journal of CULTURAL RESEARCH in ART EDUCATION

2016

volume 33

Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education

Publication:
Once a year by the United States Society for Education through Art (USSEA).

Subscriptions:
jCRAE is an open-source online publication of USSEA. While access is free, readers and people interested in supporting the mission and activities of the journal and of USSEA are encouraged to join USSEA (for more information about the organization, please visit www.ussea.netU). Annual membership dues are $25 and include issues of the Newsletter. Check or money orders should be made payable to USSEA and sent to:

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Cover:
Pamela Harris Lawton, *Recipe for Disaster*, 2015. For more information, please refer to article by Pamela Harris Lawton in this issue.

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jCRAE

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The *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* is published through generous support from United States Society for Education through Art (USSEA), The Ohio State Univerisy, and The University of Arizona.

The Ohio State University

The University of Arizona.

USSEA was founded in 1977 to promote multicultural and cross-cultural research in art education. It is an independent organization affiliated with the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) and the National Art Education Association (NAEA).

USSEA United States Society for

The editors of the *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* are indebted to Elle Pierman, PhD Student, Department of Arts Administration, Education, and Policy, The Ohio State University, for integral editorial and design leadership in making this issue of the journal a reality.

jCRAE

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Editorial: Media in a ~~Post~~-Racial Society

Ryan Shin & Karen Hutzel
Senior co-Editors

Promises and hopes for a better society and future often sustain our lives. However, false hopes and unrealistic and misconceived expectations survive only temporarily with hype that simply covers and disguises reality, like a bubble. Historically, the British *South Sea Bubble* in the early 18th century was the first recorded case of an economic bubble (Dale, 2004). Economists, therefore, caution about a *bubble economy*—overly heated and unhealthy expectations without real growth and value creation. Upon the 2008 election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, many people, perpetuated by mass media and news analysts, indicated our society had officially become "post-racial" (Kaplan, 2011). This hype, compared to a bubble economy, can be described as a *bubble of diversity,* a promise and hope that the United States had achieved a form of equality.

Many scholars (Foster, 2013; Higginbotham, 2013; Kaplan, 2011) have responded in clear opposition to the notion of a post-racial society, indicating the many ways in which race and racism still function as unaltered forms of social construction, contributing to a fixed white privilege and unequal racial structures. Media educator Douglas Kellner (2011) argues that mass media often play a significant role in reinforcing and perpetuating such racial inequalities, while social media outlets have provided grassroots efforts to draw attention to instances of overt racism.

More than ever, individuals, beyond cultural industries, have been empowered to produce and share non-conforming cultural messages and practices through social media and networked connections. Progressive educators who welcome a participatory culture (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robison, 2009; Duncum, 2011) of social media find innovative ways of engaging with mass and social media outlets in their teaching. In this volume, authors share cultural research on the topic of "Media in a ~~Post~~-Racial Society," addressing impacts and possibilities of mass and social media on a range of minority groups, such as African-Americans, Asians, Latinx, Muslims, and Sami people.

Contributors to this volume embrace various media as a form of resistance against society's ideological manipulation and oppression. They explore alternatives and changes in their theoretical explorations and teaching practices. They ask how social media outlets can be used to address issues of racism (e.g. capturing and releasing images and videos of police use of excessive force) and facilitate media literacy and citizenship. Subverting media messages or intentions of cultural producers, they also ask how art and new media forms effectively address race, gender, and other social identities and constructions portrayed in mass media. Their concerns result in creative and empowering practices and strategies to address the potential for art educators to act against the prevalence of racism in mass media, engage with social media activism and counter-storytelling, and provoke thoughtful public pedagogy.

Buffington's article, "Fostering Dialogue in a ~~Post~~-Racial Society," shares strategies and methods for addressing racism and inequalities through analyzing music videos and advertisements, awakening insidious effects of media saturated racism for most white population pre-service art teachers in her university. She reports continuous encounters of overt resistance from students, which we, as co-editors of this journal, also face regularly in art education programs. Her discussion of whiteness, intersectionality, and cultural appropriation related to media provides a significant background and concrete approaches for art educators to infuse authentic race and cultural issues in their classes.

As a Native American educator and researcher, **Eldridge** introduces readers to media stereotypes about Sami people and the lack of educational responses from schools in Finland. From her microethnographic/narrative inquiry, readers encounter the voices and struggles of several Sami educators and artisans in maintaining their language and cultural identity, a common issue across the world. At the end of her article, she encourages art educators to develop and teach art curriculum on Sami and other minority cultures to advance decolonization efforts and resist unequal power relationships in education.

Akbari's article challenges and counters media saturated negative stereotypes that deplore pandemic Islamophobia featured in the media. He provides an important counter-narrative of Islam by offering Rumi's cosmopolitan philosophy in education. He asks art educators to play an antidotic role of countering Islamophobia by engaging students in conversations about artists and thinkers relying on cosmopolitan facets of the Islamic world. He claims that as a Sufi scholar and poet, Rumi's openness to the diversity of cultures and other religions offers educational opportunity to dismantle single stories, along with Iranian-American artist and cosmopolitan Shirin Neshat, who explores themes of gender, identity, and her complex relationship with her homeland.

Media's negative influence on Native people and identity is discussed in **Pauly**'s article, which reviews historic and contemporary media's saturated misrepresentation and stereotypes of Native people. Sharing some artworks of Native artists as counter-image/storytelling and cultural resilience, she suggests that art educators actively

expose students to views and perspectives of diverse contemporary Native artists in order to resist dominant ideologies and unequal power-relations. Pauly highlights Native artists' resistance to media and popular culture influences, providing critical discussions about historical contexts, indigenous aesthetics, and counter-narrative artworks.

Yoon contradicts the appeal of social media through a critical analysis of its influence on sustaining racism. She suggests that art educators pay attention to the detrimental effects of Internet memes that facilitate colorblindness as a subtle form of racism, an outcome of the lack of critical discourse in popular visual culture. After collecting and analyzing Internet memes addressing racism from the Memecenter website, she concludes that these Internet memes perpetuate colorblindness, deny structural racism, and mock people of color. Her article offers a case study of web-based and social media research employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as research methodologies.

