want to go to college and study about black culture, so that I can learn what I didn't have the opportunity to learn in 12 years of school."

The important sentiment that black students have been deprived in learning about their culture during compulsory schooling years is further discussed in Chapter 8. These young S.I.S.T.A.S. clearly saw their racial identity as central to who they were, and none considered adopting a raceless persona in order to succeed or survive at CHS. Moreover, many sought to further strengthen their racial and cultural identities and aspired to attend historically black colleges in Florida where they believed they would have a *"greater opportunity to learn about themselves"* and experience *"black teachers teaching"* (field notes).

Whilst the S.I.S.T.A.S. were an inspirational group of young women, the premise and necessity for a group such as theirs within a public education setting was deeply unsettling. Having a student-led group (with an external volunteer mentor) designed specifically for black female education betterment and support suggests that black female students did not believe such support to be available at CHS. DeShawn argued that without S.I.S.T.A.S. many black students at CHS would worryingly not have any idea how to navigate the complex education system.

DeShawn's suggestions were supported by this study's survey data, which showed that only 59.6% of black students said they had discussed 'How to apply for college/university' at school (Q20 Appendix 3) compared to 72.8% of white students. Even more marked however is that 98.3% of magnet students had discussed 'How to apply for college/university' (Q20 Appendix 3) at school compared to 61.9% of mainstream students. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the survey also suggested that 100.0% of magnet students had discussed 'After school options i.e. college, employment', compared to only 67.1% of mainstream students, and 95.0% of white students compared to 68.7% of black students.

One common prerequisite of 4-year colleges (and many junior colleges) is a high school credit in a modern foreign language. DeShawn suggested this requirement was not often conveyed to CHS students, and it was a requirement all too many were surprised to learn some as late as the 12th grade (the point of college application) where the only option left is to take the classes online as an 'extra credit' in an already demanding final year. DeShawn also suggested that most teachers were opposed to students doing extra credit in the 12th grade, as they believed it "*a risk*" (field notes). According to this study's survey, 81.7% of magnet students have taken at least one credit in Spanish and a further 16.7% have taken one or more credits in French (total 98.4% total). Conversely, 45.1% of mainstream students have taken one or more credits in Spanish and 8.0% have done so in French (53.1% total), suggesting nearly half of

mainstream students would be ineligible for standard entry into most 4-year colleges and universities.

Current CHS 12th graders (2010-2011) were asked 'Have you applied for college or university for fall 2011?' (Q13 Appendix 3), in which 90.3% of white 12th graders said 'yes', and 98.1% of those had already received acceptance. Conversely, 61.1% of black 12th graders had applied, and only 35.7% of those were accepted. Despite these disparate 12th grade admissions statistics, and the evident lack of college preparedness information demonstrated in this section, 75.5% of all mainstream students and 81.4% of all black students indicated on the survey that they would 'Go straight to university or college after school' (Q12 Appendix 3); most of which are, according to DeShawn, destined to be "*disappointed*" (field notes).

When Ogbu suggested that black parents lacked good strategies for intervening at school, were too busy with jobs to give their children constant guidance and support, and taught their children 'abstract beliefs' about the value of schools (Ogbu 2003:147-148 p35), he did not identify the education system itself as a factor. This chapter argues that it is the school system itself that fails to intervene in the lives of its black students; fails to provide black students with academic guidance and support; and teaches black students theoretical beliefs about applying to college, but fails to assist in substantial college readiness preparation. Institutionalised 'missing connections' were also evident throughout CHS.

7.3.5 RQ5 – A Summary

In response to **RQ5**, although this study did note social distances between the races (both within and outside of the accelerated curricular program), none of the black students in this study described feelings of 'discomfort' or 'intimidation' at CHS. Black students at CHS provided wide-ranging accounts of their relationships with teachers at CHS, from caution and uncertainty through wholehearted trust although there was some suggestion

that black students were right not to trust their teachers and coaches. Despite some very infrequent encounters with accusations of acting white, this supposed 'burden' did not prove to be a prevailing force in black peer relationships. The participants in this study could be seen to embrace black academic successes, and succeed without the peril of being accused of acting white, or indeed risk being cast out from their black peer group. Finally, this study noted numerous examples of black students actively trying to encourage and promote educational success through groups such as S.I.S.T.A.S. (which black students had proactively fostered for themselves).

The noted hostilities towards formal education noted among the black peer group are arguably not because of a lacking encouragement for academic success (although it certainly does exist in some cases). The noted hostilities are also not because of supposed negative cultural attitudes that devalue black achievement (although this may again be observable in some cases). A vital perspective that needs to be explored is whether black students appear oppositional at surface level because they are not interested in perpetuating or participating in the (white) educational status quo? An important question returned in the final empirical chapter (Chapter 9) of this study.

7.4 IN SUM

As argued in this and previous chapters, whites invented race and maintain racial oppression in all its forms: individual, institutional and cultural. The white individual who comes to 'feel' these realities through critical race studies such as this, and is able to effectively communicate it, can no longer look to the victims for solutions to their oppression. To this end, it is crucial that whites learn more, not only about the stark realities of racial inequality, but also about their own role in its reproduction (Lewis 2001

p41). Educating students about race and racial inequality, and critically exploring one's own whiteness through schooling is addressed in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The White Supremacist Master Script

8.1 INTRODUCTION

As identified in Chapter 3, multicultural education refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds (Abbott 2014 p46). Multicultural education along with more radical approaches (to include Afrocentric education) were cited as solutions that would enable teachers to improve upon minority student education (May 1998). When black students are culturally centred by the curriculum, able to see themselves and their group positively reflected and empowered in the taught materials (Assante 1991 p71, Woodson [1933] 1993 p71), the attainment of black students is said to improve, and the black-white achievement gap outlined in Chapter 6 is reduced. An obstacle in implementing such a transforming curriculum however is said to lie with the majority white teaching force, who are: 1) largely unconvinced of multiculturalism's worth (i.e. Gay 2004), 2) unaware of their own whiteness (i.e. Dyer 2000), and 3) unaware of the Eurocentric materials present in the curriculum that entrench whiteness and preserve the white master script (i.e.; Assante 1991 p71; Ladson-Billings 2005 p57; McLaren 1994 p67 Woodson 1933 p71).

Chapter 8 speaks to **RQ6** but divides the question into three separate sections for reasons of clarity. Section 8.2 first explores **what role CHS social studies teachers see**

for schools in a multicultural society. Section 8.3 investigates **what versions of multicultural education were enacted in the social studies classrooms as part of the curriculum.** Finally, Section 8.4 investigates **how social teachers are conditioned by the curriculum they are required to teach and the textbooks available to support that curriculum.**

8.2 PREPARING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OR 'GOOD' CITIZENS?

Section 8.2 firstly considers **RQ6** in exploring **what role the social studies teachers at CHS saw for schools such as theirs in a multicultural society.** As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the long-standing and prominent goals of American schooling has been to prepare its students to become future citizens (Hahn & Torney-Purta 1999 p48). At CHS however, there was little consensus about the role of schools in a multicultural society.

8.2.1 Bud – Preparing 'Good' Citizens

As briefly stated in the previous chapter, Bud was the only participant who explicitly claimed to 'struggle' with his own skin (p164). Bud also claimed his struggles "*coincided with the adoption of Trey*" (field notes) the only non-white child he and his wife had fostered or adopted (as discussed in Chapter 5). Bud would frequently speak of the "*differences*" in the way he believed he was "*treated [when he was] with, and without Trey*" (field notes). Bud felt that his "*family no longer fitted*" (field notes) in many of the outlets he had frequented before adopting Trey, citing several local restaurants and diners as examples.

Bud's increasing consciousness of the mono-racial life he lived outside of CHS, helped him reflect on the "*make up*" (field notes) of the food outlets he would visit several times a week, without prior thought. Bud had undoubtedly begun the process of

confronting his own whiteness, and he admitted struggling to “*make peace with his [newly revealed] ignorance*” (field notes). However, Bud did not name racism when discussing his own ignorance’s sticking firmly to the more palatable ‘personal prejudice.’ He remained adamant throughout the entire fieldwork that he personally was not “*a racist*” (field notes), suggesting that if he were, he would not have “*adopted a young black man, and [be] proud to call [him] ‘my son’.*” Bud did acknowledge however that he was often afforded a different treatment by society than his son.

Bud’s experiences inevitably informed his approach to his teaching, and he claimed during interview to use “*every opportunity at CHS to challenge students’ understandings of racism and prejudice*” (field notes), citing his formal social studies teachings and his student-led group - STAND¹⁷⁷. Bud’s limited awareness also informed his understandings of the purpose of schooling. There was little doubt in Bud’s mind that schools *can* and *do* provide a platform for challenging racism and prejudice (consistent with Maylor et al. 2007 p49) in an ever-diversifying society. Bud also believed the social studies curriculum to be a “*good place*” in which to promote “*responsibility and change*” where students can learn the “*information and skills they need to be good people*” (consistent with many scholars i.e. Adler 2001, Banks 1997; Cherryholmes 1996; Evans 1996; Marker & Mehlinger 1992; Ross & Hursh 2000; Saxe 1992; Thornton 1994). Bud even suggested during the interview that he “*always*” taught in a way that challenged “*a students’ knowledge and their attitudes, regardless of subject or grade level*¹⁷⁸”. For Bud, the primary role of schooling was:

“Before reading, writing and math, we (teachers) must make sure that we are developing responsible young people who can all live together... that’s what’s most important. A lot of kids don’t have much in the way of guidance at home... We don’t need everyone to be academics; not everyone needs to have a college

¹⁷⁷ A lunchtime student-led group dedicated to standing up against injustice and inequity at the school. The group’s emphasis was more often than not centered around LGBT rights and religious condemnation.

¹⁷⁸ Bud primarily taught World History, U.S. Government and Economics, and only one of his six classes were mainstream (9th graders) the remainder were magnet (grade 11 & 12).

degree... We need kids that care about each other, about themselves, about their school, and about the communities they live in..."

8.2.2 Jeb – Preparing Economic Independence

Jeb did not share in Bud's view and argued during his interview that schooling was about *"preparing youths to be economically independent... [and] having the skills to be productive (measured fiscally) members of society."* Whilst Jeb did not suggest that social studies had no place to play in the curriculum - after all he was himself a social studies teacher - it was secondary to the overall goal of creating economically self-sufficient individuals that can *"give back."* Jeb understood the social studies curriculum to be a *"study of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of U.S. citizens"* (he did not at any stage refer to 'residents' of the U.S.). For Jeb, social studies ensured that students:

"Understood their rights and responsibilities... You can't have rights without responsibilities; kids forget that... Kids need to know the Constitution of the United States... Learn a little something about our history... [And] learn something about economics and the way the world works."

Jeb did not support multicultural education (consistent with Gay 2004 p50) believing such endeavors to be inherently indoctrinating. He also believed it was not his place as a social studies teacher to *"preach"*:

"It's not for schools to suggest that students' views are wrong, that a student's parents views are wrong, that their religious preferences are wrong.... I am not here to preach about whose religion is more superior, or debate the merits of each, [such things] are beyond schools, and better dealt with by families and churches... and amongst kids themselves... It's dangerous... It's risky for teachers (to discuss such topics in class)... I stick to facts, and do what I am supposed to do, teach, deliver the standards¹⁷⁹, get kids through their tests, get them an education!"

In Jeb's opinion, fostering *"communities that all play nicely together is not the responsibility of schools"* (field notes), and he argued it is *"unfair to hold a few teachers accountable for whole damned communities"* (field notes). In Jeb's understanding, schools

¹⁷⁹ Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for Social Studies (see section 8.3.1).

were just neutral transmitters of 'factual' information and his adherence to state mandated 'standards' ensured that he, and CHS more broadly, remained neutral instructional sites, rather than cultural, religious and political sites of indoctrination. Through his own whiteness however, Jeb failed to acknowledge the 'neutral' state standards as a vehicle in which the prior (white hegemonic) societal order could be preserved and reproduced (consistent with Giroux 1983 p69).

8.3 CONSERVATIVE VS. LIBERAL MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CLASSROOM

Section 8.3 explores the second part of **RQ6** by investigating **what versions of multicultural education were enacted in the social studies classrooms of CHS as part of the mandated social studies curriculum?** As outlined in Chapter 3, multiculturalism has typically been focused on either teaching the 'culturally different' to assimilate into mainstream culture, or increasing the sensitivity of the dominant group (Rezai-Rashti 1995 p56; Sleeter & Grant 1987 p55). In Chapter 3, Perry (2002 p56) argued that there were only two types of multicultural practices present in schools - conservative and liberal multiculturalism, both of which moved the concept away from the ideals of liberation and social justice proposed originally by Banks (consistent with McLaren 1994 p67).

Before exploring the versions of multicultural education enacted in the classrooms of CHS, it is important to first acknowledge the demands placed on both Bud and Jeb in delivering the state mandated social studies curriculum. It is also important to draw attention to the obvious struggles students faced in trying to meaningfully engage with the whirlwind of 'standardised' information, facts and figures.

8.3.1 Mile Wide, Inch Deep: Social Studies

CHS delivered social studies in accordance with, and as mandated by, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for Social Studies (hereafter the 'standards'). The State Board of Education first approved the 'standards' in 1996 as a means of identifying academic expectations for student achievement in Florida. These original standards were written in several subject areas to include social studies and were organised by grade level for grades K-8 and into separate subject 'strands' for grades 9-12.

In a typical academic year there are 36 weeks of taught sessions split into two 18-week semesters. In order to satisfy Florida's high school graduation requirements for social studies, a student *must* complete:

"24 academic credits in grades 9 through 12... (to include):

- (d) One credit in United States history (2 semesters).
- (e) One credit in world history, including a comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of all major political systems (2 semesters).
- (f) One-half credit in economics including a comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of all major economic systems (1 semester).
- (g) One-half credit on United States government, including study of the Constitution of the United States... the study of Florida government, including study of the state constitution, the three branches of state government, and municipal and county government (1 semester)."

(Section 1003.43, Florida Statutes)

Although the study of economics and racial inequality in schools is valid, and should be mandatory if it assists students to acknowledge and critically reflect upon their own white privilege and the enduring inequity that exists between black and white individuals (as outlined in Chapter 1 and subsequent chapters in this study), the economics curriculum did *not* mandate the discussion of race, racism or racial inequality. As a result, the economics strand is not further discussed in this study. The remainder of this section shall focus on the three social studies strands required for graduation (U.S.

History, World History and U.S. Government), which *do* mandate the exploration of race, and the experiences of African Americans specifically.

In 2010-2011 there were 20 separate standards spanning the three social studies strands - a total of 223 'benchmarks' between them. Bud and Jeb were required to cover *all* 223 benchmarks during five semesters of schooling, in addition to allowing time for revision, testing, sickness/absenteeism, public holidays, and 'storm days'¹⁸⁰. Covering 223 benchmarks in five semesters equates to covering approximately one standard per taught hour. To contextualise for the reader what 'one standard per taught hour' looks like, a consecutive section of benchmarks from the U.S. History strand (chosen specifically as it provided opportunities for the discussion of race, racism and institutional racism) is provided in Table 10 below. Bud and Jeb would therefore be required to deliver *all* of the following benchmarks in five hours, over the course of one week, to one class:

TABLE 10: NGSSS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES – U.S. HISTORY BENCHMARKS

SS.912.A.5.7	Examine the freedom movements that advocated civil rights for African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and women.
SS.912.A.5.8	Compare the views of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey relating to the African American experience.
SS.912.A.5.9	Explain why support for the Ku Klux Klan varied in the 1920s with respect to issues such as anti-immigration, anti-African American, anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti-women, and anti-union ideas.
SS.912.A.5.10	Analyze support for and resistance to civil rights for women, African Americans, Native Americans, and other minorities.
SS.912.A.5.11	Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to United States history. Remarks/Examples: Examples are Rosewood, land boom, speculation, impact of climate and natural disasters on the end of the land boom, invention of modern air conditioning in 1929, Alfred DuPont ¹⁸¹ , Majorie Kinnan Rawlings ¹⁸² , Zora Neale Hurston ¹⁸³ , James Weldon Johnson ¹⁸⁴ .

¹⁸⁰ Days set aside in the school calendar for hurricanes and other such emergencies (i.e. two bomb threats were 'called in' during the 2010-2011 school year and students were evacuated from the CHS campus).

