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EDITORIAL

Black Lives Matter and the Education Industrial Complex: A Special Issue of the Journal of Educational Controversy

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Michael Brown's death by the gun of police officer Darren Wilson in 2014 reverberated beyond Ferguson, Missouri, and into the world's consciousness of state violence against Black people. Even as Mike's body lay under the heat of an August sun awaiting examination and justice, his mother, Leslie McSpadden, expressed her grief to reporters: "You [the police] took my son away from me. You know how hard it was for me to get him to stay in school and graduate? You know how many Black men graduate? Not many!" McSpadden's reference was to Mike Brown's graduation from Normandy High School in Normandy, Missouri. The Normandy School District includes Ferguson, Missouri. Its students are primarily Black and poor, and in 2014, Michael Brown's senior year, the School District was failing; its graduation rates were less than half for its Black male students.¹

¹ See generally, *The Problem We All Live With*, Part One, This American Life, National Public Radio, available at: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one>

For Ms. McSpadden, her son's graduation from Normandy High School was an accomplishment. In the wake of Mike Brown's death we must ask ourselves the critical question of exactly what Mike's graduation from Normandy High School accomplished? Did his education in the Normandy School District prepare him and his peers to navigate anti-Black racism and indifference? Did Mike Brown's education in the Normandy School District underscore for him and his peers that their lives, Black lives, matter? Moreover, in what ways did Darren Wilson's education fail to prepare him and his peers to see Mike Brown as human, rather than as a "demon"² or someone requiring "superhuman" strength³ to overcome?

This special issue of the *Journal of Educational Controversy* explores whether Black lives matter in the education industrial complex. It examines in a myriad of ways how public schools have become sites for students to assimilate into systems of oppression rather than challenge them, and those points of intervention where our schools and communities create spaces of transformation for students to challenge oppressive systems and reaffirm that Black Lives Matter. Our volume contains 11 articles to advance our thinking on these issues. A brief synopsis of each follows:

A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Post-Ferguson Critical Incidents Across Ecological Levels of Academia

² *Department of Justice Report Regarding the Criminal Investigation Into the Shooting Death of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Daren Wilson* 14 (2015), available at: https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/doj_report_on_shooting_of_michael_brown_1.pdf

³ *Id.* at 45.

Aurora Chang, Sabina Neugebauer, and Daniel Birmingham discuss their experience walking into the academic school year eager and ready for the challenge of taking up the killing of Michael Brown and the events that followed in Ferguson as a catalyst for important conversations around structural injustice. Through exploration of critical incidents, they review how their attempts to open dialogue were met with defensiveness and a discourse that relegates the responsibility of engaging in conversations about race and power to educators of color. Echoing Pollock, Bocala, Deckman, and Dickstein-Staub, the authors found that teachers at all levels may resist the 'diversity' aspect of preservice education when they view 'diversity work' as extraneous or belonging to others. Through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspective, they examine incidents that cut across the different ecological levels in which we work, that is, our classrooms, partner public schools, and university. We use a CRT perspective across levels to explore how Michael Brown's killing and the events that followed in Ferguson, rather than igniting a shared sense of responsibility among educators across these communities, triggered White students' and teachers' defense mechanisms, founded on the need to protect whiteness as illustrated across the three critical incidents we describe.

Cocaine and College: How Black Lives Matter in U.S. Public Education

Taking the Black Panthers' call for relevant education as its starting point, co-editor William Lyne looks at the recent history of race and higher education to put the Black Lives Matter movement into historical perspective and ask whether Black lives can ever really matter in U.S. mainstream education.

The Revolution Will Be Live: Examining Educational (in) Justice Through the Lens of Black Lives Matter

Authors Amy Jo Samuels, Gregory L. Samuels, and Brandon Haas explore current sociopolitical implications of race through the lens of Black Lives Matter. In highlighting critical incidents in the movement and connecting to related events of historical significance, they establish parallels to emphasize the persistence of bias, race-based oppression, and injustice. Their article focuses on established power structures and explores inequity, oppression, and sociopolitical contradictions by examining institutionalized racism. The authors emphasize how deficit perceptions, racist ideologies, and silence on racism are dangerous and must be challenged to foster action, advocacy, and change.

Practical Representation and the Multiracial Social Movement

Damaini Johnson examines the issue of representation as it has been brought to us by scholars in social theory, ethnic and women's studies, and literary and cultural criticism. In political science representation became an issue as various social movements became concerned with their empowerment. This work is focuses on the social movement side of the study of representation. It is concerned with the political construction of racial identity and movements for empowerment based upon those identities. Utilizing Stuart Hall's theory of representation; and building upon Winant's model of racial hegemonic projects, Johnson identifies ideas and practices of racial identity and representation within those hegemonic projects. The final section of the paper advances the author's view of the importance of erecting a multiracial hegemonic project in the United States in the 21st century.

The Intersection of White Supremacy and the Education Industrial Complex: An Analysis of #BlackLivesMatter and the Criminalization of People with Disabilities

In their article, Brittany A. Aaronson and Mildred Boveda answer the question of whether Black Lives Matter in the U.S. education industrial complex, with a description of how the education industrial complex serves White supremacy. In their discussion of anti-blackness and racial bias, they also acknowledge the racialization of disabilities and the historical intersections between racial oppression and the marginalization of people with disabilities. More specifically, the authors examine the discourse and reticence about markers of differences (e.g., race, gender, ability status, race, and class) and interrogate how social categorizations are manipulated and co-opted to repurpose differences in ways that serve the education industrial complex and the prison industrial complex. Finally, they discuss how the discourse about the value of the lives of Charles Kinsey, a service provider who is Black, and Arnaldo Rio Soto, an adult with disabilities who is Hispanic, underscores the role that the education industrial complex plays in perpetuating racism, ableism, and the disposability of Black, Brown, and disabled bodies.