Lawton suggests that we embrace social media in our teaching, as artists and activists have demonstrated how to effectively facilitate sociopolitical grassroots activism and counter-narratives to racism and stereotypes. By adopting a Critical Race Theory lens and incorporating visibility and accessibility of social media in art education classrooms, she argues that art teachers can enliven art curricula to offer relevant, culturally responsive and accessible learning opportunities. She probes art educators to engage students in critical discourse on difficult topics to resist implicit mainstream media messages and encourage students to create their own counter-narratives on racism and distribute them via social media.

Museums as informal institutions offer important educational resources for art educators to teach about minority artists' complex identities and related sociocultural issues. Opening her article with the question, "How can art educators successfully address issues of race and racism in their classrooms?" **Chang** shares her surprising findings of how African-American students can deeply engage in art to explore their heritage and social issues. She offers Hampton as an example of addressing the cultural identities of minority students. Applying Critical Race Theory, she provides instructional resources on several African-American artists, addressing and discussing social justice and diversity within a setting of a predominately African-American student population.

In this volume, we introduce new and alternative submissions grounded in scholarship and research. As a response to our call, **Sandlos** offers her interview with Janaya Greene, who wrote the screenplay for the film, *Veracity*, working with her two classmates.

Sandlos' interview portrays Greene's experiences growing up with media stereotypes and how a film can serve to facilitate critical conversations about media stereotypes, calling to attention issues of power and representation of minority groups. The readers will also find that the interview format of this entry creates a space for multiple interpretations of the story, which can encourage more inclusive and diverse voices in the classroom.

The culmination of this important volume provides a timely contribution of research in art education through the work of these authors. They have taken a strong stand, supporting the necessity of eliminating the hype, the bubble of diversity and social justice, instead advancing society to continue to challenge the notion of "post-racial." Their research demands art educators to harness their power to teach with, about, and through media and social networking to generate equality, respect, and diversity against a biased and white supremacist society. At the heart of attaining these changes are teachers and students equipped with seeing their art and their teaching as a practice in social justice.

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Fostering Dialogue in a ~~Post~~-Racial Society

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Virginia Commonwealth University

ABSTRACT

This article explores strategies for promoting classroom discussions with pre-service art teachers. Ranging from ways to build a classroom environment conducive to sharing ideas to some specific video resources, the author explains some techniques she has implemented. Though the results of these efforts are mixed, continuing to explore ways to address race and culture in our post-racial society is an important step towards building the cultural competency of pre-service teachers. Because of the far-reaching and insidious effects of institutionalized racism throughout society and education, it is especially important for teachers to see and understand the profound effects of racism to work toward a more just society.

KEYWORDS: pre-service teacher preparation, race, culture, higher education, video

In response to the journal theme *Media in a ~~Post~~-Racial Society*, I reflected upon my attempts at teaching university students about race and how it operates in contemporary society. Because of the need for greater cultural understanding among teachers and students, addressing race and culture is of paramount importance in education. As societies change and interact, finding ways to help pre-service teachers expand their cultural knowledge may have significant effects on their future teaching and their cultural competence in a classroom. Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008) note that there is no handbook for teaching; teachers frequently make decisions based upon their understanding of the circumstances, and these understandings are shaped by teachers' belief systems. Thus, the values that a teacher holds have a significant impact upon how that teacher interprets situations, treats students, makes pedagogical and curricular decisions, and decides which topics are appropriate for class discussion.

Because I want to build the value of understanding and appreciating a range of students and their unique contributions, I address race, gender, culture, class, and sexual orientation throughout my classes of pre-service and in-service teachers. Finding ways to build an environment for an open and honest exchange of ideas around race and culture is a challenge and a continual learning process for me. Many university students may not have a significant degree of comfort with conversations about race and inequities, but it is crucial to have these discussions while they are in a formative period of becoming a teacher. Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008) point out that teachers' views are more flexible during their teacher preparation program than when they have their own classroom, thus making this time a critical point for intervention.

In a recent study, Brown (2009) found that the majority of pre-service teachers completing their student teaching thought they were inadequately prepared for the multicultural and multiethnic settings of public schools. This is an important issue for pre-service teacher preparation programs because "these White middle class teachers possess very limited intercultural experiences to bring into the classroom that will provide students with the knowledge and skills to work for a more just society" (Brown, 2009, p. 1). Sleeter (2001) notes that white pre-service teachers often have limited experience with and knowledge of people from cultures other than their own. Instead, pre-service teachers frequently hold views that are influenced by the media, their cultural environment, and their values (Garmon, 2004). Kaplan (2011) writes that many teachers in urban schools are young and white, often right out of college, and may not be prepared to work with students from cultural backgrounds different from their own. This problem comes, in part, from an educational system that is more segregated than it was in 1954 (Orfield & Lee, 2005), before legal desegregation. The lack of diversity within public schools today means that many students come to college with limited experiences working with and learning alongside people from different backgrounds.

Pre-Service Teachers, Diversity, and Whiteness

The students I teach at Virginia Commonwealth University reflect the fact that 86% of teachers are white and that 80-93% of students in teacher preparation programs are white (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011)[1]. Additionally, the vast majority are middle-class women who mostly attended high school with people from similar backgrounds, as Orfield and Lee (2005) note. Further, a significant majority of faculty members who teach pre-service teachers are also white women (Matias & Zembylas, 2014).

Interestingly, students frequently mention that diversity is one of their favorite aspects of Virginia Commonwealth University. Many students are comfortable with diversity and freely share experiences from their own lives or from friends and families, throughout the US or abroad, and have nuanced understandings of race and culture. However, this is not true for all students. Though I address race and culture in various ways in different classes, I continually encounter overt resistance from some students, a level of reticence among others, and a desire not to see or address inequities from others. At times, university students have referred to resources including noted multicultural education scholar James Banks' (2008) An Introduction to Multicultural Education as racist. After reading Jonathan Kozol's (1991) Savage Inequalities, some students described it as "too depressing" and did not want to deeply engage with his points. One student stated that Kehinde Wiley was "playing the race card" in reference to his portrait of Ice-T from 2005. When viewing an art exhibit that contained handmade contemporary dolls reminiscent of stereotypical pickaninny[2] imagery, some students expressed the idea that, though the imagery was problematic, it was acceptable since the dolls were made to help children.

1 Though other studies (Kaplan, 2011) differ slightly in the numbers, many put the percentage of female teachers around 75% and the percentage of white teachers between 80-85%.

2 A pickaninny is a stereotyped racial caricature of an African American child that is depicted with exaggerated facial features that often include extremely large eyes, nose, and mouth.