¹⁸¹ American industrialist, financier and philanthropist (white)

¹⁸² American author who lived in rural Florida and wrote novels with rural themes and settings (white)

¹⁸³ American folklorist, anthropologist, and author (black)

¹⁸⁴ American author, educator, lawyer, diplomat, songwriter, and civil rights activist (black)

Returning briefly to the introductory section of this chapter, given that multicultural education refers to *any* form of education that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds, as identified in Chapter 3 (Abbott 2014 p46), the benchmarks above (and NGSSS benchmarks more broadly¹⁸⁵), suggest that the social studies curriculum *can* and *should* be considered a multicultural education. With that in mind, the blazing pace in which the multicultural content was ‘delivered’ in both Bud and Jeb’s classrooms was unfathomable. Each benchmark in its own right commanded far more than one hour of taught time, which was arguably more like 40-45 minutes by the time the students arrived from the previous class¹⁸⁶, got settled with appropriate books and materials, were registered again¹⁸⁷ and the teacher had dealt with any questions or notifications.

From the previous table (Table 10 p215), Bud and Jeb were faced with addressing SS.912.A.5.7 *“Examine the freedom movements that advocated civil rights [not only for] for African Americans, [but also for] Latinos, Asians, and women”* in 40-45 minutes, which if time was split evenly between the groups, would leave Bud and Jeb around ten minutes to explore the freedom movement that advocated civil rights for blacks specifically. The pace was exhausting for teachers, and proved alienating for students trying to engage with the multicultural content, leaving them disengaged and disinterested. Shanaya, Jameeka’s friend suggested:

“Like shit, when they was doin this stuff on the KKK, like serious, I was there (interested)... But they give no time for asking questions, just movin on... so stupid. Like how kids supposed to learn.... We did like two seconds on the KKK, red socks, shirts (pauses) somethin like that y’all (laughs)... Like two seconds, for real. Me? I is switchin off.”

¹⁸⁵ Standards database available at <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard>

¹⁸⁶ Students were required to move across the 2000+ student capacity campus and between buildings for each subject.

¹⁸⁷ Registration occurred 6 times a day and had to be entered into the school database at the beginning of each lesson.

Shanaya was not the only one who found the curriculum alienating. Both Bud and Jeb “hated” the curriculum (field notes) and described it as “*paper thin*” and as being “*mile wide, inch deep*” (field notes). Bud in particular, was outspoken on the matter during his interview:

“We have textbooks that could be murder weapons (referring to a 900+ page hard-backed heavy text book). Most of the kids here couldn’t tell you anything about it (the book) at the end of the year because it is too damned much. It’s not the our faults, we do what we can, but it’s ridiculous... We are expected to (mimics) ‘analyse the impact of the Holocaust during WWII on Jews AND others’ in 30 (minutes). I mean, hell, come on now, what can you reasonably do in one class... (mimics) ‘There this guy called Hitler, he’s a very bad man. He killed Jews, gays, and anyone else he didn’t like’ ... If I put Schindler’s List on for the kids I lose three to four hours (of taught time)... Trying to make history real is important for kids; shows them how people mistreat each other... Hell, I just let the kids watch the damned film and cut something else. I’m sure I can get my ass dismissed for saying that.”

8.3.2 Multicultural Education on the Ground

Despite having numerous formal opportunities to discuss race and racism within the mandated curriculum, both Bud and Jeb failed to equate the social studies curriculum with any form of multicultural education. When questioned, both presumed multicultural education to be something ‘in addition to’ existing demands. Bud claimed he “*tried to do [his] bit*” and Jeb suggested, “*county has no hope of putting anything else in this teachers workload... especially not multicultural anything... I ain’t qualified for that*” (field notes). Although neither teacher recognised the multicultural nature of their subject, the findings of this study were consistent with Perry (2002 p56) in that two distinct approaches to multicultural education were observed in both Bud and Jeb’ classrooms. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the multicultural approaches adopted by each teacher reflected their own political preferences. Bud’s approach to social studies was most aligned with a liberal agenda and Jeb’s most aligned with a conservative agenda. The differing approaches to social studies, and each teacher’s subsequent focus on race, racism and racial inequality within their classrooms, are discussed separately below.

8.3.2a Jeb, Conservative Multiculturalism & Race

Jeb's conservative approach to multicultural education was typified by an overt commitment to colourblindness and a myopic commitment to textbook 'fact'.

Jeb's colourblind approach to schooling has already been briefly identified in the previous chapter, where Jeb suggested: *"I don't think about it (race). I treat everyone as individuals"* (Chapter 7 p165). Jeb did not acknowledge racial differences in his teaching and therefore race was treated as a non-issue in his classroom. He warned his only mainstream group one afternoon (field notes):

"Who you think you are out there (pointing to the door) is irrelevant. Y'all are the same in here; ain't no one of you special (looking intently at a popular CHS footballer sat in the front row). We've all got the same job to do; let's get it done people. Come on now."

Jeb's supposed inability to see race in his classroom instilled in him a sense of fairness and equity. He took great comfort and pride in the knowledge that he does *"not discriminate against any student in [his] class"* (field notes). Jeb's appeal to colourblindness, like other conservative multiculturalist appeals to equal treatment in schooling, can appear deceptively enlightened. For example, Jeb suggested during an interview:

"Discussing racism - which I add I don't believe to be a problem (at CHS) - creates divisions that teachers have to deal with... In all my years of teaching here, I haven't met a parent, white or black, who didn't want their kids to be taught that we are all equal, just as the Lord intended... no one better than another... [They just] want their kids to be treated fair, and to get them a good education... it's that simple".

Colourblindness as portrayed here makes a compelling case, a case that can misleadingly appear to be in the best interests of black children.

However, as we have seen in Chapter 6, despite Jeb's discursive appeals to individual 'fairness' in his classroom, at institutional level there are persuasive evidences that demonstrate the educational experiences of 'blacker mainstreamed' students to be far from fair, when compared with their 'whiter-magnet' peers. Jeb's obvious aversion to

teaching mainstream students, coupled with his time ‘in service’ as a teacher meant that Jeb ‘earned’ the right to teach five ‘whiter’ (in some cases all white) magnet classes and one ‘blacker’ mainstream class each day.

The climate of Jeb’s classes were described in the field notes as “sterile”, and as spaces where students generally “avoided getting dirty by debating and reflecting on messy subjects” (field notes) such as race, racism and racial inequality. When confronted with a ‘messy’ (uncomfortable) subject as mandated by the standards, Jeb’s remedy was to “stick to the text (book)... [and] to the facts” (field notes). Jeb outlined in the interview that in sticking to the ‘facts’ he avoided:

“Politicising the curriculum, like some of my colleagues¹⁸⁸... [and avoided] dealing with parents who become real resentful if your teaching is out of whack with their beliefs, especially religious or political... If it’s in the book, it’s in the curriculum, and if it’s in the curriculum, it’s in my classroom, simple - they (the parents) can take any grievances to [the Principal] and to the school board.”

In addition, Jeb indicated that he believed the discussing of race and racism to be ‘divisive’, defaulting again to the Horatio Alger Myth outlined in Chapter 6. Jeb’s years as an educator had taught him that:

“No good comes of telling kids they are different... It doesn’t matter what colour you are or where you come from - get an education, go to college, get a good job and live a good standard of living. It really is that simple... all kids have got to do in school is work hard... I can’t make kids want to work, but I can make sure they have the information they need to pass the tests; the rest is on them... Kids have to be made responsible for their choices.”

Jeb’s conservative multiculturalist approach, and his sentiment above, detrimentally ignored the ways in which race was claimed by his black students (as argued in Chapter 7), and further marginalised or completely ignored the lived realities of the black students in his class (as outlined in the black students’ narratives in the previous chapters).

¹⁸⁸ Jeb did not name Bud, but this comment was most likely directed at him.

Despite Jeb's appeal to colourblindness, there were occasions noted during the fieldwork when he did explicitly acknowledge 'difference.' However, consistent with this study's literature review, he did so *only* when attempting to bridge the gap between white middle-classist schooling norms and those of the culturally 'different' (Jenks et al. 2001 p50), and under the more palatable guise of academic standards for *all*:

"I expect the same high standards from all my students, even my mainstreamers... There are no free rides - all have to earn their grade in my classroom."

Jeb's conservative approach reduced race to a matter of phenotype, instead of acknowledging race as an indicator of "social status, history [and] power" (consistent with Guinier and Torres 2002:38 p19). Jeb offered assimilation into the norms of white, middle-class schooling as the solution to educational outcome differences, indicating his mainstreamers needed to perform at the same 'high standards' as his magnet groups. By avoiding a critical analysis of institutionalised forms of racism (particularly those outlined in Chapter 6), Jeb further promotes the false notion that the condition of black people in America can be overcome without any structural alterations; they just need to work hard (to white standards), 'pulling themselves up by their bootstraps' (consistent with Jenks et al. 2001:91 p50).

Jeb suggested to his mainstream students one afternoon:

"Listen up, I need you to write not as you think, not as you speak, not like you're having a chat 'wit you friends' (mimics Ebonics). I need you to write properly people - proper English, not all this made up stuff I mark... Use full sentences and real words... this is basic stuff people... Y'all is not a word. If I get a paper with y'all on it, I am going to give you an 'F'... Got that?... Do you think you'll get in to college if you write (mimics strong 'southern' female accent) 'I wanna come this school cos y'all got a great program goin on'."

Although Jeb's attempt at mimicking accents resulted in collective laughter, a dangerous problem with Jeb's conservative approach is that 'colourblind' (or better so, colourmute) ideology and adherence to incontrovertible textbook 'fact' (as presented in white-

master-scripted textbooks¹⁸⁹), does not allow for the status quo or the basis of white hegemonic power to be challenged.

Jeb was not alone in his commitment to textbook ‘fact’; Florida legislature has also been criticised for limiting instruction in social studies to the ‘facts’. Florida passed a law essentially banning revisionist and postmodernist history from being taught in the state’s public schools. In June 2006, the Florida House of Representatives both passed and signed into law (by Governor Jeb Bush¹⁹⁰), an Omnibus Education Bill. The language of Florida’s Bill stated that students should learn ‘facts’ and not ‘constructed’ elements of American history:

“American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowledgeable, teachable, testable and defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the principles stated in the Declaration of Independence.”

Florida House of Representatives HB 7087 (2006:44)

The original version of the bill contained even stronger language, which was eventually removed from the final text:

“The history of the United States shall be taught as genuine history and shall not follow revisionist or postmodern viewpoints or relative truth.”

AHA (2007)

Although some claim that *all* historical accounts are fictional (see for example Butler 2002), most would agree that no single document (or sets of them) could fully and perfectly reflect historic events; all documents need to be interpreted. Jeb’s steadfast commitment to the incontrovertible ‘facts’ as presented in textbooks, disavows the way in which historians, educationalists, policy makers and others gather evidence; interpret that evidence; assemble that evidence into ‘facts’; and promote, re-master and omit certain ‘facts’, as required to preserve white hegemony (discussed further in section 8.4; see also Asante 1991 p71).

¹⁸⁹ Discussed further in Section 8.4

¹⁹⁰ Jeb Bush was Florida Governor from 1999-2007 and is today exploring a presidential bid for the White House in 2016, as a Republican candidate (see <https://www.GOP.com/presidential-straw-poll/>)

Jeb's aversion to getting 'messy' teamed with his resolute (white hegemonic) textbook bound teaching, limits the potential of Jeb colliding with his own whiteness, and Jeb's students from acknowledging their own.

8.3.2b Bud, Liberalist Multiculturalism and Race

Bud's liberal approach to multicultural education was primarily typified by a commitment to "*learning about each other's differences*" and the celebration of those differences (field notes). For Bud, the message was clear; he told his STAND group one afternoon:

"Y'all should treat, and expect to be treated fair. Whether you're a man or a woman, whether your gay, disabled... regardless of where you come from... y'all are beautiful."

In Bud's classroom, both race and ethnicity were acknowledged, and he often referred to his students (and groups beyond CHS more broadly) using their race/ethnicity i.e. 'black kids', 'Mexican kids'. During one magnet U.S. Government class, Bud exclaimed:

"Isaiah, where were the black folk last week? Y'all didn't show up for me. I'm disappointed... If y'all would 'have voted - like you did for Obama - we wouldn't have a Republican, Tea Party criminal¹⁹¹ as Governor."

Consistent with Chapter 7, this is another example of how teachers at CHS looked to Isaiah within the magnet environment as the authentic voice of all black people. Of note, the same direct questions were not usually asked within a majority-black environment. There are also many other examples of Bud referring to race already presented within this study, for example: "*the black kids were forced to walk over a... confederate flag*"

¹⁹¹ Bud was referring to Rick Scott's previous tenure as CEO of Columbia/HCA ('Columbia' being a company Scott started in 1987). Over the next decade Scott added hundreds of hospitals to the company. In 1994 Scott purchased HCA and its 100 hospitals, merging the two into Columbia/HCA. In 1997 federal agents went public with an investigation into Scott's company, resulting in his resignation as CEO. The government uncovered the largest Medicaid fraud in U.S. history (to date) and fined Columbia/HCA a total of \$1.7 billion for Medicaid fraud. Scott, who Bud considered to be the "*darling of the Tea Party movement*" (field notes), went on to become the 45th (and present) Governor of Florida (elected in both 2010 and 2014). Scott left Columbia/HCA with a \$9.98 million financial settlement, and 10 million shares of stock (worth an estimated \$350 million).

(Chapter 5 p115) and “*they* (Republicans) *will leave just enough of the public school for... blacks*” (Chapter 6 p139).

Bud, like many liberal multicultural educators, truly believed the cause of racial conflict at CHS (and within the community) to be a “*misunderstanding of black people*”¹⁹² and “*people sticking with their own*” (field notes). Bud explained:

*“Wearing baggy pants and walking a certain way does not make a black kid a criminal... They (black kids) are not something to be frightened of... Police here are so damned suspicious of our (CHS) black kids... You (the researcher) must of noticed that the black kids here like a certain style, you know: baggy pants, hats with the store labels and holograms on, branded jackets, gold jewellery, bright white sneakers... They (police) see our kids walking in the streets and they stop them... I’m glad county introduced the uniform code... Much better for the kids... Trey hasn’t been stopped for a few months... Now he’s all about the preppy look”*¹⁹³.

Bud would express his frustrations that every time he opened a newspaper or turned on his TV, he would see the criminalisation of black people. He also explained that a deep mistrust of ‘the other’ meant that every Friday night “*the whites* (to include the CHS teachers and Principal) *sat with whites*” and “*all the blacks sat together*” (field notes), despite both supporting the same school team. Bud could often be found sitting amongst the black CHS supporters and he was popular with many of the former students (many of whom were now in their forties watching their own children ‘play ball’). Bud’s efforts to break down racial divides was also in keeping with his liberal multiculturalist approach to teaching. However, in his pursuit to “*get people to know and understand each other... not fear each other’s differences*” (field notes), Bud failed to identify inequitable power relations and institutional racism as a source of the deep divide. Consistent with Grant and Sleeter (1998 p60), Bud’s liberal approach included little-to-no analysis of why inequalities, such as those identified in Chapter 1 and subsequent chapters, exist in the first place. Bud’s focus on ‘getting to know each other’ evades a much-needed critical

¹⁹² Citing news channels and social media as particular sources of misunderstanding.

¹⁹³ Defined by Trey as “*Preppy is sharp, polos and shirts done all up, khakis to the knee with a belt, boat shoes with socks... Looking sharp*” (field notes).

examination of whiteness and white hegemony as the root cause of enduring racial inequality today.

Consistent with Jenks et al. (2001 p50), Bud's enthusiastic commitment to the liberal multicultural agenda was most apparent during events such as Black History Month (as discussed in Chapter 7), Martin Luther King Day and other 'holiday celebrations' of different world cultures i.e. Hanukkah, Chinese New Year and Eid. Bud's classroom walls often became a canvas for the promotion and celebration of such events. Bud was also quick to focus on the special features presented within the aforementioned master-scripted textbooks, arguing: *"some of the features are great and help get the kids more interested in the subject... I often ask my kids to think about the key questions... some of those questions are great"* (field notes). Bud, although willing to deviate somewhat from the topic being covered in the textbook, was rarely seen without a textbook during formal lesson time. Bud, like Jeb, had become textbook reliant in order to cover the mandated standards.