Exclusionary Discipline in New Jersey: The Relationship Between African American Teachers and African American Students

Randy Raheem Miller, Sr. posits that there are a host of variables that affect the disciplinary outcomes of African-American students, for example, poverty rates and students with special needs. The variables of interest here are African-American teachers and/or teachers who have identified themselves on record as African-American and the gender of those same race teachers. Race and gender impact both how students are instructed and disciplined. It is the intention of Miller's paper to contribute to the empirical scholarship on the impact teacher race has on the

education of Black students in New Jersey Public Schools. More specifically, Miller investigates the relationship between Black public school teachers and Black public school students who've received a suspension as a disciplinary consequence in New Jersey public schools. A possible relationship between African-American teachers and suspension referrals of African-American students can provide educational practitioners with insight for the necessity of hiring more African American teachers to meet the various challenges of school districts as it relates to the relationship between the growing number of students of color and a primarily White teaching workforce.

Stories of Social Justice Educators and Raising Children in the Face of Injustice

James Wright and Amanda U. Potterton examine their life stories as parents, social justice scholars, and educators from different races and backgrounds. The authors consider the emotional process of personally and collectively coping with and navigating parenting and sharing critical truths with their children in the current social, political, and cultural environment and in light of recent assaults on communities of color. They employ life history methodology to explicitly continue a critical conversation that was started by Matias and Montoya about Critical Race Parenting, and they encourage other scholars, particularly those who are parents, to think about, and articulate, their different emotions and experiences as they engage in critical race conversations about racial injustice and racist ideology, and as they more generally navigate schooling and life with their own children.

Going to College: Why Black Lives Matter Too

Raquel Farmer-Hinton shares why centering Blackness is critical in implementing college readiness for all. By utilizing the readiness practices of high school leaders, counselors, and teachers at five predominantly Black colleges for all high schools, Farmer-Hinton explores key activities, instructional approaches, and support systems that are integral to Black students' college readiness. She presents two themes: mission intentionality and doing whatever it takes. These findings are also coupled with lessons learned from existing scholarship on non-selective college preparatory schools and college readiness issues in urban communities. Lastly, in reflecting upon the qualitative findings from the five high schools and existing scholarship, she offers four ways to help center Black students' college readiness.

Post-Trayvon stress disorder (PTSD): A theoretical analysis of the criminalization of African American students in U.S. schools

Marcia J. Watson-Vandiver examines the historical and contemporary intersections of race in education. Specifically, her article explores the African American schooling experience in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement. Although the Brown vs. Board of Education [1954] decision promised more racial cohesion in public schools, many African American students still experience widespread disparities. With African American students receiving three times the number of suspensions or expulsions, it is imperative to explore the undeniable relationship between public schooling and the criminal justice system. To that end, it is important to consider ways that U.S. schools continuously underserve students and communities of color. This theoretical article highlights the criminalization of Black youth and draws parallels between public schooling and the criminal justice system. The results of this article are exigent for school and community reform.

Schools and the No-Prison Phenomenon: Anti-Blackness and Secondary Policing in the Black Lives Matter Era

Lynette Parker observes that Black boys in schools are often labeled as discipline problems, criminalized and overclassified into special education programs. Her article describes the ways in which current practices of labeling and disciplining Black boys have far-reaching impacts on their lives beyond school. It explores the ways Black boys, who are surveilled and criminalized in school, are further victimized when school records are used to characterize them as deviant as a way of justifying violence against them. Drawing upon anti-blackness as a theoretical framework, Parker explores the 9-1-1 transcripts in the cases of Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice to clarify the role of surveillance, then explains how school records are implicated in the no-prison phenomenon prevalent in many Black Lives Matter cases. Her work reveals not only the ways in which Black boys remain under the watchful eye of society, policed in their every move, but it also demonstrates acceptance of policing of Black boys' bodies. Ultimately, her article offers insight for practitioners and policy makers about the consequences of racialized and gendered labeling violence.

Magical Black Girls in the Education Industrial Complex: Making Visible the Wounds of Invisibility

Co-editor Teri McMurtry-Chubb shows us that Black girls in public school are constantly exposed to physical violence, racialized gender hostility and harassment, and hate speech. Yet, the national narrative perpetuates the belief that Black boys are the main targets of such behaviors. This narrative renders Black girls invisible, and normalizes their treatment as another beam in the framework of White supremacy. Her article addresses Black girls' invisibility first creatively, though the African

diasporic rhetorical practice of storytelling. It then turns to an exploration of Fennell v. Marion Independent School District, where three sisters were subjected to a racially hostile educational environment in Marion, TX. The article concludes with a positive imagining of how visibility can work to make Black Girls' Lives Matter.

These articles show us both specific classrooms and the larger invisible forces that structure the U.S. education industrial complex. This allows us to both finger the jagged edges of the promise that Leslie McSpadden thought education held for her son and to make a clear-eyed examination of the role that the U.S. educational system played in his death. We hope that this issue helps push us a little bit closer to the knowledge that leads to better arrangements.