Further, some students have felt the need to privately relay to me a negative personal experience with a person of color after discussions of race occur in class. While I usually want to jump in when students make these comments, I have noticed that it seems to be more powerful when one of their peers asks a question or challenges what was said. Through an open peer dialogue that allows for questions without immediate negative assumptions, I think more students begin to see the world differently. If another student does not address what the student said, I do intervene and explain, to the best of my ability, how or why some of the ideas may be problematic. These classroom experiences reinforce that the concept of the United States as a post-racial society is not accurate and that systemic racism is indeed deep and prevalent throughout contemporary society including in laws, public institutions, and education.

Whiteness

Addressing social constructions of whiteness is an area I am working to develop in my own teaching. Within a city that is still grappling with its history as the capital of the Confederacy, critically interrogating whiteness in Richmond, Virginia[3] is a challenge. For example, the building where I work is located about one half mile from a large monument to a Confederate leader, J.E.B. Stuart, and there are four other large Confederate monuments within close proximity along the same street. I typically include 1-2 classes specifically on public art each semester and address ways to respond to works of public art and how that can be part of a curriculum (Buffington & Waldner, 2012).

Roediger (1991), an early theorist of whiteness, explained the social, political, historical, and changing aspects of whiteness that, at times,

3 Richmond's problematic history has continued due to many factors. For instance, during the Civil Rights era, the local schools and citizens promoted "massive resistance" as developed by US Senator Harry Byrd, from Richmond, leading to the complete closure of some public county-wide school systems in Virginia for several years in the 1960s. Still today, in many of the local school districts, students of color are suspended at more than twice the rate of white students.

excluded certain groups now widely understood to be white. The construct of whiteness later included a wider range of people as they embraced certain class values. Mccarthy (2003) specifically discusses teacher education and points to the unequal relationship of knowledge and power within the system. He writes: "White teachers and students benefit from such an asymmetry. White identity, then, is an effect of the practical operation of systems of privilege and material advantages – not simply a matter of physical characteristics or markers such as skin color" (p. 128). As noted by researchers (Gallagher, 2008; Matias & Zembylas, 2014), many white people believe they are not racist and use cautious and guarded language around race. To Matias and Zembylas (2014), this reticence to engage in discussions of race creates an additional challenge when some people may be hesitant to unpack their identities, instead believing that they are "normal" and labeling people they perceive to be different as "other" or "having culture."

Intersectionality

Educators and theorists recognize that identity is not a fixed or singular demographic category. Crenshaw (1991) explains that intersectional identity is complex and involves a constantly shifting combination of personal, cultural, societal, and political factors that work together. Rather than individuals having a set identity, aspects of their environment, peers, circumstances, emotions, and other factors continually influence how an individual may identify. Additionally, intersectionality addresses how various aspects of a person's identity may intersect with other aspects to create particular unique circumstances. Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) discuss what happens when an individual's identity distances them from the prototype of white, male, and heterosexual. They posit the term "intersectional invisibility" to refer to the marginalization that can occur, even within subordinate groups. For instance, in the classes I teach that are predominantly white and female, we could consider the lesbian students, the students of color, or international students to potentially be experiencing intersectional invisibility. Powers and Duffy (2016) believe that it is crucial for educators to "develop an understanding of intersectional identities to develop cultural competence" (p. 63). Further, pulling from Freire's work (1998), Powers and Duffy argue that teacher education can assist pre-service teachers in becoming aware of their own intersectional identities as well as their future students'. Developing awareness could lead to small openings in preconceived or fixed notions about self or others (Hatch & Groenke, 2009). Related to Freire's (1998) belief that coming to conscientization tends to be an incremental process of small steps, these small openings may lead to greater awareness in the future and potentially impact the pre-service teachers' future classroom communities.

Classroom Community

I have made and continue to make changes to the content and how I teach in an effort to better prepare students for their future teaching positions. In terms of altering the classroom environment, I work with students to build a classroom community that allows students to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and experiences. Community building starts on the first day of the semester with overt conversations of how classroom discussions could unfold. I ask students to brainstorm, at times with a partner and sometimes as a whole group, successful strategies for discussion. After brainstorming, I usually stop the discussion and let the students know that they have until the next class to think about the best strategies they have seen in various classrooms throughout their education.

We continue our conversation in the next class, discussing in detail what factors create an environment that fosters strong discussions and what factors impede a good discussion and how to avoid those pitfalls. We compile a class list of discussion guidelines and try out the parameters starting in the next class. Revisiting this list at least once during the semester is also useful to make revisions or changes. Giving students advance notice of this discussion is a strategy that

seems to help because, when given time to reflect about previous experiences, they seem much more likely to contribute to forming our discussion norms.

Video Resources

Recently, I have also begun using more video resources in teaching and find that viewing and discussing videos is a helpful tool for eliciting meaningful discussions. Because many of my students spend significant amounts of time consuming media, including video, they tend to have robust comments and are easily able to make connections between and among various videos, frequently introducing classmates and me to related resources. Additionally, I intentionally work to introduce pre-service teachers to strong resources, including *Teaching Tolerance*, a publication and website from the Southern Poverty Law Center that focuses on anti-bias curriculum. Though their art-specific resources are limited, many of their resources relate to contemporary culture. One article in particular, written by English professor Neal Lester (2014), addresses the problematic parodies of some music videos.

In the spring of 2015, in the context of an undergraduate curriculum class for Art Education majors, I asked students to read Lester's (2014) article, and then we watched the videos he discusses – Will Smith's (1997) *Miami* and the video Christmas card parody of it created by the Holderness family (2013), *Xmas Jammies*, as well as the Toyota *Swagger Wagon* (2010; 2015) advertisements that are corporate parodies of rap videos. Lester makes the point that while there is nothing inherently wrong with white people rapping or with satire in general, it can be viewed as a form of modern day blackface when stereotypes related to language, fashion, culture, etc. are also employed. He writes, "These modern hip-hop parodies—integrated into the mainstream media as innocent fun—devalue the creative integrity and impact of hip-hop as a genre of social change and social justice" (2014, para. 5).