This study's survey identified that 0.5% of the CHS students stated 'Islam' as their religious preference (Q9 Appendix 3); the 0.5% also identified themselves as 'black'. Bud in his liberal multicultural approach was particularly keen to challenge students' understandings of (or better prejudices thereof) Islam. Bud informed students that there are many famous black Americans that are Muslim, listing for example *"Malcom X, Muhammad Ali, Mike Tyson, Snoop Dog, Akon, [and] Shaquille O'Neal..."* (field notes). He furthered that *"only one in three Muslims in the U.S. are of Arab decent"*, and that *"Islam is the 3rd largest religion in the United States"¹⁹⁴* (field notes).

¹⁹⁴ Whilst this statement appears correct (behind the two biggest religious followings of Christianity and Judaism), Islam is followed by only 0.6% of the total U.S. population (a percentage similarly reflected in this study's survey) and may have misled the students (see www.pewforum.org/interactives/muslim-population-graphic).

Bud was keen to also challenge students' ideas of terrorism and of terrorist acts, pointing to acts he deemed to be "*Christian acts of terrorism on U.S. soil*" (field notes). He reminded his class one afternoon:

"Let's not forget that people are still doing crazy things in the name of Christianity, right here in the U.S.A... Every day, radicalised Christians are out there murdering, attacking, bombing... setting fire to abortion clinics, gay night clubs, Muslim temples, and anything else they disagree with - all in the name of God."

Bud in his deep commitment to the liberalist 'get to know each other' approach even tried to organise an impromptu school trip to the local mosque. The mosque had already provisionally agreed to host the students with the condition that females wore 'long pants'¹⁹⁵ that covered their ankles and brought a wide scarf or hooded sweatshirt. CHS denied Bud's request, stipulating that: 1) there had been insufficient interest from parents and students, and 2) that other teachers had expressed concerns that the proposed trip would interfere with their FCAT preparations.

Bud's "*letting the kids have the opportunity to hear and learn from others' experiences*" (Chapter 7 p180), often through Isaiah or one of the Asian students in his magnet classes, was in itself marginalising and also preserved white hegemony. Through his cultural tourist approach (consistent with Perry 2002 p59), Bud's white students were quick to learn that culture was something other people and groups had, and that social studies entailed learning something about them: their celebrations, traditions and norms (usually foods), and an examination of unique individuals from that group (consistent with Jenks et al. 2001 p50). Black students in Bud's mainstream class were equally encouraged "*to learn something about [their own] history*", as if they should know more about themselves 'as others' in the Eurocentric experience (field notes).

Bud's focus on familiarising his white students with the more exotic 'other' served only to further evade a critical examination of whiteness and white hegemony as

¹⁹⁵ Trousers

the root causes of racism and racial inequality today. When Bud was asked to describe his teaching approach, he claimed:

"I try and address issues in my teachings from my own experiences... I try and share with them... I think it's important kids have space to think about their beliefs, and challenge opinions openly; it's more meaningful... It's important that kids know how far we've all come (presumably from evils to include slavery)... I try to be as open as I can with them, so they too can be open... I always try and show them how similar they really are under it all; how similar people really are, as well as the more obvious differences of course... Differences shouldn't be feared [however]... and people should never have to die because of differences, especially religious ones."

Although Bud's approach had great potential to expand a student's multicultural knowledge, it did so without calling into question the way white middle-class norms prevail in society (consistent with King 2001 p60). Bud's honouring of 'differences' in such an essentialist way also leaves whiteness as the unmarked norm against to which black students and other racial and ethnic groups are compared (consistent with Perry 2002 p56).

8.4 THE WHITE SUPREMACIST MASTER SCRIPT: TEXTBOOKS

Finally, Section 8.4 speaks to **RQ6** and investigates **how the social teachers at CHS were conditioned by the mandated curriculum and the supporting textbooks available to them**. As outlined in Chapter 3, CRT considers the formal school curriculum a 'culturally specific artefact' designed to maintain a 'white supremacist master script' (Ladson-Billings 1998:18 p17). Master scripting silences multiple voices and perspectives in favour of legitimising and promoting the dominant white voice as the standard knowledge students need to know. As identified in Chapter 3, textbooks were frequently utilised in schools to preserve the white supremacist master script by distorting and marginalising knowledge (Ladson-Billings 2005 p57; see also McLaren 1994 p67).

As we have seen in the previous sections, both Bud and Jeb relied on textbooks in order to ‘survive’ the demands of the vast social studies curriculum; neither teacher deviated massively from the textbook content during the whole ethnography. CHS adopted the 850 page McClenaghan’s *American Government* (2005) to support the teaching of 12th grade U.S. Government in 2010-2011. For the purpose of depth and clarity in argument, this section critically examines just three chapters from McClenaghan’s (2005) *American Government*¹⁹⁶. Chapters 19 through 21 address perhaps the most fundamental of all political values in American society values that go to the heart of the Declaration of Independence: the protection of civil rights and liberties.

8.4.1 (Mis)Representation of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Civil liberties are understood to be inalienable rights retained by (as opposed to privileges granted to) *all* citizens of the United States under the Constitution i.e. freedoms of speech, association and assembly; freedom of the press; the right to keep and bear arms; freedom from unreasonable search and seizure; and freedom of religion.

¹⁹⁶ The full textbook was also examined in relation to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who is discussed in section 8.4.3.

FIGURE 4: “AMERICANS ENJOYING THEIR FREEDOM OF RELIGION”



The lead image of the first Civil Liberties and Civil Rights chapters, titled '*Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms*' (Figure 4 above), immediately raises questions about the presence of master scripting in school textbooks (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2005). The sanitised image of an all-white congregation seems to suggest that the freedom of religion pertains to whites (and Christians) only. In this powerful image (Figure 4, see also Appendix 5 for enlarged images as required), it is white people who are portrayed as powerful, legitimate and privileged in the master script.

In order to assess whether the lead image (Figure 4) is a misnomer, and not an example of the white supremacist master script, *every* photographic image of people contained within all three chapters were critically examined and a tally compiled (for the full tally see Appendix 4¹⁹⁸). What became quickly apparent was that the lead image was *not* a misnomer. The three chapters collectively contained approximately 932 white faces

¹⁹⁸ Political cartoons, images of art and other exhibits, and other photographic images that did not include people, were all excluded from the tally. The tally focused specifically on the representation of people by race and ethnicity. Again, as discussed in Chapter 7, it is explicitly accepted that making assumptions on a persons race/ethnicity based solely on the skin tone and features captured in a photograph is a crude measure that is fraught with ethical difficulties. However, the tally was necessary to illustrate the damning presence of a white supremacist master script in school texts.

and 54 black faces. The chapters also included 118 ‘others’ largely of Asian, Hispanic and Latino(a) decent¹⁹⁹. White faces were disproportionately represented in the text. However, even though black students did see themselves represented in the 91 pages (McClenaghan 2005:530-621), *how* those black faces were presented was consistent with the presence of a white supremacist master script (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2005 p57).

In Chapter 19, ‘Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms’, white faces were positively portrayed as: enjoying freedom of religion (McClenaghan 2005:530), practising freedom of religion within the military (p543), actors (p534), publishers (p549), philosophers (p537), teenagers holding cash (p550), and government legislators (p54). Whites were also seen as football coaches, student athletes, physiotherapists and medics (p539); teachers (p541 and p545) and students (p541 and p545); holding silent candlelight vigils (p555) and protesters (p557, p546, p552).

White faces were the overwhelming faces in the crowd “*Celebrating... Bill of Rights Day in New York... 1941 – 8 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor*” (p533), with only two black faces visible amongst the crowd of civilians and military personnel. Equally, two other photos in Chapter 19 that included black faces were also large group images (protesting the Vietnam War p552 and at a high school football game p539). The final image of four in Chapter 19 that included a black face was the sole image in a whole-page ‘special feature’ on “*Religious and ethnic diversity, as shown in this Los Angeles classroom*” (p545). The image of eight female students largely huddled around a desk where a white male teacher is seated, is provided over (Figure 5).

¹⁹⁹ At the risk of ‘othering’, this thesis has, and continues to focus specifically on, the diverging experiences of black students at CHS and their white peers. Individuals from other ethnic/racial backgrounds were counted as ‘others’ in the tally for comparative context, but are not discussed further.

FIGURE 5: "RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY... IN THIS LOS ANGELES CLASSROOM"



As can be seen in Figure 5, four (possibly five), of the children are stood in a tokenistic way in traditional or culturally specific dress, alongside white peers. On the back row, alone, stands a taller young black female, disengaged from the table, other students and the teacher. The question posed at the bottom of the 'special-feature' ironically asked: "*What defines an American according to this report?*" (p545). The powerful message of black marginalisation, and the sensationalism of accepted 'exotic others', ensures white hegemony reigns supreme, and remains the standard by which all else are judged (consistent with McLaren 1994 p67).

Chapter 20, '*Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights*', and Chapter 21, '*Civil Rights: Equal Justice Under Law*', were equally supportive of the white supremacist master script. Although Chapter 20 commenced more positively by portraying black faces as "*serving on a jury*" (McClenaghan 2005:562 & 575), the Supreme Justice, attorneys, judges, lawyers, plaintiff/prosecutors²⁰⁰, and court clerks were all white (see p562, p572, p575, p580, p594²⁰¹). Even the court artists, spectators and court cameramen, were white (p580). Of note, the defendants on pages p562 (lead chapter

²⁰⁰ It is unclear if the image was of a civil or criminal case – In either instance, the prosecution/plaintiff ordinarily occupy the seats next to jury box with the defense and defendant sat furthest away. Only the bench next to the jury and the judge's chair were shown in the image (McClenaghan 2005:562).

²⁰¹ In this image there was one white female and one Native American female attorney "*enjoying success*" despite being "*targets of discrimination*" (p594).

image) and p575 were not shown, and as such it is impossible to comment on the defendants' race. However, consistent with the white master script, where the defendants in the chapters were shown to be white, their portrayal supported and enhanced the dominant culture by affirming white privilege, legitimacy and power.

For example, *all* of white defendants pictured in Chapters 20 and 21 (see p580, p583, p584) had their original convictions overturned by a higher court. Louise Woodward (p580) was sentenced to 15 years in 1997 for the death of an 8-month-old baby in her care. She served 279 days after an appeals court downgraded her charge. Clarence Gideon (p584), an 'uneducated man', was sentenced in 1966 to 5 years for breaking and entering with intent to commit larceny. Gideon supposedly 'taught himself' the U.S. legal system in jail and concluded his constitutional rights had been violated. The U.S. Supreme Court voted unanimously in his favour and overturned his conviction. Ernesto Miranda (p583) was arrested on kidnapping, rape and armed robbery charges in 1963. Miranda's case was subsequently overturned because he confessed to the crime without being informed of his right to consult with an attorney prior to being interviewed by police.

Today because of Gideon, every defendant now has a right to a publicly provided attorney, and Miranda's case is immortalised in the words: 'You have the right to remain silent.' However, unlike the above-mentioned whites whose decisions were overturned and still cherished today, when a convicted black face was portrayed, he appeared unnamed, and alongside the words, "*Stop the execution*", and next to a image that stated "*Remember the victims*" (p586). Black faces also appeared namelessly, and unsurprisingly (given the data presented in Chapter 7), as college athletes in high revenue sports (p600 and p611).

In addition, black faces were negatively depicted and powerless "*injured and wounded prisoners... in the aftermath of the 1921 Tulsa riots*" (p564). The aforementioned image speaks volumes about who is powerful, legitimate and privileged. Figure 6 (over) shows

whites as armed, standing alongside a probable white nurse, all looking inwards at the truck bed (and likely at black 'prisoners'). On the back sit two white males, one assisting the other by resting his arm on a white pillow. Next to the white pair sat the 'acted upon' in the form of a shoeless and shirtless black male 'prisoner' who is being watched by an armed white.

FIGURE 6: "INJURED AND WOUNDED PRISONERS... IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1921 TULSA RIOTS"



Tulsa, then the wealthiest black community in the United States²⁰², was burned to the ground and some 6,000 black residents were arrested and detained (and an estimated 300 killed), following the large-scale, racially motivated conflict. This basic background information to Tulsa was omitted from the master script. The *only* reference made to Tulsa was (p564):

"Are you familiar with the riots that took place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on May 31-June 1, 1921? ... Learn what happened in Tulsa in 1921.... And you will understand why the concept of due process of law."

Despite textbook appeals to 'learn about' the Tulsa Riots, Tulsa was questionably not discussed beyond the image, and thus students were deprived from 'learning what happened in Tulsa' and exploring the culture of (white) vigilantism that bypassed the

²⁰² Known also as the 'Black Wall Street'

legitimate governmental procedures of 'due process' in 1921. Tulsa's Afrocentric centered story was not included in the white supremacist master-script. The inclusion of historic imagery from Tulsa provided a visual veneer of 'multiculturalism' but no substance; it was not the only example.

Valuable Afrocentric stories were also relegated to unsupported imagery in several other places, e.g. the powerful narratives of "*discrimination... at Woolworth's lunch counters*" (p592), and the "*white men, colored men*" 'separate but equal' drinking fountains (p604). Both images portrayed blacks as 'acted upon' and did not provide opportunities to explore the powerful narratives of blacks as organised, non-violent, civil activists that surrounded the images. Where black civil action was presented in the text, it was shown secondary to a master script narrative that reaffirmed white power. On page 610, *Allan Bakke...* [depicted in image and in script] *successfully challenged the admissions policies of the University of California*" on the grounds of reverse racism. Overleaf, a nameless black male student is shown leading a march "*to defend affirmative action*²⁰³" at the very same institution (p612).

The depiction of whites as powerful, legitimate and privileged in McClenaghan (2005) continued through the final three images that depicted black faces in chapters 19 through 21 that are yet to be discussed. The way the three images were presented in the text to the reader, conclusively confirms the presence of a white supremacist master script, so much so that each is discussed separately in the next section.

²⁰³ Affirmative action or positive discrimination is the policy of favoring members of a disadvantaged group who suffer from discrimination within a culture.

8.4.2 Special Features? Distortions? Or Absent?

As discussed in Chapter 3, and as demonstrated in the previous section, textbooks are frequently used as a strategy for distorting knowledge preserving the white supremacist master script (Ladson Billings 2005 p67). Afrocentric accounts and perspectives are omitted from the white master script *unless* they can be disempowered. Methods of disempowerment included in McClenaghan (2005) were found to be: marginalisation (special features), distortion (Eurocentric narrative), or absence (erased from the master script altogether). Each type of disempowerment was demonstrated in the narratives and images of Ernest Green, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King.

8.4.2a Earnest Green: Marginalised Special Feature

Earnest Green is presented as *“the first black student to graduate from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas”* (McClenaghan 2005 p607). In the whole-page special feature, *“Mr. Green recalls the historic days of 1957 when, as one of the ‘Little Rock Nine,’ he helped bring an end to school segregation in the United States”* (p607). The feature was separated from the relevant master narratives on *‘Segregation in America’* (p602) and *‘Brown v Board of Education’* (p603), and was framed by a solid blue border (approx. 5mm thick). In addition to the feature being marginalised via dislocation from the relevant script, the supporting sole image (see Figure 7 over) was itself marginalising (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2005 p67).

FIGURE 7: “ERNEST GREEN SHOWS HIS TEXTBOOKS TO CHILDREN IN LITTLE ROCK”



The above image depicts young black boys admiring Green's textbook as if it was otherworldly. The image posits that young black males residing in Little Rock rarely, if at all, came into contact with such books. Consistent with proponents of Afrocentricity (see Asante 1991 p71), images such as this damage the self-esteem and subsequent performance of modern black students. Contrary to the primitive, marginalised image, black students in Little Rock *did* have access to black-only libraries and black-only schools, long before Green graduated from the newly integrated (historically-white) school (that is not of course to say that the aforementioned institutions were 'separate but equal'). Asante maintained that black children's needs were as much cultural as they were academic, and thus positive imagery in modern texts is not only desirable but also essential.

What is not stated nor depicted in the marginalised special feature is that Mr Green enjoyed many successes beyond Little Rock to include his role as the 'Assistant Secretary of Labor' under the Carter administration. Or indeed, his most recent role as managing director of Barclays Capital (formerly Lehman Brothers): one of the biggest investment banking companies in the U.S.A., where, amongst his high profile clients, were

the City and State of New York, Atlanta, Connecticut and Washington D.C. Consistent with the white supremacist master script, although any number of empowering images could have been chosen to accompany Mr Green's account of his early experiences, a marginalising image of ten young black boys staring in amazement at his educational artefact, was selected.

Additionally, Mr. Green's account of his own experiences were sanitised in a way that reinforced the white master script, damagingly disempowering Mr. Green's own agency:

"I was a student in Little Rock, Arkansas, finishing the eighth grade. Little Rock had one school for blacks..."²⁰⁴ (the black school was not named) and one for whites, Little Rock Central High School..."²⁰⁵

In the spring of 1957, I was asked, along with other black students in Little Rock, to consider attending Central High School²⁰⁶ the following fall. Initially, a number of students signed up to enrol, but when fall came, only nine of us had survived the pressure to quit...

During the summer, rumors began to circulate that there might be violence if the 'Little Rock Nine,' as we became known, tried to attend school in the fall. I didn't pay much attention to what was going on..."

McClenaghan (2005:607)

It is reasonable to question how a 'quoted' recollection²⁰⁷ of experiences could be sanitised? Consistent with Ladson-Billings (2005 p67), Mr Green's account is an example of distortion, in that his experiences have been disempowered through misrepresentation. For example, Mr Green was no stranger to the Civil Rights Movement and his own mother was an educated, active and involved member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). According to the Central High National Historic Site website²⁰⁸, it was Green himself that volunteered to integrate with the all-white school, and actively declined his assignment to the brand new Horace

²⁰⁴ "... " In original

²⁰⁵ "... " In original

²⁰⁶ It is a coincidence that Central High School, in Little Rock, is the same name selected for the anonymised school in this study. For practical reasons, the researcher did not select another pseudonym for this study's school.

²⁰⁷ Written in first person, but no references were provided to establish accuracy/original source.

²⁰⁸ See <http://www.nps.gov/chsc/learn/education/upload/The%20Little%20Rock%20Nine%20Lesson%20plan.pdf>

Mann High School for black students, a claim which is inconsistent with the unnamed, raceless individual who ‘asked’ him to attend (removing Green’s own agency) in the white supremacist master script (p607). Green’s marginalised feature also disempowered him by failing to note that alongside his mother, Green had himself taken part in numerous protests from a young age. Perhaps the most significant misrepresentation and largest disempowerment of all however is that the master script declined to mention that Green’s civilly active and empowered family, were plaintiffs in the lawsuit that sought to desegregate Central High School in the first instance, three years after Arkansas ignored the ‘Brown decision’²⁰⁹.

8.4.2b Rosa Parks: Disempowered Feature

Rosa Parks was presented in a ¼ page special feature: a feature distinguished from the master narrative against a yellow background, utilising a differing font. According to the feature in 1955 Parks (McClenaghan 2005:602):

“Refused to give her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and was subsequently arrested. That simple act led to a bus boycott by African Americans and helped the civil rights movement grow into a national cause.”

The omitted Afrocentric narrative would have addressed her supposed act of civil disobedience very differently and over far more lines of text. For example, according to the Montgomery ‘Negroes-in-back’ municipal bus policy (in accordance with broader segregation laws of the day), Parks took a seat in the Negro section after work (as a seamstress). Although not formally written, it was customary for the bus driver to ask black ‘riders’ to give up their seats so that a full row could be reallocated to white ‘riders’ when the white section of the bus was full. Park’s ‘act’ was therefore misrepresented, as she was more accurately, arrested, charged, given a suspended sentence and fined \$14, for legally²¹⁰ refusing to give up her ‘Negro-in-back’ seat.

²⁰⁹ Brown v Board of Education 1954

²¹⁰ Given the presence of customary practices and lack of written legal precedent.

Park's actions were further disempowered in McClenaghan (2005) when the text referred to her refusal as a "*simple act*" (p602). Parks' 'simple act' of civil disobedience was not happenstance, nor accidental. Parks, like Ernest Green, was an avid civil rights activist. Erased from the master script was that Parks was not only a member of Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, but was the chapter secretary for some 11 years before the 'simple act'. Parks worked closely with the Chapter President, Edgar Nixon, and Nixon was himself there to meet Parks after she was bailed. Parks, with the support of Nixon and her husband (another NAACP member), courageously became the plaintiff in the case against the City of Montgomery. Together the Chapter organised for the black 'riders' of Montgomery (who made up approximately 70% of the passengers that utilised the city busses) to boycott the buses on the day of Parks' trial.

Participation in the boycott was far wider than expected, and Nixon and others formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), electing Martin Luther King Jr. as President. As Parks's appeals made it all the way to the US Supreme Court (who subsequently ruled bus segregation to be unconstitutional), her 'simple act' resulted in both Nixon and King's homes being bombed and Parks herself losing her job and being forced to move from Montgomery amidst continued harassment, anger and violence from whites. Perhaps the biggest disempowerment of the 'simple' seamstress is her Congressional Gold Medal (awarded in 1999), the highest honour the U.S. Government bestows on any citizen. The sole supporting image to Park's heroics depicts her in a 'simple' unassuming way (see Figure 8 over – left image), and could have more empoweringly featured her receiving the Congressional Gold Medal (see Figure 8 over – right image).

FIGURE 8: “DISEMPOWERED EUROCENTRIC (LEFT) OR EMPOWERED AFROCENTRIC (RIGHT)?”

8.4.2c Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Marginalised, Distorted and Erased

Ernest Green and Rosa Parks were not alone in the Eurocentric sterilising of black figures to ensure they are safe for white consumption; McCleghaghan (2005) even disempowered perhaps the most cherished of all black figures: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (consistent with Assante 1991 p71). If it were not for the presence of a white supremacist master script, how could an 850-page textbook on U.S. Government, which dedicates nearly 100 pages to the protection of civil rights and civil liberties, feature Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in only nine places? Perhaps an unfair assessment, or perhaps as argued in the previous examples, the Afrocentric endeavours and narratives of notable black Americans make a challenge to white privilege, legitimacy and power (consistent with Assante 1991 p71): a challenge that must be re-mastered and brought under control if it is to be included in the veneer of multicultural information in schools.

Dr. King was not allocated a marginalising special feature, or indeed disempowered in a dedicated $\frac{1}{4}$ page space: the sum of his life's endeavors, in which he ultimately gave his life for, were reduced to a mere nine tokenistic references made sporadically throughout the entire 850-page text. As Dr. King was strangely mute (featuring only twice, totaling a mere few lines) in the 100 pages dedicated to the protection civil rights and civil liberties, the entire textbook was examined to ascertain

how and where he was presented and/or featured in the white supremacist master script.

King first appears as an isolated quote: *"Injustice anywhere... is a threat to justice everywhere"* (McClenaghan 2005:9). King's quote was unsupported by the master script narrative, and King himself was not discussed. King also featured on p160 where he was introduced to the reader as 'leading the civil rights movement.' Of note, the underlined sections in the following excerpts are returned to later in this section:

"Largely in response to the civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Congress was moved to act. It has passed several civil rights laws since the late 1950s."

King is also discussed under the heading *"The Civil Rights Act of 1964"* on the opposite page (p161):

"Dr King mounted a voter registration drive in that city (Selma, Alabama) in early 1965. He and his supporters hoped that they could focus national attention on the issue of African American voting rights... [Their] efforts were met with insults and violence by local white civilians... An outraged President Lyndon Johnson urged Congress to pass new and stronger legislation to ensure voting rights of African Americans. Congress responded quickly."

The first image of King appears two pages later (p163), dislocated from the faceless²¹¹ 3 and 6-line narratives above. The iconic image shows King addressing the crowds during his 'I Have A Dream Speech'. The image stands alone on the page, unsupported by the master script. The small font detail under the image again cites him as being a 'leader', without contextualising his vast and empowering Afro-centred contributions for students:

"I Have a Dream – This famous speech, delivered by civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., was a highlight of the 1963 March on Washington, which drew more than 200,000 people."

Neither King's powerful speech, nor the political rally known as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom were discussed anywhere in the 850-page textbook,

²¹¹ Without image

his important speech erased in the white master script. All students were thus deprived of the Afrocentric knowledge that black leaders collectively planned the march to specifically advocate for the passage of the Civic Rights Act, which was then stalled by white Congress and the top-rated modern president, John F. Kennedy²¹². King is ironically next outlined as being ‘assassinated’ alongside him (p213):

“Those years (1960s/1970s) were highlighted by a number of traumatic events. Of special note were the assassinations of President John Kennedy in 1963 and of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968.”

In keeping with the white master script, the above reference is the *only* reference made to King’s assassination. The aftermath of his death was however associated with “*invasion and internal disorder*” (p98-99), and the need for federal troops to ‘put down’ riots, arson and looting in three historically black cities:

“The use of federal force to restore order within a state has historically been a rare event... However when racial unrest exploded into violence in Detroit during the ‘long hot summer’ of 1967... police and fire fighters, supported by state police and National Guard units, could not control riots, arson, and looting... In 1968, again... federal troops were sent into Chicago and Baltimore to help put down the violence that erupted following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.”

Unsurprisingly absent from the master script is the Afrocentric narrative that, although authorities apprehended the small-time criminal James Earl Ray for the assassination (single bullet to the head, shot at distance) of King, the probable cause of the ‘racial unrest’ outlined above is that many did not accept Ray (who incidentally pleaded guilty without entering a testimony at his trial) to be the sniper. Ray later recanted his confession, claiming to be the victim of a government conspiracy.

Members of King’s family also believed Ray to be innocent of the military-caliber fatal single-shot to the head, and petitioned to have the case reopened. Each time the U.S. government conducted an inquiry into the case and denied the family’s request, finding

²¹² See www.gallup.com/poll/165902/americans-rate-jfk-top-modern-president.aspx

Ray guilty on all charges. Perhaps the biggest omitted fact from the master script, one which would make a tremendous threat to white power and legitimacy, is that in 1999, twelve Memphis jurors²¹³ unanimously found the United States government guilty of conspiring to assassinate King, and ruled King's death to be as a direct result of that conspiracy.

Next, the Martin Luther King public holiday features bizarrely under the heading *"Government rules must be content neutral..."* (p556) in a discussion about county ordinances, which could levy a fee of up to \$1000 for public demonstrations. The master script narrative was not one of a federal holiday to honour King's birthday, instead the script outlined that a *"white supremacist group"* who wanted to protest the creation of the King holiday *successfully* contested²¹⁴ Georgia County ordinance laws. As a result of the white supremacist group's efforts, county officials were prevented from setting the exact fee to be paid by any group, sending a strong message to the reader about white privilege, power and legitimacy.

As stated at the beginning this section, King is mentioned on only two occasions within the three chapters dedicated to the protection of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (p530-621). And, despite stating that (p596):

"Most of the gains the nation has made in translating the Constitutions guarantees of equality into a reality for all persons have come out of efforts made by and on behalf of African Americans. For example, the struggles of Martin Luther King Jr., and others resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965."

King was not actually named *within* the section titled "The Civil Rights Act of 1964" some 12 pages later (p608). A quote by King does however appear, subsumed within the broader introduction:

"You may have heard of this oft-made argument: 'you can't legislate morality.' That is, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination cannot be eliminated merely with laws. Martin Luther King Jr. replied to that contention this way:

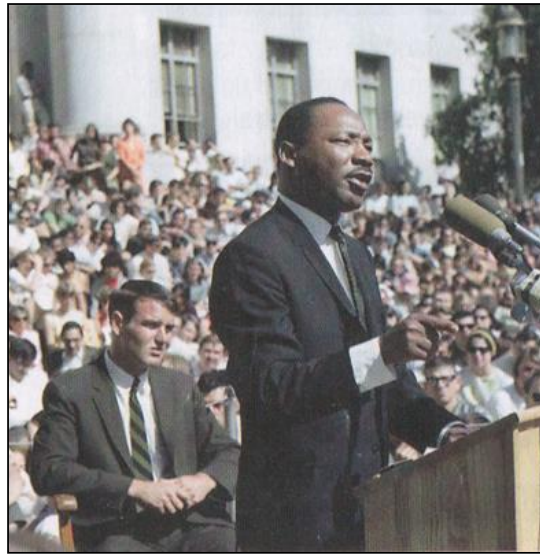
²¹³ Coretta Scott King, et al. vs. Lloyd Jowers et al. (1999)

²¹⁴ Forsyth County v. Nationalist Movement (1992)

'Laws... may not change the heart, but they can retrain the heartless.' Congress agreed with Dr. King – as it has enacted a number of civil rights laws over the past 40 years.

A small (2x2 inch) supporting image of King Jr. addressing a crowd is also included at the bottom of the same page (Figure 9) - the second only image of King within the entire 850-page text. The image is, again, not happenstance.

FIGURE 9: "MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR."



Collating the underlined quotes presented in this section, we find: *"Congress was moved to act [and] it has passed several civil rights laws since the late 1950s", "Congress responded quickly (to ensure voting rights of black Americans)" and "Congress agreed with Dr. King – as it has enacted a number of civil rights laws over the past 40 years."* The image above (Image 7), sought specifically to show King Jr. standing outside what appears to be a federal building, against the backdrop of a visually white, seemingly supportive audience. The powerful white supremacist narrative that Congress 'supported' King and were quick to agree with him and take action for him, results in the student reader being blinded by the master script and further separated from Afrocentric truths: truths as we have seen in this chapter that would have shown blacks as powerful, organized, civic-active, non-violent and most importantly legitimate agents of change.

8.4.3 RQ6 – A Summary

Whilst Jeb did not believe the preparation of youths to assume their role as citizens in a multicultural society to be the primary role of schools such as CHS, adding that it is unfair to hold schools accountable for that, Bud did. Bud felt the preparation of citizens *was* an important role for schools in an increasingly multicultural society with challenging “*racism and prejudice*” (albeit with an individualised focus²¹⁵) and promoting “*responsibility and change*” (albeit with a localised focus²¹⁶) of great importance to him. However, when conservative and liberal multicultural educators such as Jeb and Bud silence or exoticise race in their classrooms, they fundamentally fail every student in their classes (consistent with Pollock 2004).

Jeb’s ‘conservative approach’ to social studies engaged whiteness and by silencing race, racism and racial inequity, Jeb also denied the ways in which he personally participated in the legitimisation of whiteness. Within the framework of whiteness in which the status quo is both desirable and beneficial, Jeb’s silencing of race in the classroom was truly golden. But within a framework of equity in which social justice and fairness are sought, Jeb silencing was both indifferent and highly problematic. Bud, unlike Jeb, avowed race, racism and racial inequality (albeit historic). However, Bud’s ‘liberal approach’ reduced race and racism to individual ‘differences’ and personal ‘prejudices’, instead of indicators of social status and power (Guinier and Torres 2002:38). Bud’s superficial celebrations of diversity and historical events, not only exoticised race, but also further engaged whiteness through othering. Bud’s failure to situate ‘white’ as a racial category ensured that it was not criticised, or its practices exposed, leaving key aspects of the problem unharmed and unopposed (consistent with Gillborn 2006 p49).

²¹⁵ As previously discussed (chapter 7), Bud would also stop short of naming institutional racism and white supremacy, focusing on overtly racist or prejudiced acts between individuals and groups, not institutional or systemic.

²¹⁶ Bud never acknowledged being part of a global citizenry during this study’s fieldwork.

Finally, social studies teachers such as Bud and Jeb *are* being conditioned by the curriculum and supporting materials available to them. The cultural messages contained within McClenaghan (2005) transmit to the students that whites are powerful, legitimate, and privileged. As demonstrated in this section, the master scripting in social studies textbooks dictate that the histories and endeavours of notable African Americans are being marginalised, distorted, muted and even erased completely, particularly when the Afrocentric truths made a challenge to white hegemony. Anything that did not reflect the dominant voice was re-mastered and brought under control through marginalisation (as in the case of Ernest Green), disempowerment (Rosa Parks), or muted and almost erased altogether (Martin Luther King Jr.). Solidifying the master script of white privilege, legitimacy and power was the disproportionate and more positive presentation of whites ‘enjoying’ and ‘exercising their civil rights and liberties’. Black faces conversely were portrayed more negatively as ‘acted upon’ by those who have privilege, legitimacy and power. Bud and Jeb’s adherence to the sanitised version of important black figures and events presented in McClenaghan (2005) limited the potential of them (and their white students), uncomfortably coming into contact with their own whiteness, and also served as a vehicle in which to further entrench white supremacy in schools.