Reading Lester's article and watching the three videos he mentions led to a long, insightful, and, at times, passionate discussion about race and how it operates in contemporary society. While many students agreed with Lester's point that these parodies could be problematic and perpetuate stereotypes, other students vehemently disagreed. Students shared many ideas, including: rap and hip hop is for everyone; analyzing someone's video Christmas card was just reading too much into something intended for fun; and they had never thoughtfully considered these videos. One point that multiple students raised is that in the Will Smith *Miami* video, both he and some of the actors say the phrase, "Welcome to Miami" in English as well as the Spanish translation, "Bienvenidos a Miami." The use of Spanish became a significant topic of discussion; some students compared it to Lester's (2014) point that using language from another culture in a stereotypical way can be problematic. Other students disagreed and brought up the points that Miami has a significant Spanish-speaking population and that neither Will Smith nor the other performers dressed or acted in a stereotypical manner meant to imitate Latino people. Students also mentioned other videos that include words and phrases from Spanish. Our discussion then centered around linguistics in the *Miami* and *Xmas Jammies* videos, as it was the point about which more students were passionate.

In watching the *Swagger Wagon* commercials (Toyota, 2010; 2015), the factor that a few students pointed to was the participation of the acclaimed hip-hop artist Busta Rhymes in the 2015 version. Some students believed that as a legendary figure in hip-hop, his presence was a "stamp of approval" from a knowledgeable person, so the commercial was not racist. Thus, they disagreed with Lester's (2014) assertions that the *Swagger Wagon* commercials are funny if you believe certain stereotypes. Though we did not come to a group consensus on either of these issues, it was important to me that a wider range of students than usual shared their viewpoints, were able to disagree with one another and still be respectful. To a small degree, this dialogue reduced the stigma of discussing race and culture in a classroom setting. Because so many students were familiar with the genre of music video as well as these specific videos, they seemed

more engaged than in an average discussion simply based around readings that I select.

Cultural Appropriation and Microaggression

As a result of my experiences with music videos and advertisements, I have worked to include more videos as fodder for class discussions, including ones on related topics – microaggressions created by MTV (Kornhaber & Romagnoli, 2015) and another by teenage actor Amandla Stenberg (2015) on cultural appropriation. The ensuing class discussions were interesting, and the use of video seemed to prompt students to consider other perspectives, rather than only their own lived experiences. By referencing numerous popular culture icons and fashion trends, Amandla Stenberg creates an interesting link between the popularity of cultural appropriation of African Americans by white musicians at the very same time that police killed numerous unarmed black youth, igniting the Black Lives Matter movement. She points out how some celebrities felt it was acceptable to use black culture to further their careers, but then seemed to ignore the issues that go along with black culture and did not participate in the movement. Certainly not all students were in agreement with Stenberg's points, but the videos elicited passionate responses from students and helped them think about daily occurrences in new ways.

Questioning Strategies

Certainly, using video to start a classroom discussion is not a panacea, but I have found that contemporary media, along with carefully worded open-ended questions, can draw more students into a discussion. Simply showing videos and asking, "What do you think?" is not likely to be successful. The strategy that I have used is to compose 5-7 open-ended questions ahead of time that relate to the video, as well as other recent readings, current events, or the students' personal experiences. I have a copy of the questions prepared for everyone and allow students to read over them and pick our starting point. Usually we only address a few of the questions that I generated, but having them written out is a helpful tool to begin a discussion; it aids in redirecting a floundering discussion, and it allows for students to have some choice and direction related to our discussion. What typically occurs is that we start with some of the questions that I have prepared, students raise other points that lead our discussion to their areas of interest, and then we return to a different question. This strategy builds a back-and-forth among the class members and allows for the natural flow of conversation as well as the opportunity for students to take the conversation in another direction.

Building Comfort

As with most classes that I teach, students who are ready to offer opinions about gender, curriculum, the history of education, and their own experiences often become much quieter when we start discussing race. Racism is so embedded and pervasive that many university students are not aware of it and how they may be reinforcing these societal inequities when they make decisions about their curriculum and pedagogy, either inadvertently or intentionally. As a teacher, I struggle with how to react when students make what I perceive to be unintentionally racist comments or comments that perpetuate outdated ideas and beliefs. In the example above related to the *Miami* video, I see a significant difference between Will Smith speaking Spanish in a song about Miami and the use of "gangsta" slang by a white person who then steps out of that role and into a role identified with the normative power of speaking standard English. However, in the moment, I waited to see how students would react to their peers' comments. Several students engaged in a back-and-forth about this issue and I paused until their discussion seemed to run its course before offering my opinion.

Becoming More Aware of Inequity

Many current university students were in elementary or middle school when Barack Obama was elected in 2008, and the idea of a colorblind or post-racial society has been prevalent throughout their formative years. They also consume media virtually all the time through their various screens with some estimates placing their usage at up to 11 hours per day (Fountaine, Ligouri, Mozumdar, & Schuna, 2011). Thus, they are learning constantly from both the general milieu that promotes the idea of a post-racial society as well as the actual media they consume that may be filled with stereotypes and cultural appropriations. What I experience in the classroom relates more to Foster's (2013) ideas about the complex contradictions embedded in the racetalk of many white Americans.

One particular aspect that I have noticed in some pre-service art teachers is what I am tentatively calling the "Pollyanna paintbrush." Through this technique, students look at videos, art objects, other people's experiences, or anything that relates to challenging existing racial oppression and view the works through an extremely happy lens, ignoring the system of oppression that the work is addressing. For instance, when looking at works of art that challenge societal inequities, the university students may focus on the bright colors, rather than the overall meaning of the work. They may gloss over the issues of the work to quickly move on to designing a 'school art' (Efland, 1976) style replica of the artist's work without engaging in an interpretation of the meaning of the original work. Because so many contemporary artists create works with meaning related to race and culture, it is crucial to work with pre-service teachers to help them build comfort with discussions of art that relate to critical interpretations of both the work itself and of society.

One stereotype that I think we as art educators need to retire is the idea of who is or can be an artist. Through many different means – posters readily available through the major art supply companies, reproductions available through various means, and the curriculum of many college art history courses – we learn mostly about white male artists. A few years ago I worked with a student teacher who was placed in a school where 100% of the students were students of color. Both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher were white women. The first time I visited this placement, I was struck by the fact that the cooperating teacher had named the student worktables after artists, which is a great strategy to help manage a classroom and build student familiarity with artists. But what stood out were the names she chose for the tables – Picasso, Van Gogh, and Dali. Certainly these are all important artists, but I questioned the relevance of deceased European male artists from the 19th and 20th centuries to a room full of contemporary children in North America. While I view this as problematic for all children, it is even more so because all the students were children of color. Taking steps, albeit small ones like changing the names of the tables in a classroom to reflect a range of artists from different cultural backgrounds and genders, can make classrooms more welcoming to a range of students, validate their lived experiences, and promote interest in art.