8.5 TO PRESERVE, ENTRENCH AND PERPETUATE

What could further cause damage to young black students in a white-hegemonic school system that is: 1) unclear on its role in a multicultural society (civic or economic), 2) that has teachers (conservative and liberal) who fail to acknowledge their own whiteness and how they act as roadblocks to racial justice (by denying and superficially affirming race in their classrooms), and, 3) that delivers a mile-wide inch-deep social studies curriculum, which sees teachers become white-supremacist textbook-dependent to just

‘survive’? The answer is increasing the exposure of the dominant group to the white supremacist master script:

TABLE 11: REQUIRED SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSES FOR MAINSTREAM & MAGNET STREAMS

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Mainstream	World History (offered in 9 or 10) (2 semesters)		U.S. History (2 semesters)	U.S. Government (1 semester) Economics (1 semester)
Magnet	World History (2 semesters)	European History (2 semesters) American Government (offered 10, 11 or 12) ***Students also required to enrol on Critical Thinking Skills Class [CTS] during 2 nd semester) (3 semesters total - inc. CTS class)	U.S. History (2 semesters)	Economics (2 semesters)

As shown above, the CHS mandated social studies requirements for both mainstream and magnet students differed. What is immediately obvious is that blacker mainstream students only received six semesters of social studies education, whereas whiter magnet students received almost double the hours of mandated social studies; 11 semesters in total (including the single semester Critical Thinking Skills course). What is further alarming is that the magnet students receive double the instruction time in U.S. Government specifically the white supremacist scripted course discussed in previous section (section 8.4). Again, if not for the preservation of white hegemony today, why would whiter magnet students, who are already privileged, legitimised, and made powerful by ‘gifted’, ‘AP’ and ‘magnet’ provisions (as demonstrated in Chapter 6), require *double* the social studies instruction time? Why? To *protect* white privilege, *entrench* white legitimacy, and *perpetuate* white power.

8.6 IN SUM

Consistent with Asante (1991 p71) white hegemonic education will continue to prevail as long as accurate information about ‘the other’ is withheld. The absence of Afrocentric information in McClenaghan (2005) is not happenstance; it is *intended* to be harmful to

the self-esteem and academic performance of black school children, keeping children as “near that stage as possible” (Neal & Moore 2004:7, see Appendix 1) some 50 years after the Brown decision.

The absence of Afrocentric knowledge in the school curricula is not a simple oversight – the absence represents an institutionalised instance of racism that serves the interests of particular classes and social groups only (Apple 1990 p65). White hegemonic education can exist only as long as whites maintain that Africans and other non-Whites have never contributed to world civilisation (consistent with Asante 1991 p71).

However, as we have seen in the previous chapters (Chapter 6 & 7), unlike their white peers and white teachers, the black students in this study were not unaware of the Eurocentric bias in their education and they were not unaware that they were in a system that did not serve their interests. Conversely, they were acutely aware that institutional racism (via policies such as FCAT and NCLB) was alive and thriving in so called ‘post-racial’ America. Far from ‘acted upon’ as presented by John Ogbu, Signthia Fordham and others, the black students in this study were agents in their own free choices, and they each rejected the marginalisation of black culture and the white-supremacist system of schooling in their own unique ways, ways that are discussed in the final empirical chapter (Chapter 9).

CHAPTER NINE

The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House²¹⁷

9.1 INTRODUCTION

At the end of Chapter 7 (section 7.3.5) a vital question was raised about whether black students at CHS appeared oppositional because they were not interested in participating in Eurocentric experience of schooling? Similarly, as outlined in Chapter 2, Lundy claimed: “When black students express a preference for their own culture... they have in effect chosen to be the subject in the creation and telling of their personal narrative, rather than the object in the European experience” (Lundy 2003:464 p74). But what was ‘the European experience’ that black students at CHS were said to oppose?

In summarising all the evidence presented in the three previous chapters, the Eurocentric experience for the majority of black students at CHS was one of social ranking, marginalisation, and harm. Chapter 6 presented the European experience as one where standardised testing was better equated with social ranking in a presumed-to-be-fair testing agenda (NCLB), an agenda that had the power to affirm white superiority and declare black ‘failures’. Chapter 7 presented the Eurocentric experience to be one in which stigmatised and devalued blackness acted as a source of perpetual disadvantage for black students, and invisible and protested whiteness as a source of perpetual advantage for white students. The Eurocentric experience in Chapter 8 was one in which

²¹⁷ Lorde (1983)

'black' as a racial category was either 'silenced' or 'exoticised' in the classroom; either way, both ensured that 'white' as a category remained unidentifiable and its practices protected. Additionally, Chapter 8 also highlighted the way in which the European experience brought harm to black students through cultural dislocation, specifically addressing the harm brought through the omission or misrepresentation of Afrocentric knowledge in taught materials.

This chapter offers a '3rd wave' critical race theory conceptualisation of black participants in this study, not as passive victims that are 'acted upon' in the Eurocentric experience, but more positively as young Afrocentric black agents who have utilised that agency to make evaluations and decisions based on their own experiences within it. Section 9.2 and 9.3 therefore speak to this study's final research question, **RQ7** exploring: **when a black student stands within their own cultural location, and use that location as a reference to interpret their own reality, are they being 'oppositional' or are they embracing their agency in the rejection of the Eurocentric experience of education?**

9.2 AFROCENTRIC, NOT OPPOSITIONAL

As outlined in Chapter 2, Obgu (2003 p35) believed that black students had to adopt white norms to be 'successful' in school and by not doing so he believed them to be contributors to their own academic shortcomings. McWhorter (2000 p33) also agreed, suggesting that black students did not engage in 'appropriate academic behaviours' for success but oppositional ones. Both authors made 'acting white' a desirable personal attribute, one that is essential for black success in school. Consistent with both authors, black students at CHS were encouraged to commit white (Eurocentric) identity theft: not in the colloquial sense of stealing a passport, but more critically in impersonating the

cultural and linguistic practices associated with white middle-class schooling norms. For example, as seen in the previous chapter, Jeb suggested to his mainstream class (Chapter 8 p220 – here restated):

"Listen up, I need you to write not as you think, not as you speak, not like you're having a chat 'wit you friends' (mimics 'southern' Ebonic accent). I need to you write properly people - proper English, not all this made up stuff I mark... Use full sentences and real words... this is basic stuff people... Y'all is not a word. If I get a paper with y'all on it, I am going to give you an 'F'... Got that?... Do you think you'll get in to college if you write (mimics 'southern' Ebonic accent) 'I wanna come this school cos y'all got a great program goin on.'"

No other group at CHS were told that their 'way' of speaking was an obstacle to academic success or worthy of an 'F' grade. When questioned how it was possible to tell that a black student had written a paper, Jeb suggested:

"Blacks have a distinct way of writing, they write almost as they speak... Let me give you an example, (pauses) they would write 'I be', 'them be', 'they with they friends'... It's hard to describe, but you can just tell... They need to speak in good, clean English... I try and make sure that all my students write and speak proper English... it's important for their lives after school... You have to write well and present cleanly to get an A in my class."

Jeb had students from a variety of backgrounds (i.e. Asia) in his magnet classes and yet he was only witnessed urging black mainstream students to shed any connection with their 'way of speaking' (consistent with Lundy 2003 p42). Jeb was not alone; several others believed that black students at CHS spoke "ghettoish"²¹⁸ and pretty much "slaughter[ed] the English language" (field notes).

When asked about the 'way' blacks talked, Isaiah suggested that his church leader delivered in an Ebonic/English hybrid, like many preachers that he knew. Isaiah explained that Ebonics is the:

"Language of African American people... For me it represents a warm place in the hearts of black people. It's familiar; it feels like home... My grandma speaks that way... It's the language my ancestors... It's my culture, my history... I respect regular English, and will do what I need to do [suggesting he'd

²¹⁸ Ghettoish – defined as "using half a word or like making up [their] own words" (field notes)

conform as required to succeed at CHS]... *But I hate when people in school call it ghetto' it's not ghetto, it's Ebonics.*"

For Isaiah, Ebonics is Afrocentric, and its use was not a sign of poor English skill and low ability, or indeed a 'ghettoish' oppositional behaviour, but a culturally centred language that felt 'like home'.

Dante was a firm believer that Hurricane "county [was] *out to get blacks*," and he refused to speak "like a fuckin white man" in the Principal's office. He would repeatedly accuse CHS of trying to make "all blacks white..." claiming that: "y'all (white teachers – possibly including the researcher) *trying to clean us up like we dirty*" (field notes). Dante's belief that black people were perceived as 'dirty' and need to be 'cleansed' is consistent with DuBois ideas on 'deculturalisation', in which new members of society were stripped of their culture and 'reconditioned' (DuBois [1903] 1982). Dante's argument thus postulates that in order to succeed at CHS, black students must reject their own culture (decultualised), and be sanitised (reconditioned) with white middle-class schooling norms and behaviours. The notion of 'cleaning up' black students also chimed with the process of marginalisation, disempowerment and erasure of Afrocentric events and figures in textbooks and Bud's sentiments on the introduction of a uniform policy²¹⁹ both discussed in the previous chapter.

School uniform remained a contentious subject throughout the fieldwork, as it was the first year a blanket uniform policy was mandated for all schools in Hurricane County. Black students were particularly upset by its introduction, believing it to be unnecessary and designed to target their group specifically. The teachers often uttered sentiments to include: "*how much nicer do the kids look in their uniform... so clean and tidy*" (field notes). In addition, Jeb was most pleased that he no longer had to "*cite half his*

²¹⁹ From August 2010, students were required to wear a solid-colour polo shirt (small brand motifs permitted) and solid colour/denim shorts, skirt or trousers (no ripped fabric or embellishments to pockets etc.). Dresses and shirts were also permitted as long as they have a collar and cover the shoulders. Hairstyles, jewelry and hats/caps were also heavily restricted.

mainstream class for seeing their underwear... [Suggesting] the girls look like girls again, not streetwalkers²²⁰ (field notes). Black students however argued, *"County doin all this just to get rid of the baggy pants.... I'm tellin y'all. It stupid... [and] they taken my fucking hat... It's like y'all don't seen my hair; it some crazy fucking shit"* (field notes).

Consistent with the students above, many of the black students at CHS were most angry about how the rules affected their hair. One student even admitted being absent because of his hair, or rather lack of hat. A number of black female students, who formerly wore hair scarves or wraps to school were *"totally pissed"* (field notes) and even stopped attending school *"in between weaves"* (field notes). One student who was particularly outspoken argued that the *"Indian girl in [grade] 10 wears her scarf every day y'all... It ain't right"* (field notes). She believed her own black female needs were not met with the same understanding as religious ones at CHS. One student was even cited for wearing an Afro comb in his hair, after refusing to take it out. According to the student, a teacher asked him to remove the comb on the grounds *"County do not permit headwear"* (field notes). The student disputed that the comb constituted 'headwear' and thus refused to remove it, likening his comb to a girl's hair clip. The student was later suspended for the week for repeatedly refusing to remove the comb in the Principal's office. A week later the student explained what his hair meant to him: *"this here my life* (pointing to his round, even Afro)... *it's who I am"*, and he intensely defended his right to a hair comb *in* his hair.

For many students, their hair was a defining part of their black identity, and none more so than Jameeka *"who would rather die than be seen without a weave"* (field notes). Jameeka, like many others, believed white teachers disproportionately cited black hairstyles and accessories as *"not in code"* (field notes).

Many students also disagreed with the teachers' justifications for the uniform code itself on the grounds of 'behaviour management' i.e. that physical altercations at

²²⁰ Prostitute

CHS (particularly amongst the black students) had decreased since the introduction of the uniform code. Shanaya argued:

Things we normally wear we cant. It's not justified y'all. They say it behavioural.... So now they be all justifyin it (uniform code) saying there is less behavioural issues in school.... Dumbest thing I ever hear. If they think dress code fixes behaviour, it ain't true. It luck y'all, like behaviours change year on year... different classes, different peoples, y'know? It not like I am going to go 'shit I am wearing a blue polo shirt so I am not gonna fight y'all today'".

Being perceived as 'oppositional', adopting a stance 'opposite' white cultural norms, or 'opposing' white institutional rules and practices is more than black students at CHS avoiding speaking 'good clean English'; or wearing baggy pants, scarves or hats; or absenteeism in protest of rules. Rather, when a black student expresses a preference for his/her own cultural values, norms and preferences to include language, dress, and hair, they are not being oppositional, but exerting their own Afrocentric agency (consistent with Assante 1991 p71). Afrocentricity is thus about cultural and racial liberation, and the freedom to exercise one's own black agency. It is about the desire on the part of black students at CHS to be free from the persistent oppressive rule of white supremacy, which is maintained and perpetuated in all its forms at CHS (individual, group and institutional) as seen in this and the previous chapters.

Consistent with Lundy (2003 p46), the data presented in this section supports that *both* oppositional culture theory and the acting white thesis do violence to the cultural centeredness and agency of the black students discussed in this section. White hegemonic preferences are presented and promoted by schools and the county as the sum of all student preferences, imposing Eurocentric preferences and norms as universal to all students, except for certain religious exceptions (consistent with Asante 1987). The European experience is therefore not sensitive to the Afro-centered cultural needs of the black students at CHS.

9.3 SOULS OF BLACK STUDENTS: REJECTING MARGINALISATION

How does the rejection and marginalisation of black students (Chapter 6), black culture (Chapter 7) and black agency (Chapter 8) manifest itself in the 'souls of black [students]' featured in this study?

In a society where black agency, black people and black culture are relegated to the margins of white hegemonic power, Jameeka, DeShawn, Trey, Dante and Isaiah were not simply rejecting educational success by being 'oppositional', or indeed self-sabotaging by failing to 'act white'. Instead, they were rejecting their own marginalisation and the very marginalisation of their black group and culture, and they did so in very varied ways. They each exerted their own agency and made choices based on their understandings of the Eurocentric experience at CHS. Each made a conscious and calculated choice to be the 'subject' in the creation and telling of their own narrative and rejected their position as 'acted upon' (as a colourless or exotic object) in the Eurocentric experience. They each challenged, in the most basic of ways, the white supremacist institution of schooling in a supposedly 'post-racial' America.

9.3.1 RQ7 – A Summary

In responding to **RQ7**, each of this study's black participants will be discussed separately, as each could be seen to stand within the Eurocentric experience of schooling and used that location as a reference to interpret their own realities. Far from oppositional or 'acted upon', each of this study's black participants drew upon their unique experiences and utilised their own agency to make decisions about their future.

Jameeka, the 'entrepreneurial teen mom (to be)' saw the white hegemonic system for what it was; she knew from experience that the Eurocentric experience of schooling at CHS "*don't got nothing to offer*" her (p185). She also knew that the standardised testing agenda would "*chew [her] up*" (p185) and place her at the bottom

of the social strata, claiming the *"FCAT [was] just a way of keeping poor peoples poor"* (p149). She was acutely aware that unless you were enrolled on the highly prized magnet program or classified as 'gifted' *"ain't no one care"* (p187). She believed that teachers *"don't even wanna teach [blacks]"* (p187) and that the whiter magnet groups had access to a more rigorous curriculum and teaching methods than the blacker mainstreamed students who were *"treated like we're not as good"* (p151). Jameeka sadly believed herself mostly *"invisible"* in the Eurocentric experience, unless she was being cited for *"hair [and] clothes"* infractions (p252). To her, the white supremacist institution of school *"makes... (blacks) feel like we aren't meant to be smart... like we don't got nothing to offer this world"* (p185).

Jameeka could 'see' and understand the system in a way that her fellow white participants could not. She stood in her own location and utilised her own agency to ensure that she would *not* become a passive victim in the white supremacist institutional violence against her. She was not oppositional, but a young independent woman who instead of *"letting county rule [her]"* (p138), acquired for herself *"some skills"* (p138) in hairdressing. Jameeka had, by her own admission, *"got [her] own things going on"* and no longer 'needed' school (field notes).

Jameeka utilised her agency to make her own way, independent of the public school system. For Jameeka the function of school was now purely a social one, arguing that CHS could no longer *"tell [her that she's] stupid if [she] ain't listening to their BS (bullshit)"* (p185). Jameeka worked as an unqualified (and unlicensed) hairdresser and claimed to weave and braid approximately 40 hours a week. She could often be seen braiding during the school day, especially for CHS footballers in preparation for their Friday night games. She never disclosed how much she charged, stating that she worked for *"the love y'all"* (field notes), as charging other individuals would have broken state

laws²²¹. The researcher did however witness several bills passing hands on multiple occasions during the fieldwork. Additionally, Jameeka also claimed she had *"enough dollars to see her and her baby good"* (field notes) despite having no formal employment.

Jameeka was not reckless in her choices, but realistic. She was aware and had thought deeply about her future prospects, particularly the future of her unborn child. She saw the white supremacist system for what it was, one that would ultimately see repeat failures for her and her friends. She stood in her own cultural location and utilised her black agency to opt out of the white supremacist system. Jameeka is today a mother to a beautiful and healthy baby boy. She is also in her final year of cosmetology school, making the very most of the financial assistance afforded to young single mothers in Hurricane. In spite of the institutional violence she experienced from a young age, she is today well on her way to realising her dream of being a salon owner (field notes), in spite of the Hurricane public school system.

DeShawn, the founder of S.I.S.T.A.S., also made independent decisions based on her cultural location and personal experiences in the Eurocentric system of schooling. Her own reality and her interpretation of the realities for *"too many young black women"* (field notes) led her to autonomous action in the local public schools. She was very aware of the gap in achievement between black and white students, noting that it *"was bad"* because the *"FCAT determines so much of what you can and cannot do"* (p147). She was aware that school administrators only *"care about... FCAT scores"* (p147) and that school *"beats young black children, takes away their hopes and dreams, [and] leaves them broken, lost [and] unable and unwilling to change their futures"* (p203).

DeShawn, far from being oppositional, knew that she needed to take matters into her own hands, as the white hegemonic education system was not going to center the

²²¹ In the state of Florida, all "compensated" (considered cash, goods or services) cosmetology services (hair cutting, hair arranging, hair coloring, permanent waving, and hair relaxing), with the exception of hair braiding, must be performed in a licensed cosmetology salon.

needs of young black students. She exerted her own Afro-centered agency through the creation of S.I.S.T.A.S so she could help empower young black women to make the “*choice to succeed against the (white) odds*” (p203). She utilised her awareness and understandings of the Eurocentric experience of schooling as a marginalised black female herself to help other young black women pursue success in spite of the intuitively racist system stacking odds against them. She knew all too well that being black and smart were *not* incongruent, as too many young black women had been led to believe through public schooling. She actively promoted strong independent black agency, and stressed that ‘her girls’ did not have to adopt a raceless (white) persona in order to succeed in the system. Today, DeShawn is still committed to ‘us[ing] *what the dear Lord gave her*’ by graduating college and securing a full time nursing position. She is now a full member of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority for college-educated black women and is still overseeing the student-led S.I.S.T.A.S. at CHS, and hopes to secure funding to expand the program into other county high schools.

Like Jameeka and DeShawn, **Trey** too saw the white supremacist system of schooling for what it was:

“We are being used, I know that... we all (the football team) know that. They (CHS) just keep us here to play ball. Kids give hours of they time, after school, weekends, all summer when everyone else taking classes online... Most of the team will fail high school... a few will get scholarships to play ball... but most will end up failing.”

Trey understood the Eurocentric system offered different experiences to black and white students and included initiatives that prevented black people from succeeding. For example, Trey suggested: “*they (white administration) don’t want black people ruling America*” (p149), and “*they (county) are happy with us failing*” (p149). Trey was not oppositional in the system that marginalised him (unless he was putting points on the CHS Football scoreboard).

Trey stood, as a young black male athlete in a white dominated system, and calculated his options:

"College ball and a college scholarship's all I got. Without it there be nothing left but Miccy D's²²²... Y'all been to Miccy D's right? I mean who's eating (whites) and who's flipping burgers (blacks)... society don't want to let blacks out from behind the grill... I got two options, college ball or flip burgers."

Trey exercised his agency in pursuing the only viable option he perceived that would bring him success in the Eurocentric experience i.e. a black athlete with the necessary 2.0 GPA to 'play ball.' Trey was ultimately successful in obtaining a college football scholarship to a NCAA Division III school, but struggled academically and quit at the end of his freshman year. Today, Trey is a soldier in the U.S. Army and is presently stationed in the U.S. Both he and Bud remain very close.

Dante, although not a 'main character' in this study, is here included, as he was without exception the angriest critic of the Eurocentric experience at CHS. Dante also displayed the most 'oppositional' behaviours of all the black participants and was outwardly resistant to public institutions to include schools. Dante was convinced beyond doubt that public education is *not* a valid path to success (measured financially) for black males. Dante's interpretation of his own reality was one in which schools were not there to help him or his "*brothers* (black males) *succeed in life*" (fieldnotes). If anything, Dante believed white supremacist notions of schooling to *be* the reason black students fail. Dante was adamant that education policy was devised solely with the purpose of excluding blacks from "*y'alls* (white) *society*" (p150). Dante's realities led him to "*hate white people and white man's society*" (p126), because it told him "[his] *life is worth nothing*... [And as a result, he did not believe that he] *should... respect y'alls* (white) *lives.*" (p150).

Was Dante oppositional? By definition he probably was, in that he defined himself and his friends in opposition to the white-controlled CHS, but whether he was

²²² McDonalds

oppositional in the context of sabotaging himself through victimology, dismissing academically oriented behaviours was another thing. Dante was raised in a white supremacist school system that he had *never* seen any form of success in. After failing *every* FCAT from grade 3 through high school, Dante saw no option but to “*work it*” (the system) for himself (field notes). Dante was rumoured to be involved in the sale of drugs outside of school, which is perhaps what he meant by ‘work it’. Dante had also previously claimed that “*the only peoples who got work in [his] hood is the fucking dealers y’all*” (field notes). Dante, uniquely amongst this study’s participants, also expressed his hope for a black civil uprising, in which America would witness the biggest race war on its soil to date. Dante was permanently excluded towards the end of the 11th grade and is today, perhaps unsurprisingly, serving a 10-year sentence for multiple drug possession and distribution offences. He is no doubt even angrier at ‘white America’ and even more hopeful of a race riot.

Isaiah, like his black peers, stood as an Afrocentric young person and interpreted his experiences of the Eurocentric education system. To ensure success, Isaiah (and his parents) knew that he needed to “*do what [he] need[ed] to do*” and perform white middle-class schooling norms. Isaiah believed the white supremacist version of schooling (more specifically the practice of standardised testing) “*has taught [black kids] they belong (in mainstream classes)*” only (p184-185), and worse still, that they did not belong on stage with the white CHS graduands each year. Isaiah understood that the Eurocentric experience:

“Gives a clear message (to black students)... The black communities are already the bottom... [and the majority white graduands are visual confirmation to] blacks that they are not good enough... [and] not able to pass what the white kids can.”

Isaiah was very aware of the white supremacist education policies in action against his group, believing the \$50 million annual cost to Florida for administering the FCAT to be a gross waste of vital education resources to:

"Tell blacks and others that they are dumb, stupid, uneducated and not welcome here in the US of A... Hell, generations of idiots before have managed to do that a lot cheaper."

Isaiah did not support the white hegemonic system, although he performed it in order to resist it through academic success. Isaiah opposed institutional racism by surviving the system designed to fail him, his peers and his culture. Isaiah was acutely aware that he did not succeed alone, and that he, unlike his peers, had years of supplementary education outside of public schooling. He was also aware that his parents made a tremendous and sometimes-painful sacrifice of time and siblings, so that their only child could succeed in a white-dominated society. He admitted that:

"I would never be where I am today without the support I received... I'm not 'gifted', just had tutoring since I was small... These kids (other magnet students) aren't gifted, they're just children of professionals with the resources to ensure their kids succeed at school. All black kids want to do well, but life isn't fair... at some stage they just give up, the gap is too wide... Black kids just don't have the means to recover."

Isaiah did survive the Eurocentric experience at CHS and is today close to graduating from a historically black university in a neighbouring state, where he was offered a full academic scholarship. He also joined a Christian ministry and spent three summers on humanitarian missions in sub-Saharan Africa.

9.4 IN SUM: THE WHITE EUROPEAN MASTER'S TOOLS

Ogbu's (2003) recommendation at the end of his final book was to encourage the black community to become more engaged in schooling, suggesting that blacks need to change how they respond to their conditions. He wrote, "although good teaching and some

changes in the education process are important, the academic achievement gap is not likely to be closed by restructuring the education system, or by what the schools, communities and the U.S. society at large can do for black students,” equally important is “what the black community can do” (Ogbu 2003:274). The notion that black students at CHS simply need to adopt a stronger work ethic is clearly misguided, given the examples of individual, group and institutional racism presented in this study.

As demonstrated in this chapter, whilst the black students of CHS were arguably not passive victims of the white supremacist education system at CHS, they were still victims. Although black participants in this study learned how to resist, survive and succeed, within and beyond institutionally racist contexts, they cannot end their victimisation. Therefore this study, in disagreement with oppositional culture theory (Ogbu 2003), contends that victims of oppression *cannot* stop their victimisation: they can fight against it utilising their agency as young black women like DeShawn; protect themselves from its effects by hollowing out alternative measures of success like Jameeka and Trey; learn to achieve in spite of it like Isaiah; or rebel and later succumb to it like Dante. But, what the young black participants in this study cannot do is stop something that they did not create, maintain or perpetuate. A system dominated by white supremacy will never safeguard the educational interests or successes of black children (consistent with Carter 2005). In short, as suggested by Lorde (1984), using the white-European ‘master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’, only preserve and further entrench its domination (Lorde 1984).

CHAPTER TEN

Concluding the Portrait of Black-White Inequality

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This in-depth single site case study of a diverse high school in Florida set out to investigate the enduring achievement gap between black students and their white (non-Hispanic) peers, some 60 years after the landmark *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) case. In accordance with the tenets of Critical Race Theory, which grounds itself in the distinctive experiences of people of colour, this study paid specific attention to the counter stories and experiences of black students at Central High School. This study firstly explored the quantitative manifestations of the 'achievement gap' and participant experiences and understandings of the gaps, before questioning which reported group has benefitted most from the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In addition to Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies were adopted as a framework in which to investigate the (often hidden) privileges of 'whiteness' in school and the extent to which participants of both races were aware of, and understood or identified the contours of whiteness. The popular, albeit controversial, 'cultural' explanation for the black-white achievement gap in schools - 'oppositional culture theory' and 'the burden of 'acting white'' - were employed to explore whether black

students at Central High School were 'oppositional' in their seeming rejection of schooling and academic excellence. Equally, Afrocentric thought was also utilised to question whether black students were, more accurately, rejecting white cultural schooling norms and the Eurocentric experience of education. Finally, this study explored the Social Studies curriculum as a multicultural education intervention, through which issues of race, racism and racial inequality could be addressed in schools; drawing specific attention to the role teachers saw for schools in a diverse society and how their teachings were being conditioned by the mandated curriculum and text books available.

This study utilised a critical race mixed-methodology to elucidate the research questions and involved a year-long participant observation (conducted during 2010-2011). This study also utilised documentary analysis of state issued statistical reports and social studies curriculum materials, 361 student surveys, numerous narrative interviews with 15 participants (both student and teacher) and innumerate informal conversations conducted with a broad range of individuals involved in the schooling process.

Analysis of these materials leads to the conclusion that the enduring pattern of racial inequality seen at Central High School was not fortuitous, but a deliberate goal of the NCLB Act and its state level manifestation (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Testing). As such, consistent with Gillborn (2005), both NCLB and FCAT *can* and *should* be considered an 'act of white supremacy', and a government-supported initiative to perpetuate and preserve white hegemony. Whilst this study offered a positive conceptualisation of black participants as young Afro-centered agents, who were neither 'opposed' to education (at least not in principle), nor passive victims of the institutional violence against them at Central High School (i.e. learning how to resist, survive and succeed, within and beyond institutionally racist contexts), they were still victims; of 'whiteness'.

This concluding chapter shall firstly summarise the implications of this study for existing literature (Section 10.1), before making recommendations for policy and practice (Section 10.2). The final section (Section 10.3) shall address recommendations for future research and address some limitations of this study.

10.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY FOR EXISTING RESEARCH

This section addresses the implications for existing research utilising 3 subheadings: 'Whiteness', Oppositional Culture and Acting White, and Multicultural Education and the Eurocentric Experience.

10.2.1 Whiteness

For the most part white participants in this study believed there to be a line drawn under the past, that society was now 'post-racial' and were documented displaying attitudes that 'minimised racist legacies' (consistent with Castango 2008; Gillborn 2008; Preston 2007a). Consistent with critical whiteness theory, white participants in this study were found to have only limited awareness of whiteness as a construct and how they can and/or did embody white supremacist values (consistent with hooks 1989). White participants largely failed to recognise not only the ways in which their actions support and affirm whiteness and white dominance, but also the institutional role of schools and policies such as NCLB, in the sustaining and perpetuating of racial inequality (consistent with Castango 2008; Gillborn 2005). Although many white participants were seen to promote colourblindness as 'desirable' in a post-racial society (consistent with Dyer 2000), they were equally quick to mark themselves and their group as 'white' when they believed they were 'under attack' i.e. 'reverse racism' or affirmative action practices (consistent with Giroux 1997; Ladson-Billings 1998). Additionally, meritocracy allowed

the white participants in this study to see themselves as 'innocent' in an institutionally white system that creates, maintains, and reproduces social injustices, through practices such as magnet schooling and college preparation classes (Ladson-Billings 1998)

Consistent with DiAngelo (2010) and Gillborn (2005), this study found that white participants largely failed to acknowledge the significance of group membership and as such denied the reality that not all students had the same access to resources. Consistent with Ladson-Billings (2008), such denial allowed for the development of normative categories of whiteness at Central High School (i.e. 'intelligence', 'gifted', 'achievement', 'magnet schooling', 'college prep classes (AP)', 'at or above standard', 'graduation', 'wealth', and 'middle-classness') and equally permitted the application of normative categories of blackness ('dumb', 'mainstream', 'below standard', 'failure', 'drop-out', 'poverty', and 'underclass'). This study found that whiteness permitted the white participants to attribute the achievement gap to a black student's personal 'deficiencies' (consistent with Gillborn 2005).

Unlike their white counterparts (who believed their ascendancy to be a product of their own hard work and their experiences of schooling to be normal for that of all students, consistent with Gillborn 2005 and Leonardo 2002), black participants were acutely aware of how their race shaped their educational experiences and perception of life chances (consistent with Duncan & Jackson 2002), recognising the education system and policy to be inherently unjust (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2003; Noguera 2003; Oakes 2005). Although several black students described a sense of solidarity in mainstream classes, and felt a strong sense of belonging at CHS more broadly (consistent with Gibson 2005), black students expressed frustrations being confined to the 'basics' and were aware that the magnet group disproportionately had access to 'enriched' and more 'rigorous' curricular (consistent with Oakes 2005). Several black students did identify feelings of 'inferiority', but this term was only utilised to explain a sense of neglect by mainstream teachers (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2003), and as a

descriptor for an inferior education experience when drawing comparisons with their magnet peers.

Black students in this study provided wide-ranging accounts of their relationships with CHS teachers, which conflicted with the findings of the study of Shaker Heights (inconsistent with Noguera 2003; Ogbu 2003).

10.2.2 Oppositional Culture and Acting White

This study's findings were consistent with findings in Downey & Ainsworth (2002), Farkas et al. (2002), Fryer (2006), and Massey et al. (2002), who established little evidence to support the acting white thesis. Although Central High School could accurately be described as 'two different schools in one building' (and therefore likened to Shaker Heights in Ogbu's [2003] study), high achieving black students at CHS did *not* report feelings of 'discomfort', 'intimidation' and 'inferiority' (inconsistent with Ogbu 2003; Gibson 2005). Conversely, the sole high achieving black student in this study described a sense of 'belonging' (consistent with Cook & Ludwig 1998) and expressed 'disappointment' with the under-representation of black students in accelerated classes. Additionally, he also believed himself to be 'respected' and claimed that it was other white students that were in fact 'uncomfortable' with his presence (but would never admit to it). This finding is also inconsistent with Bergin and Cooks (2002; see also Suskind 1999) who argued that black students (enrolled in advanced classes) in diverse schools were most at risk for being accused of 'acting white'.