Conclusion

I agree with Kaplan (2011), who writes that the United States "does not need to be colorblind, but cognizant and respectful of the differences that have made us who we are" (p. 4). It is the concept of being cognizant and respectful that is a challenge as an educator. We need to take the time to think through our practices, question them, learn about the experiences of others, and be ready to change and adapt what we do throughout our careers. Because the popular media that we consume are embedded with stereotypes and cultural appropriation, educators need to learn to see these stereotypes, learn ways to address them, and work to help our students recognize these stereotypes so they can work against them too.

As we look at complex social issues including the inequity of educational funding and the school-to-prison pipeline, it is apparent that there is significant work to do to approach equality. Achieving

equality is a challenge for a variety of reasons. Not only were most pre-service teachers educated alongside students from similar socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, but many of them have also learned not to acknowledge race or cultural differences. Garmon (2005) outlines two major areas that influence pre-service teachers' thoughts on diversity: dispositions and experiences. Within each larger category, he positions three sub-categories. Dispositions include openness, self-awareness/self-reflectiveness, and commitment to social justice. The experiences relate to intercultural experiences, educational experiences, and support group experiences. When considering the practices I described in this article through Garmon's (2005) lens, it is clear that I have focused primarily on the experiences rather than the dispositions. In order to better prepare my students, I need to make changes within my teaching to relate to openness, self-awareness/self-reflection, and foster in students a commitment to social justice. Perhaps asking students to engage in a reflective discussion or written piece after one of the videos would be a good tool to help them understand their own openness or develop their self-awareness related to race. Through the use of more first person and narrative videos, I can assist students in understanding a wider range of experiences and people, delving deeply into cultural issues. To create a forum for an extended discussion beyond this special journal issue, perhaps multiple other journals in our field or large national conferences could overtly address systemic racism throughout educational policy and practice.

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The Need for Visibility and Voice of Sami People in Art Education

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ABSTRACT

In 2013, I spent six months in Finland pursuing questions concerning the presence of Sami people (the Indigenous people of northern Europe) in Finnish art education. In this combination study of microethography and narrative analysis that utilizes an Indigenous research paradigm, I asked Sami research participants about how they would like to be represented in art classes. Data description highlights the Sami research participants' voices, as the presence of Indigenous people is often lacking in education due to the effects of colonization. Analysis of the data shows that these research participants think that media, education, and tourism all contribute to negative stereotypes of Sami people. In conclusion, art educators are in a unique and important position to educate students about Sami people so that stereotypes are not perpetuated and so that Sami people gain visibility and voices in global discourse concerning decolonization efforts in education.

KEYWORDS: Sami, Indigenous, decolonization, art education, Finland, Indigenous research, microethnography, narrative analysis

I spent the first six months of 2013 in Finland, and during this time I focused my research on how the Sami people (the Indigenous people of northern Europe) are represented in Finnish public schools and how Sami people *want* to be represented in Finnish and global art classes. As a Native American woman who is an elementary art educator, I am interested in decolonizing efforts in art education. I am particularly interested in listening to the experiences of Indigenous people in education to learn how to better teach my art students about the need for social justice for Indigenous people. As an experienced art educator, I am familiar with seeing a Native American presence, albeit often a stereotypical one, in U.S. curricula. I was unprepared to find the almost complete lack of mention of Sami people in the Finnish art classrooms and general education classrooms that I visited.

When visiting classrooms in Helsinki, located in the southern tip of Finland, I asked Finnish educators about the Sami people's inclusion in learning. Repeatedly I heard that I needed to "go north" to see a Sami presence in education. I was able to make a short trip to two northern villages to visit schools that had classrooms dedicated to the teaching of Sami crafts and languages.

While in Finland, I was a participant observer of Sami National Day[1] in Helsinki, and in northern villages I talked with Sami teachers, artists, and advocates. During my visits, I employed an open-ended questionnaire. This study focuses on the voices of three Sami research participants as a way to break the silence that surrounds the Sami and include Sami voices in the decolonization efforts of Indigenous people globally.

Decolonization and Indigenous Research

Colonization is a complex set of relationships that stem from one group of people having power over another people's cultures, languages, lands, economy, and education (Ballengee-Morris, Mirin, & Rizzi, 2000). Decolonization is not simply a transfer of power, but also a process where one re-becomes oneself (Fanon, 1967). In research, decolonization can be about the process of reclaiming, valuing, and foregrounding Indigenous voices (Swadener & Mutua, 2015). As a Native American woman who is an art educator, I am particularly interested in including Indigenous voices and positions in the field of art education. In this paper, I employ an Indigenous research paradigm by adapting research frameworks developed by Keskitalo, Määtä, and Uusiautti (2011, 2012b) and Kuokkanen (2008) that focus research on Sami representation in education. I selected works by Sami researchers who employ an Indigenous research paradigm that supports Sami communities to inform this study. Research conducted in an Indigenous framework is culturally relevant and appropriate for Indigenous peoples and satisfies the academy (Smith, 2000). Indigenous research methods should preserve Indigenous voices, build resistance to dominant discourses, create political integrity, and be meaningful to the communities studied. Researchers from Indigenous communities are expected to speak from experience and not just theory, with their methods, methodologies and findings grounded in Indigenous subjectivities and experiences of everyday life (Eldridge, 2008, 2014). I found that in sharing my culture, the history of my nation, and my personal stories of being Native, I was welcomed by several Sami people who wanted to share their experiences in the hopes of increasing education for Sami students that is free of negative stereotypes.

My Indigenous research framework is based on the overarching idea stated by Keskitalo, Määtä, and Uusiautti (2011, 2012b) that research involving Sami people should benefit Sami society or disseminate information about "Saminess." Indigenous research methodologies must respect local traditions, values, cultures, histories, and families. Additionally, the research must be just, valuable to Sami people, "good-producing," and not cause harm (Keskitalo, et al., 2011, 2012b). An important aspect of decolonizing research is that the research material is constructed through dialogue and social communication with Sami people (Keskitalo, et al., 2011, 2012b). Given the history of the types of research done *on* Sami people and not *with* them, I felt it necessary to employ this Indigenous framework in an effort to not repeat past wrongs.