Unlike their white peers, black participants in this study did not name academic achievement as a marker of acting white (consistent with McArdle & Young 1970; but inconsistent with Fordham & Ogbu 1986). Inconsistent with several scholars (Bergin & Cooks 2002; Brown 1992; Farkas et al 2002; Fryer & Levitt 2004; Graham et al. 1998; McWhorter 2000; Steinberg et al. 1992), the sole high-achieving black student in this study was celebrated by black peers of both genders (consistent with Ainsworth-Darnell

& Downey 1998), and his participation in the magnet program at CHS was not viewed as a 'defection' from black identity; or indeed worthy of 'co-ethnic ridicule'. Conversely it was white participants that described him as being most like them (acting white).

There was also little evidence of the black peer group purposely undermining and thwarting each other's academic efforts through negative pressures (consistent with O'Connor 2002; Tyson et al 2005; inconsistent with Fordham 1986). Conversely, far from being contributors in their own academic shortcomings, black students in this study could be found taking autonomous, organised group-action to promote academic success (inconsistent with Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Majors & Billison 1992; Ogbu 2003); and they did so Afrocentrically without the need to adopt the 'norms of white culture'.

10.2.3 Multicultural Education and the Eurocentric Experience

Consistent with Perry (2002) only two approaches to multicultural education were established in this study. 'Black' as a racial category was either 'silenced' or 'exoticised' in the classroom; either way, both the conservative approach and liberal approach ensured that 'white' as a category, remained unidentifiable and its practices protected (consistent with McLaren 1994), and avoided a critical analysis of institutional forms of racism (consistent with Jenks et al 2001). Additionally, both the conservative approach and liberal approach enabled teachers to deny the ways in which they personally participated in the legitimisation of whiteness (consistent with Giroux 1983) and included no analysis of why inequalities exist in the first place (consistent with Grant and Sleeter 1998).

This study argues that the social studies curriculum, as a form of multicultural education, gave insufficient consideration to the 'official' knowledge and both conservative and liberal approaches were both shown to avoid a critical analysis of institutional forms of racism (consistent McLaren 1994)

Consistent with King (2001), although black students saw themselves represented in the curriculum and textbooks – the way important black narratives and persons were presented was marginalising, distorted and some were even omitted to satisfy the white master script (consistent with Ladson-Billings 2005). The Eurocentric materials provided to students in this study served to further entrench whiteness and preserve the white master script (consistent with Assante 1991; Ladson-Billings 2005; McLaren 1994). This study contended that the absence of Afrocentric knowledge in the school curricula was not a simple oversight, but an institutionalised instance of racism (consistent with Apple 1990).

10.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Critical Race Theory in education is likely to remain the darling of the radical 'Left' and will continue to generate important scholarly papers and essential debate that will largely remain within the confines of the ivory tower; failing to penetrate the classroom, schools, teacher preparation programs, local government or education policy. Whilst it is tempting to promote CRT as a more powerful explanatory-narrative for the persistent achievement-gap in schools and classrooms today, one has to seriously consider the intense studying and careful rethinking of race and education.

Adopting CRT as a framework for educational equality means that white scholars, educationalists and policy makers, will have to expose (or rather admit to) the scale of institutional racism in modern schooling, and come to terms with their own whiteness and privilege (where applicable), before proposing substantive radical solutions that will finally address the enduring achievement gap outlined in Chapters 1 and 6. In light of the seemingly insurmountable and the largely hidden obstacle of whiteness, critical race scholars will have to adopt bold and sometimes unpopular positions and accept that as a

group, we may be pilloried figuratively, or at least vilified for these stands. By and large, critical educationalists, despite lodging convincing criticisms of the education system (such as the data presented in this study), fail to recommend viable alternatives and fall short of offering solutions. Whilst this study does not offer substantive recommendations for policy and practice, it does offer some realistic smaller-scale ones.

Firstly, the practice of placing students in separate classrooms depending upon presumed ability (or lack thereof) is often defended on the basis of meritocracy. Race, as we have seen, is never cited as a reason for separating students of varying abilities, and yet the decision upon a student's placement rests almost entirely upon a teacher's personal assessment of the student's characteristics and performance on standardised tests; as mandated by 'colourblind' policies to include No Child Left Behind. Ironically, any movement towards a real and substantial colourblind schooling system, in which *all* students have truly equal opportunities to realise their dreams and ambitions, is halted by the dominance of colourblind policies in which race clearly still shapes access to resources and opportunities. Although it is acknowledged that in an era of greater accountability in schools, it is unlikely that Federal standardised testing policies and their state level manifestations will be abolished all together, this study more realistically recommends that the results of such 'tests' (i.e. the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) are *not* used as the primary criterion for legitimate advancement in school systems (i.e. promotion to next grade, access to accelerated curricular programs, determinant of graduation).

It is also the responsibility of schools to rebuild trusting relationships with black students and create a positive environment that supports, rather than undermines, academic achievement. It is also important that schools provide black students the same access to social capital and institutional support that is needed to prepare for college and future careers; especially given that resegregation has occurred within most desegregated schools due to advanced curriculum courses. Supplemental, supportive

and culturally specific education such as S.I.S.T.A.S cannot be referred to student run programs alone. To be successful, the entire school community must commit itself and work intentionally and continuously to create a learning community committed to the analysis of power and privilege.

Secondly programs for teacher education must help educators negotiate questions of white identity and power. Teachers and administrators need to become careful observers of culture, both in the communities in which they will teach and in themselves, to prevent white educationalists in particular from believing that they are 'race-less' and 'without culture'. Recognising one's self as a cultural being is a challenge and so teacher educators and programs need to structure experiences and activities that enable their students to take a closer look at their own cultural systems and recognise themselves for what they are. Educators must also continue to explore alternative ways to integrate Afrocentric teachings into the schools' curricula in order to serve the interests of, and to address the implications for, not only black students, but *all* students.

The Afrocentric idea in education does not mean a complete rejection of all mainstream education has to offer in the broader sense. On the contrary, it calls on the educator to utilise the best of what mainstream knowledge offers through a review of its paradigms, viewpoints, and methods as a basis to critique contemporary society on issues of social justice, racism, and white privilege. Again, recommending that the Federal and State administrators simply rewrite the curriculum and corresponding standards is unrealistic, this study therefore contends that educators and students learn how to recognise and deconstruct the white master script in existing curricula and standards, creating counter-stories that will increase their capacity to bring about change and foster improved academic achievement for all.

This study contends that when examining a script, whether a textbook, policy document or scholarly research article, the reader should ask: How has the experience of subordinated people been represented? Have their experiences been made invisible,

distorted or marginalised? How can the experience of subordinated people and groups be reconstructed or made visible? How might the recounting of this experience be different if done by an African American for example? Increasing the capacity of educators and students to wrestle with the history of racism and white privilege, interpret the master script and (where applicable) acknowledge their own whiteness, will foster success in changing the climate of schools so that they no longer perpetuate white supremacy.

10.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Critical scholars who are concerned with disrupting the status quo in schools and addressing the achievement gap between dominant (white) students and their black peers, *must* adopt conceptual and methodological frames that place race at the centre of their analysis, such as Critical Race Theory. Through utilising a CRT framework in this study, a number of areas for further research were uncovered.

Firstly worthy of further critical race research are the agentic actions taken by groups of young black students outside the regular curriculum, who encouraged each other to strive for academic excellence. Such important and organised actions on the part of minority groups fly in the face of oppositional culture and other deficit theories and thus must be explored further. Whilst the S.I.S.T.A.S. in this study were an inspirational group of young Afrocentric women, the necessity for such a group should be deeply unsettling to scholars, educationalist and policymakers alike. Having a student led group (with an external volunteer mentor), designed specifically for black education betterment and support, suggests that students did not believe such support to be available within the public school system. Therefore research into the prevalence of Afro-centered education clubs in public education settings is important.

Secondly, this study noted that Ogbu failed to draw attention to the ‘soft bigotry of sport’ in public schooling and the exploitation of young black students. ‘Interest Convergence’ one of the key tenets of CRT argues, that whites will tolerate and/or encourage racial advances (i.e. black athletics and academic ‘no pass-no play’ requirements) only when they also promote white interest (i.e. school/county prestige, state championship titles, revenue generation from ticket sales). As such, further research into the one-way cultural integration experiences of black athletes in school sports is important. Black students must be encouraged and supported to reach their full academic potential and *not* be encouraged to pursue sport as a sole (realistic) means of upward mobility.

Thirdly, it is important to utilise CRT and Critical Whiteness Studies to further explore ‘the burden of ‘acting white’’ in the context of high achieving black students in the magnet classroom environment. This study found that high achieving black students were conversely most at risk of peer ridicule *in* the magnet classroom, and *not* from their co-ethnic peers in the mainstream environment (as suggested by Ogbu 2003). The sole high achieving black student in this study alluded to the fact that if he demonstrated too much commonality or empathy with the experiences of ‘the black collective’ during classroom interactions and discussions, he could risk disenfranchisement and ridicule from the whiter magnet group.

Finally, Toni Morrison reminds us the point is “not... to alter one hierarchy in order to institute another... which have no drive other than the exchange of dominations – dominant Eurocentric scholarship *replaced* by dominant Afrocentric scholarship (for example).” Thus this ‘portrait of inequality’ study could be meaningfully expanded to incorporate LatCrit theory in the exploration of the Hispanic/Latino(a)-white gap and experiences of Hispanic/Latino students in school, or indeed Black Feminist Thought in the exploration of the black female-white female achievement gap in education, and the diverging experiences of both groups. This small-scale in depth case study could also be

usefully made larger in terms of participant numbers or even repeated in another school, or even in the United Kingdom.

Appendix One

BROWN V BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954):

A SUMMARY

Brown v. Board of Education 1954 was not an abstract case about the issue of segregation, it was about the basic structure of American society, and was brought to court by four separate communities with 13 plaintiffs, whose cases were combined (Orfield & Lee 2004). The combined cases addressed issues of buildings, transportation, curricula, and qualifications of teachers, and were brought by African American minors who sought admission to the public schools of their communities on a non-segregated basis. In each instance each minor had been denied admission to schools attended by Caucasian children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. Marshall, the lead attorney, successfully argued that school segregation was a violation of individual rights under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, asserting that separate schools kept people who had formally been slaves “as near that stage as possible” (in Neal & Moore 2004:7). The unanimous decision declared the ‘separate but equal’ concept unconstitutional, calling for federal action to desegregate public schools in the U.S. and provide equality in educational opportunities for *all* students.

Appendix Two

2010 CHS FCAT RESULTS DATA SHEET

2010 CHS FCAT READING Results GRADE 10

Group Name	Total Students	Mean Scale Score	% Earning each score point					CHS	WHS	EHS	State
			1	2	3	4	5	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3
White	211	345	13	22	19	18	28	65	71	92	50
Black	162	274	61	30	5	1	2	9	16	20	19
Hispanic/Latino(a)	30	277	57	13	13	3	13	30	46	93	34
Male	225	299	40	26	13	10	11	34	60	50	37
Female	213	324	31	23	15	9	23	46	54	54	42
Free/Reduced Lunch	166	279	55	30	6	4	5	14	27	18	26
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	270	23	23	21	19	13	24	56	66	74	51
Standard Curriculum	366	30	26	15	10	19	44	44	61	56	43
Magnet Curriculum	84	371	4	18	15	14	49	79	92	91	88

* Percentages in the above table may not sum to 100% because of rounding errors present in the original FCAT data

2010 CHS FCAT MATHS Results GRADE 10

Group Name	Total Students	Mean Scale Score	% Earning each score point					CHS	WHS	EHS	State
			1	2	3	4	5	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3	≥ 3
White	213	350	3	8	22	46	21	89	91	98	81
Black	162	309	15	34	35	15	1	51	46	52	50
Hispanic/Latino(a)	30	307	30	17	30	13	10	53	77	100	68
Male	227	326	12	18	26	34	9	70	86	71	72
Female	213	335	7	21	27	31	14	72	77	76	69
Free/Reduced Lunch	165	314	16	29	34	18	2	55	58	52	60
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	273	341	6	13	22	41	17	81	89	87	81
Standard Curriculum	367	336	7	19	25	36	14	74	84	79	76
Magnet Curriculum	84	369	0	0	10	51	39	100	100	99	99

* Percentages in the above table may not sum to 100% because of rounding errors present in the original FCAT data


Appendix Three

CHS STUDENT SURVEY

A SURVEY ABOUT YOU

*** You will be read a statement about this survey and the study this survey informs. All information you give here is anonymous and the teachers/school will not have access to your individual responses - you will not be identified in any way. You are not required to participate in this survey, however, should you choose to fill in this survey, your responses are gratefully appreciated and I thank you for your time. My contact details can be found at the end of the survey should you wish to contact me about any aspect of this survey or the overall study.

1 What grade are you in? Grade 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 <input type="checkbox"/>		***GRADE 12 ONLY: 13 (a) Have you applied to college or university for fall 2011? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
2 Gender Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>		(b) Has your application been accepted? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
3 What is your zipcode (or street name if zipcode unknown)? <input type="text"/>		(c) In which college/university was your application accepted? <input type="text"/>	
4 What is your current Grade Point Average (GPA)? <input type="text"/>		(d) Who will be paying for your fees/tuition Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (i) A scholarship/funding/bursary/grant <input type="checkbox"/> (ii) My family will pay <input type="checkbox"/> (iii) I will pay my own tuition <input type="checkbox"/> If you have a scholarship/funding what is it? Bright Futures, football etc. <input type="text"/>	
5 What are your MOST RECENT four FCAT scores (fill out one score for each of the subjects below)? Gr8 Gr9 Gr10 Gr11 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
6 What is your living situation (tick all that apply)? Living alone <input type="checkbox"/> Living with other family <input type="checkbox"/> Living with partner <input type="checkbox"/> Living with my child(ren) <input type="checkbox"/> Living with parents/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> I am currently homeless <input type="checkbox"/>			
7 Are your parents: Living together? <input type="checkbox"/> One or both deceased? <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced or living apart? <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know <input type="checkbox"/>			
8 What is your race? (mark one or more) White / Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American / Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black / African American <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican / Chicano <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian / Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Other Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Please state below <input type="text"/>			
9 What are your religious preferences (if any)? <input type="text"/>			
10 What are your political views? Strong Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know <input type="checkbox"/> I do not care about politics <input type="checkbox"/>			
11 Who would you have voted for in recent Florida Governor election? Rick Scott <input type="checkbox"/> Another candidate <input type="checkbox"/> Alex Sink <input type="checkbox"/> None, I would not have voted <input type="checkbox"/> It doesn't matter who you vote for they are all the same anyway <input type="checkbox"/>			
12 What will you do after school? Go straight to 4 year college <input type="checkbox"/> Join the military <input type="checkbox"/> Go to a 2 year college <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing <input type="checkbox"/> Get a job <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know <input type="checkbox"/> If 'get a job' please state what type of job: <input type="text"/>			
14 Are you employed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (i) If 'yes' please state job title e.g. cashier, babysitter etc. <input type="text"/> (ii) On average, how many hours a week do you work? <input type="text"/>			
15 Are you a carer for siblings (brothers or sisters) or other family members? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (i) If yes, please explain your responsibilities: <input type="text"/> (ii) On average, how many hours a week are you a carer for family? <input type="text"/>			
16 Do you/have you ever participate(d) in a club/team/activity AT school? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (i) If 'yes' please list the name(s) of the team, club or society: <input type="text"/> (ii) How many hours of your week would you give to your activities? <input type="text"/>			
17 Do you/have you ever participate(d) in a club/team/activity OUTSIDE school? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (i) If 'yes' please list the name(s) of the team, club or society: <input type="text"/> (ii) How many hours of your week would you give to your activities? <input type="text"/>			

18 Are you studying for any of the following programs: Magnet Program <input type="checkbox"/> Standard Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> ESOL <input type="checkbox"/> Special Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>				21 Since studying in high school, have you had the opportunity to: Yes No					
19 Have you taken/will you take any of the following classes (tick one box on each line):				Debate a difficult/sensitive issue in class <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about Florida <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss issues that are in the news <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the media, how news becomes news <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Make a decision that affects the school <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about US Government <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Vote in a school election <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer time for a charity/cause <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Organize an event/club/society <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss your personal opinions and beliefs in class <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the rights that US citizens have <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Help another student study <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a community based project i.e. homeless shelter <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage other students to do well <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Write a formal letter about a community/school issue <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss issues/events/problems happening outside the US <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Debate issues in class that matter to you personally <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Vote on a school issue/problem <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the responsibilities of being a US citizen <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a reconstruction/role play i.e. voting, court case <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate volunteer opportunities in the community <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>					
20 Have you discussed the following at school or at home (tick one or both school/home, or neither if you have not discussed the issue at all)?				22 On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being strongly agree and 5 strongly disagree) how would you rate the following statements (tick one box for each statement):					
School Home Neither				Strongly Agree Neither Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5					
War in Iraq/Afghanistan <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom of speech <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Guns <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Rick Scott <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Terrorism <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Religious extremism <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Local poverty and homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Racism <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Prejudices <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Drug and alcohol abuse <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Illegal Immigration <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Local community issues <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Politics <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Voting <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> After school options i.e. college, employment <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Global news events <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Standardised testing i.e. FCAT <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> How to apply to college/university <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Community projects <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Protesting <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The welfare system <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> "No Child Left Behind" <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				I am proud to be a US citizen <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I have loads of school spirit <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I do not feel I belong in my school <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am very committed to my school <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other students at school share my beliefs <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> The adults in my community respect me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I believe that I can make a difference <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am an active member of my family <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I know a lot about American Government <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I accept other peoples opinions/views <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I do not understand the US voting system <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> My school is caring and supportive <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am not an active member of my community <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am confident to speak my beliefs/opinions <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am committed to my community <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am very aware of my rights /responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I would protest for something I believe in <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I do not respect the adults in my community <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I do not trust the government <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> My classroom is open to discussing issues <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I am not a committed American <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>					
Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey; your time has been greatly appreciated. Good luck with the remainder of the school year and best wishes for the future. If you wish to see the results of these surveys, I would be happy to forward you an electronic overview, please email clairecrawford@live.co.uk or ssoce6@cardiff.ac.uk .									
<div style="text-align: center;"> <h1>THANK YOU</h1> </div> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>									

Appendix Four

MCCLLENAGHAN'S AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS - PHOTOGRAPHIC TALLY

TALLY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES FROM MCCLLENAGHAN (2005) pp530 - 621

White	Black	Other	Notes:	Page
Chapter 19 – Civil Liberties: First Amendment Freedoms				
70			"Americans enjoying freedom of religion" – Image of approx. 70 individuals stood outside a brick and white pillar church. Children amongst the crowd hold helium balloons.	530
300	2		"Celebrating the Bill of Rights. A crowd gathers for Bill of Rights Day in New York... 1941 – 8 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor" – Image of approx. 300 white people congregated with several white military uniforms seen amongst the crowd. 2 black males can also be seen.	533
1			"The Fugitive – Sheppard v Maxwell gave rise to a popular movie starring Tommy Lee Jones as a police officer who relentlessly pursue an escaped prisoner and former surgeon (played by Harrison Ford) accused of murdering his wife. The story of Dr Sheppard also inspired an action-adventure television series during the 1960s" – Image of white actor.	534
1			"Alexis de Tocqueville author of Democracy in America" – Image of white French philosopher.	537
		12	"Religious Freedom. Like all Americans, these church-goers are free to practice whatever religion they choose" - Image of 12 Mexicans/South Americans leaving a church.	538
14	2	14	"Prayer and the public schools" – Image of school football team knelt down as if in prayer (approx. 26 Hispanic/Latino(a)/white/black students) in front of their 2 white coaches, Hispanic/Latino(a) physiotherapist, and white medic (NB - this image was difficult to count).	539
4		1	"The Lemon Test" State aid for parochial schools – Image of a classroom with 1 white teacher, 3 white students and one male student of Asian decent.	541
1			"This Christian nativity scene was displayed in front of the Massachusetts State House" – Image of a white male walking past a nativity scene in the grounds of a state house.	542
2			"The rabbi at right, a Jewish chaplain at the U.S. Naval Academy, helps a midshipman study the Torah" - Image of 2 Jewish male military personnel.	543
3	1	5	"Religious freedom in a diverse nation" – Image of 1 white male teacher sat at a desk surrounded by 8 female students (2 white, 5 Asian wearing traditional dress, and one black student). The black student stood alone on the back row.	545

Appendix 4: Civil Rights & Civil Liberties Tally

8			"Free speech essential to these anti-tax protestors" – Image of 8 whites protesting income taxation.	546
1			"Katharine Graham was a publisher of the Washington Post when the paper decided to print the 'Pentagon Papers' despite the government's attempt to bar their publication". The court decided in favour of the New York Times – Image of white Katherine Graham.	549
2			"These teenagers should not be admitted to R rated movies" - Image of 2 teenage white females holding cash outside a cinema complex.	550
200	10		"These demonstrators were protesting the Vietnam War in 1971" - Image of approx. 200 white skinned faces, 10 black faces can be seen amongst crowd.	552
1			"The Patriotic Act ²²³ " – Image of former attorney general John Ashcroft defending the Patriot Act.	554
5			"A silent vigil is one form of assembly protected by the 1 st Amendment" – Image of a candlelight vigil with 5 white young people holding candles.	555
10		4	"Peaceful protest – These demonstrators have gathered in front of the White House to rally against war manoeuvres and bomb storage on Puerto Rican island of Vieques" – Image of approx. 10 white 3 Hispanic and 1 Asian people in printed shirts.	557
Chapter 20 – Civil Liberties: Protecting Individual Rights				
13	2		"Courtroom with a trial in session" – Image of courtroom with a white judge, white lawyer and white clerk in session. 12 jurors are also shown (2 black and 10 white).	562
12	1		"A Failure of Due Process. Injured and wounded prisoners are taken to hospital by the National Guard in the aftermath of the 1921 Tulsa riots ²²⁴ " - Image of 2 white civilians (one armed) walking on street, 1 white guard stood at door of truck, 5 white armed civilians and a white nurse line either side of the truck bed facing inwards towards the floor. One white male assists another injured white male placing his arm on a pillow. A wounded shirtless and shoeless black male sits alone at the back of the truck, watched by and armed white man.	564
1			"Justice Bader Ginsburg joined the Supreme Court in 1993" prior to becoming a justice she had appeared before the Supreme Court during several women's rights cases – Image of Justice Ginsburg.	572
7	1	1	"Serving on a jury" – Image of white lawyer and part of jury (6 white, 1 black and 1 Hispanic/Latino(a) jurors).	575
2			"Court Artists" – Image of 2 white court artists sketching the court proceedings.	580

²²³ The Patriotic Act, in the wake of 9/11 gave the Justice Department broader power to track down and prosecute suspected terrorists.

²²⁴ The Tulsa Race Riot was a large-scale, racially motivated conflict on May 31 and June 1, 1921, in which whites attacked the black community of Tulsa, Oklahoma. It resulted in the then wealthiest black community in the United States, being burned to the ground. During the 16 hours of the assault, more than 800 whites were admitted to local white hospitals with injuries (the black hospital was burned down), and police arresting and detaining more than 6,000 black residents.

Appendix 4: Civil Rights & Civil Liberties Tally

7		1	<i>"Cameras in the Courtroom? Friends and family watch the televised trial of nanny Louise Woodward²²⁵ for the murder of a child in her care."</i> – Image of 1 white judge, 5 white spectators, 1 white cameraman, and 1 Asian soundman.	580
4			<i>"In 1966, the Court struck down the conviction of Ernest Miranda²²⁶, who had confessed to a crime without being told of his rights".</i> Image of 4 white males.	583
1			<i>"The right to an attorney. Clarence Gideon²²⁷ was an uneducated man who had to defend himself in a Florida court because he could not afford an attorney and the trial judge refused to provide one at public expense".</i> Image of a white male, Clarence Gideon.	584
20	1		<i>"Supporters for and against capital punishment make their views known".</i> Image of approx. 20 white people holding flowers and signs with a picture of a death row black male and the words <i>"stop the execution"</i> . One white person is holding a sign saying, <i>"remember the victims."</i>	586
Chapter 21 – Civil Rights: Equal Justice Under Law				
7	14		<i>"Discrimination against African Americans at Woolworths lunch counters, 1960"</i> – Image of protestors. Approx. 14 black and 7 white individuals, holding signs to include <i>"fight for equal rights."</i>	592
1		1	<i>"A diverse nation"</i> – Image of 1 white and Native American female attorneys <i>"enjoying success"</i> despite women and Native Americans being targets of discrimination.	594
		2	<i>"Asian Americans"</i> – Image of 2 Vietnamese shop owners.	597
6			<i>"Women's work"</i> – Image of 6 white women typists in the 1960's.	599
	1		<i>"Equality in sports"</i> - Image of a black female basketball player. <i>"The Law known as Title IX, enacted in 1972, ensures women equal treatment in all aspects of education. Since, then Title IX has left its greatest mark on college sports, dramatically expanding opportunities for female athletes by requiring equal opportunity and funding."</i>	600

²²⁵ Louise Woodward was sentenced to 15 years for shaking an 8-month old baby in her care to death, but she only served 279 days of her sentence when an appeals court upheld the judge's decision to downgrade the charge to manslaughter stating that "Woodward acted out of confusion, inexperience, frustration, immaturity and some anger, but not malice in the legal sense". Upon her release she obtained a law degree, got married and has since had her own baby.

²²⁶ Miranda was arrested in March 1963 on kidnapping, rape and armed robbery charges. Miranda was taken to the police station and placed in a line up where he was positively identified by the 17-year-old victim. Police obtained a confession from Miranda within 2 hours of interrogation. The landmark case *Miranda v Arizona* however set aside the initial conviction, ruling that criminal suspects must be informed of their right to consult with an attorney before being questioned by police. Police on both sides of the Atlantic now use the 'Miranda warning/rights': "You have the right to remain silent. If you give up the right to remain silent anything you can say can and will be used against you..." Miranda was later convicted at a second trial but only on evidence given by his estranged de facto wife after Miranda tried to sue her for custody of their daughter.

²²⁷ Gideon was sentenced in August 1961 to 5 years for breaking and entering with intent to commit larceny. Whilst in jail Gideon studied the American legal system and came to the conclusion his constitutional rights had been violated. He petitioned the Supreme Court, and they agreed to hear his appeal and they later voted unanimously in his favour in a landmark decision in March 1963, as a result of the Gideon decision, 2000 people were freed in the state of Florida because every defendant had a right to an attorney.

Appendix 4: Civil Rights & Civil Liberties Tally

	1		Rosa Parks ²²⁸ - <i>"In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and was subsequently arrested. That simple act led to a bus boycott by African Americans and helped the civil rights movement grow into a national cause."</i>	602
	1		Plessy v. Ferguson <i>"Separate but equal facilities for different races are acceptable"</i> 1896. Image of black male drinking from a 'colored' water dispenser.	604
		1	<i>"Court upholds internment of Japanese Americans during WWII."</i> Image of Japanese female child sat on a suitcase.	605
	10		'Special Feature' – <i>"Ernest Green²²⁹ shows his textbooks to children in Little Rock"</i> 1957. Image of black Ernest sat outside holding his textbook, surrounded by 10 young black males.	607
200	1		<i>"Martin Luther King Jr."</i> Image of MLK Jr. speaking at a lectern. Approximately 200 or so white faces appear, seated in tiers behind him.	608
5			<i>"Allan Bakke²³⁰... successfully challenged the admissions policies of the university of California"</i> . Image of white Bakke with 4 other white males and a white cameraman.	610
3	1	1	<i>"Title IX – requires near equal funding for men's and women's athletic teams at public schools and universities."</i> Image of 5 female athletes playing soccer.	611
20	5	75	<i>"Students at the University of California marched to defend affirmative action."</i> Ethnically and racially diverse protest of approx. 100 students with around 20 white faces and 5 black faces amongst the crowd. The remaining student body were Hispanic/Latino(a), Asian and Arabic. A young black male led the protest.	612
White	Black	Other	Approx. Group Representation Totals for Chapters 19-21	
932	54	118		

²²⁸ Rosa Parks was a black female who was arrested for refusing to give up her 'coloured only' seat on the bus to a white male after the 'whites only' became was full; she was bailed and later found guilty in court of 'disorderly conduct' and 'violating local ordinance' and find \$14 in 1955. Her act led to a bus boycott by African Americans and helped the civil rights movement grow into a national cause.

²²⁹ Ernest Green was the first black student to graduate from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Mr. Green as one of the *"Little Rock Nine...helped bring an end to school segregation in the United States"*.

²³⁰ Bakke successfully sued the university of California for reverse discrimination stating that the university had set aside 16 of its 100 medical student places for non-white students. Bakke charged the university with reverse discrimination, and as such, a violation of the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. By a 5-4 majority, the court held that Bakke had been denied equal protection.

Appendix Five

McCLENAGHAN'S AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS – ENLARGED PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

FIGURE 4: "AMERICANS ENJOYING THEIR FREEDOM OF RELIGION"



FIGURE 5: "RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY... IN THIS LOS ANGELES CLASSROOM"



FIGURE 6: "INJURED AND WOUNDED PRISONERS... IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1921 TULSA RIOTS"



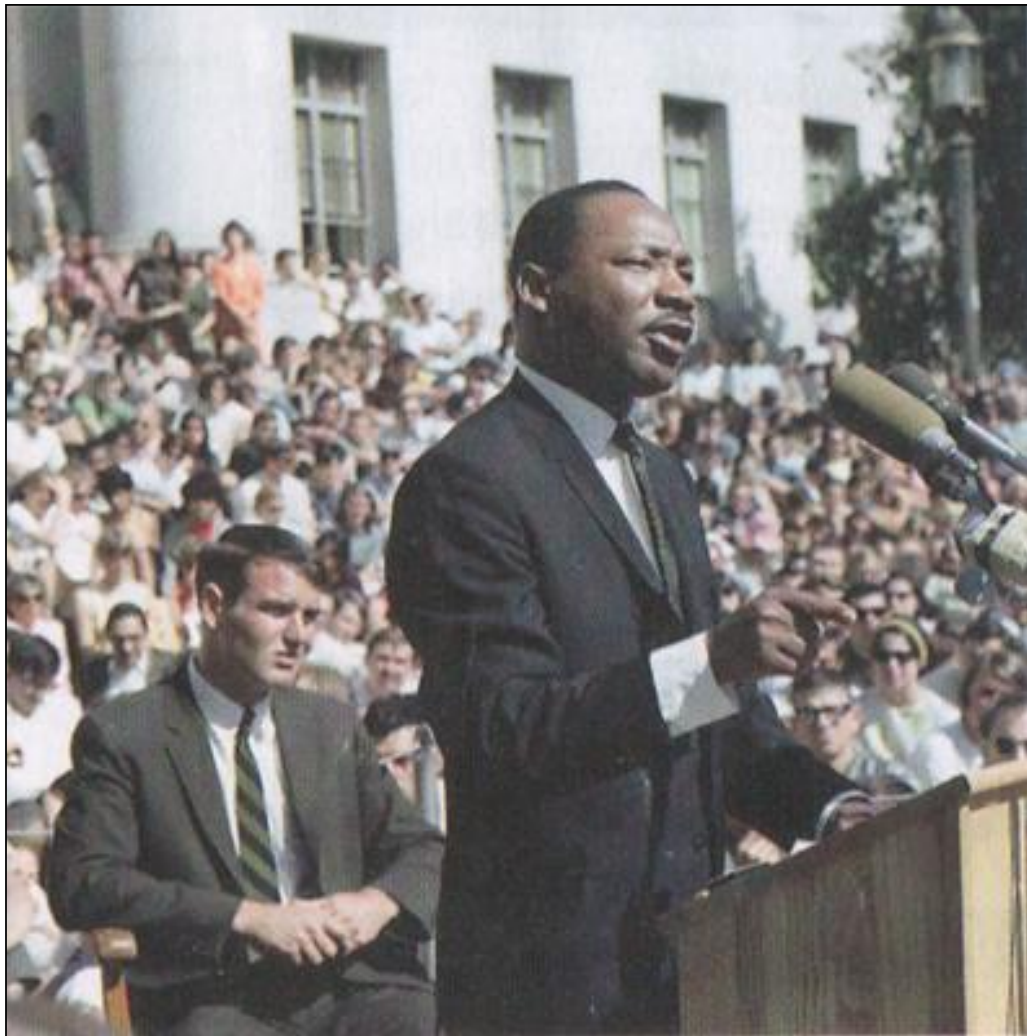
FIGURE 7: "ERNEST GREEN SHOWS HIS TEXTBOOKS TO CHILDREN IN LITTLE ROCK"



FIGURE 8: "DISEMPOWERED EUROCENTRIC (LEFT) OR EMPOWERED AFROCENTRIC (RIGHT)?"



FIGURE 9: "MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR."



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