Important to Indigenous philosophies is that of "giving back" (Eldridge, 2008, 2014). This can include a strong commitment to not using academic practices, knowledge, and research as tools of colonization and exploitation of Indigenous people by taking their knowledge without giving something in return. For example, research should have relevance for the Indigenous people being studied (Kuokkanen, 2008). I gave back to the teachers and students by wearing my traditional regalia of a Cherokee tear dress and talking about Cherokee arts, handicrafts, traditions, history, and culture to students, teachers, and administrators. Students and faculty, particularly of the vocational school I visited, were very interested in my attire and my presentation of culture and history. Also, I developed a unit of instruction on examining stereotypes, which included learning about Sami artists and art forms and issues surrounding both non-Sami and Sami students' identities. I sent this unit to all research participants. The teachers with whom I shared the unit of instruction were grateful, but in one case a little doubtful of her ability to teach about art.

A Combination of Microethnography and Narrative Inquiry

Ethnography usually requires substantial time in the field, and

1 Sami National Day on February 6th celebrates the first Sami congress held in 1917. Booths that displayed crafts for sale, and a stage for singers and speakers were in a central Helsinki location on the day that I attended events.

microethnographic research is usually conducted in a small site/community and in a short time period by use of ethnographic methods such as interviews, participation, observation, and documentation (Lai, 2012). Narrative inquiry is the study of the ways in which humans experience the world through their storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). As Indigenous research is often about reclaiming native voice and presence, I wanted to incorporate Sami voices in this micro-study, which led me to a combination of narrative inquiry informed by ethnographic methods.

My Sami and Finnish language skills are non-existent, so I had to rely upon the various abilities of my Sami research participants to communicate in English. One individual was almost completely fluent, another was understandable but uncertain of her ability to communicate in English, and I primarily communicated in written English with the third participant. This meant that I had to "read" the "text" of the surroundings in some cases where I was a participant observer.

This microethnographic/narrative inquiry study began with the collection of data through participant observation that lasted a little over a week. Data collection included informal interviewing, note-taking, photographing while visiting schools and classrooms, and later use of a questionnaire. The three research participants who are the focus of this study answered the questionnaire via email after my visit to the northern region of Finland. I contacted each research participant through email for member checks. I used the constant comparative method to determine the overarching ideas presented in the data of the questionnaires, and rich, thick description to describe my time as a participant observer. The voices of the research participants are the focus of the data description. What they have to say is not only important to me as an Indigenous person, but also as a way for others to both "see" the Sami people as present in education and listen to what Sami people feel is important to say.

Foundational Information and History of Colonization of Sami Peoples

The Sami people live in the circumpolar regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. *Sapmi*, the area that is the homeland of the Sami, is called Lapland in Finland (Koslin, 2010). A rough estimate of the Sami population in *Sapmi* is 75,000 to 100,000, the majority of whom live in Norway, with approximately 8,000 to 10,000 living in Finland (Henriksen, 2008; Jonsson, Sari, & Alerby, 2012; Kuokkanen, 2003). Various formal censuses in these countries do not ask for ethnic origin, so it is difficult to state exactly how many people identify themselves as Sami (Jonsson et al., 2012). The Finnish Sami home region consists of the northern municipalities of Inari, Enontekïo, Utsjoki, and the northern part of Sodenkylä (Stevenson, 2001).

The Sami define themselves as an Indigenous people, as stated in the International Labor Organization Convention 169, and are recognized as an Indigenous people in the Constitution of Finland (Keskitalo et al., 2012a). The various Sami groups have attempted to unify by instituting a Sami Parliament Council that encompasses each of the Nordic countries, creating a pan-Sami flag, and celebrating Sami People's Day (Keskitalo et al., 2012a).

There are over one thousand years of history of trading and levying taxes on items used in trade by the Sami. Trading was one of several ways that kings and statesmen attempted to increase control over the northern territory and its people as the kingdoms surrounding the Sami competed for supremacy (Kuokkanen, 2003). Competing forces also claimed ownership of the northern land by encouraging Finnish, non-Sami settlers to move there and establish farms. Additionally, Christianization was another form of Sami colonization (Kuokkanen, 2003). In the 1400s, the earliest churches were built on coastal areas, and the Danish-Norwegian crown declared reduced fines for criminal charges against Christianized Sami. Later in the century, anyone recognized as a *noaidi* (Sami shaman, healer, and visionary) was put to death, and Sami sacred sites were destroyed (Kuokkanen, 2003).

A governmental focus on assimilating the Sami into the majority populations of Norway, Sweden, and Finland took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both Norway and Sweden passed laws early in the nineteenth century that prohibited the use of Sami languages in school and at home. Finland's assimilation policies were not as explicitly stated as in Norway and Sweden. Compulsory education became nationalized, which, due to the long distances in northern Finland, led to the establishment of boarding schools (Kuokkanen, 2003). Children were sent to centralized schools, staying in boarding houses. Young students went home on weekends, and at the upper levels, only on long holidays and during the summers (Lehtola, 2010).

Boarding schools were not specifically for Sami students; they were for anyone, including Finnish students who were too far from a school

to attend regularly. The schools were run directly by the government, and the majority of teachers and supervisors were Finns from other parts of Finland (Kuokkanen, 2003). There was not a separate jurisdiction and bureaucracy used to control the Sami as there was used to control Native Americans and First Nations peoples in the United States and Canada (Kuokkanen, 2003). Also, there was no acknowledgement of the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the Sami students. Finnish culture and language dominated schools, and children were only taught in the Finnish language and exclusively learned Finnish cultural traditions (Keskitalo et al., 2012a).

The understanding of the Sami as distinct, Indigenous peoples was not and still is not commonly shared in the eyes of the majority public of Finland (Kuokkanen, 2003). The Sami are not considered a sovereign nation or wards of the state, as was the case with Native peoples in America and Canada. However, in spite of differences in official policies between Finland, the U.S., and Canada, the mentality in Finland was similar to other colonial settler states. It was the denigration of Indigenous cultures with a clear message of cultural inferiority. Differences in educational policies between the U.S., Canada, and Finland resulted in similar effects including low self-esteem of students, alienation from one's cultural background, and difficulty in integrating and adapting in society (Kuokkanen, 2003). Traditional knowledge that had been transmitted through centuries, such as handicrafts, was forgotten or never learned. Boarding schools affected everything from dress and behavior to spiritual values (Lehtola, 2010).

Thanks to extensive activism during the 1960s and later, a pan-Sami identity was reawakened and fostered. This was done through education in the Sami language (only in the northern municipalities of Finland), native-language public media, and a few higher education programs that taught *duodji* (traditional Sami handicrafts) and Sami languages (Koslin, 2010). Today, language use by the Sami individual or by his/her immediate ancestors is the major criteria for participation in Sami political institutions, and self-identification as Sami is relevant for participating in other community organizations (Levy, 2006). The Sami do not use blood quantum or the equivalent of tribal registration cards. Sami people are citizens of the countries in which they reside, and they participate politically and socially (Conrad, 2000).

Damaging Stereotypes of Sami People

The Sami are stereotypically defined as reindeer herders. This stereotype continues today, despite the fact that less than 10% of all Sami throughout *Sapmi* are involved in any way with reindeer husbandry (Conrad, 2000; Lehtola, 2011). The majority of Sami people pursue a wide variety of livelihoods, from hospitality to computer sciences. However, the image of the reindeer-herding Sami living in nature is emphasized and promoted by institutions of education (Conrad, 2000), the media, and tourism, if mentioned at all.

Figure 1. A restroom sign in a mall in Rovaniemi, Finland using generic, stereotypical Sami figures. Photo: Laurie Eldridge

In previous decades, research was done *on* the Sami people, not with them or by them, and not for their benefit. The 19th century European romantic nationalists considered the "Lapps[2]," as the Sami were called, to be exotic and primitive; they were a curiosity that provided the more "civilized" Europeans a glimpse of their nature-based past. World's fairs and exhibitions in the 19th century featured "live Lapp" displays, complete with reindeer and tents (Conrad, 2000; Koslin, 2010). During the first half of the 20th century, the Sami were categorized as a separate and inferior race based on cranial form and measurements by pseudo-scientists who practiced scientific

2 In the beginning, "Lapp" meant people who lived on the periphery that were not farmers and were therefore uncivilized. Despite the disparaging essence of the term "Lapp," and the explicit wishes of the Sami people, the term "Lapp" is still widely used (Pietikäinen, 2001), however the term became derogatory and should no longer be used (Lehtola, 2010).

racism (Levy, 2006). Social Darwinists described pan-Sami as "lower" and "more primitive" than agricultural societies because of their historical focus on hunting, reindeer herding, and fishing. Researchers who studied Sami languages, history, and ethnography were called "Lappologists," and their work displayed social Darwinist leanings (Lehtola, 2010).

Media Representations of the Sami

Stereotypical representation of the Sami in popular media and historical documents reviewed by Pietikäinen (2003) have described them as child-like, greedy, and dirty people prone to excessive drinking. In several historical documents reviewed by Minde (2005), Sami people were also regarded as impoverished, beggarly, old fashioned, reactionary, and in many instances, heathen. In typical historical and contemporary tourist brochures, representatives of Sami culture are dressed in traditional clothing, sometimes not accurately, standing in front of huts or tents, surrounded by reindeer and the vast outdoors of the Nordic north. This portrayal conveys an image of the Sami people as historical, monolithic, and dominated by nature, similar to how other Indigenous people have been stereotyped around the world (Pietikäinen, 2003). The idea that Sami culture, attire, and language are singular, uniform, and unchanging is a strong stereotype (Lehtola, 2010).

Mainstream television and radio programs about the Sami, with the exception of nature documentaries and movies about "mythical Lapland," are rare for Finland (Pietikäinen, 2001). A recent study of news representations of the Sami in the leading national daily newspaper showed that the issues, cultures, and ways of life of the Indigenous people of Finland were to a great extent ignored (Pietikäinen, 2001). The Sami appear so rarely in the news (Pietikäinen, 2003) and in general educational discourse that public discussion hardly exists in those areas.

Data Description

For this study, I have focused on the experiences of three research participants. Two of the three research participants are from Inari, a very small, rural village above the Arctic Circle in the Finland Sami domicile area. It is located off the shore of Lake Inari and its roughly 750 inhabitants make their livelihoods through a flexible combination of forestry, fishing, reindeer husbandry, and the service and tourism industry. Tourism is a significant part of the economy (Pietkäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Inari is central for the Finnish pan-Sami community as many Sami institutions and services are located there, including the Finnish Sami parliament, Siida (a nationally and internationally recognized Sami culture and nature museum), schools, and media. A third research participant, located in Utsjoki, the Finnish Sami domicile area near the Norwegian border, was only able to communicate with me via email.

Decolonization: Listening to Sami Voices

Helbme. I initially met Helbme[3] in Helsinki during a lunch break at the Ministry of Education where she and a small number of other Sami teachers were working to revise the Sami component of the Finnish national curriculum. Sami language and culture is taught to Sami students in the northern regions of Finland as part of the Finnish national curriculum. Although her English was very understandable, she was reluctant to speak because she felt her English was inadequate. She did share her email address, and with a big smile invited me to visit her primary Sami language classroom in Inari. A few weeks later I stepped into the hallway outside Helbme's classroom in what seemed to be a typical Finnish primary school in Inari. A large sign posted on her classroom door had "anarâš-luokka" (Inari language school) printed with small sticks glued onto tan paper and surrounded with zigzag designs in the colors of the Sami national flag (see Figure 2). Helbme greeted me at her door dressed in street clothes with a welcoming smile. I was dressed in my Cherokee tear dress; I would later give back to Helbme, her students, and the school for having me as their guest by giving a short presentation on Cherokee history and customs. I wanted to share my own culture as a way to build rapport and connect cultures, and this was one way of building a learning experience for all.

Helbme did not speak much to me during the time I spent observing in her classroom; she primarily spoke to her students in the Inari

3 All names used in this study are pseudonyms. The names were selected by me and are a combination of Finnish and Sami names. Some of the research participants only shared with me their Finnish names, others shared that they had both Finnish and Sami names.

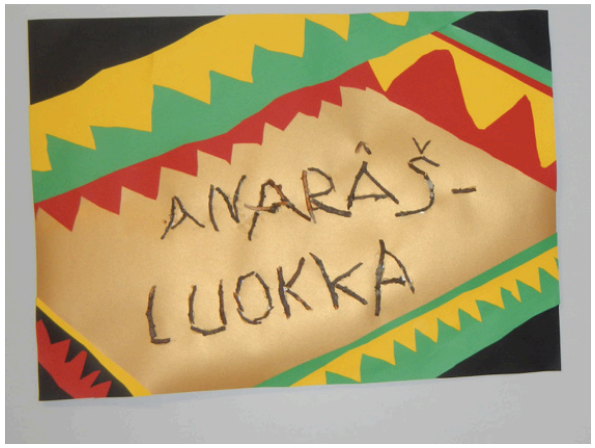

Figure 2. Sign on the door of Helbme's classroom. Photo: Laurie Eldridge

Sami language. She conversed minimally with me in English and indicated where she wanted my attention. Her classroom was filled with items such as posters, alphabets, number lines, and illustrations of the human body that either she or her students had made. I saw only a few books published in Inari Sami. Most of the supporting educational materials, such as worksheets, she had made herself.

The seven students, who ranged from kindergarteners to second graders, were working on illustrating stories they had written in the Inari language. Some were coloring and some were painting. Art materials were freely available to them on the work table. Many were in the early stages of their illustrations, but two children were far enough along that I could discern their specific ideas. One girl was creating drawings of a bear in different habitats. Another girl had drawn a traditional Sami tent with a fire. She was with her mother in traditional Sami dress, and there were dogs with them. A completed drawing on display showed foxes or wolves in their snowy habitat with stars above them.

Helbme particularly wanted me to see a poster that had been made by one of the students. Grains of rice represented the number of speakers of each of the three Sami languages spoken in the Inari village. I was impressed and also saddened that the student easily counted out the rice grains to an exact number, as this displayed the low number of fluent Inari Sami speakers. In the section of the poster for Inari speakers, one grain of rice was colored red to indicate the student who made the poster.

Figure 3. Student creating a drawing of her Sami life ways. Photo: Laurie Eldridge

Helbme then asked a second grade boy to demonstrate his ability with a back strap loom. He continued weaving a boot tie, which is a traditional Sami item used to wrap around the pant legs where they are tucked into boots to prevent the accumulation of snow. The designs woven into the bootstrap can indicate the wearer's gender, family, village and/or region. Nearby was a finished drawing in which he had estimated the length and width of the boot tie and charted out the design. He had also created a poster that illustrated the process and had pictures of completed boot ties, all labeled in Inari Sami.

Figure 4. Student weaving on a boot tie on a back strap loom in Helbme's class. Photo: Laurie Eldridge

Helbme then pointed out a large tree branch that dangled from the ceiling of her classroom. The tree branch held boot ties made by her students as well as examples made by adults. Helbme told me that she was trying to integrate nature and art into her classes, but without making each a separate subject, as that was not the Sami way. In the Sami languages there is no actual word for art but *duodji*, a North Sami word mostly used to refer to Sami handicrafts made of traditional materials by traditional Sami methods (Pietkäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011; Stevenson, 2001).

Figure 5. Boot ties made by an adult and those made by students; also braided boot hay hanging from the ceiling of Helbme's classroom. Photo: Laurie Eldridge

When it was time for me to give my presentation, Helbme had the children change into their Sami clothes. I felt so honored that the parents had sent these precious items of Sami identity to school with their children. Helbme brought her Sami dress, but she did not have time to change. I felt it was an important occasion, perhaps more than I had anticipated, beyond a cultural exchange. We all made our way to the auditorium. There I gave a short presentation to the school of 110 students with the help of the English teacher interpreting into Finnish. Helbme then had her students stand up in front of the school, and she introduced them and explained their clothing in Finnish. After we made our way back to the classroom for some photos, she told me that the Finnish students, who are taught separately from the younger Sami students, were not aware of what her students were learning or why it was important. She wanted me to know that this was definitely different from the normal school day and was perhaps an eye opening experience for the Finnish students.

Helbme's voice. Although Helbme was reluctant to speak in English, she did agree to complete a short open-ended questionnaire and email me her answers. It is from this exchange that I have drawn Helbme's voice, with her permission, and with only very slight changes in spelling and punctuation to make her writing more clearly readable.

Helbme was born in Inari, but her family moved to southern Finland when she was four. She attended primary school and high school there. She returned to *Sapmi* when she was twenty. Her experience in learning about Sami people in public school was "poor, hardly nothing." She thinks that "stereotypical information is born because of unconsciousness about Sami people." Helbme believes that "more and better information in school books" at all grade levels is needed, and "web-pages that offer material for every grade in school" are important. Also, having Sami people visit schools in person and including information about Sami people in teacher education are necessary to bring about change in educating the general population about Sami people; "…our history, heritage and traditions are important to know by pupils all over Finland." Additionally, Helbme believes the Sami Parliament of Finland, the representative body for people of Sami heritage in Finland, should be responsible for teaching about the Sami people in Finland through the development of webpages and educational materials; "if we don't do it ourselves, I think stereotypical thinking does not disappear" (personal communication, April, 18, 2013).

Kata. I met Kata on the same day at the same time that I met Helbme, which was during their lunch break at the Ministry of Education. Kata was part of the small group of Sami educators who were working on revising the Sami language component of the Finnish national curriculum. Kata was enthusiastic about my research questions, and she invited me to her Sami language classroom as well. Unfortunately, due to time, distance (her school is located in Utsjoki, near the Norwegian border), and finances, I was not able to observe her classroom. However, we did exchange emails and it was through this exchange that I interviewed her.

Kata's voice. Kata belongs to the generation of students who were sent to boarding school. She spent grades one through three in her village school where her teacher was from southern Finland and spoke only Finnish. During her fourth grade year, her father was

her teacher. He used Sami language to aid in instruction, which was quietly allowed by the school authorities. From the age of eleven until the end of high school, she attended a boarding school in Ivalo, which is located near Inari and is several hundred miles from her home village in Utsjoki. After receiving her bachelor's degree at the teacher's college in Oulu, she returned to Oulu University to study Sami languages.

Kata believes that in her experience, "Finns know far too little about Sami people and their history." Unlike Helbme, who attended school in the south, Kata was able to study with her Sami father in grade four. He seamlessly wove Sami experiences and values into lessons. Kata remembered an instance when her father asked his students to write stories, and he talked with the older students about living on the tundra, reindeer herding, fishing, hunting – issues that could occur in their stories. Later, several of the pupils from her father's classes became Sami writers in the 1960s to 1980s, which Kata believes shows "how important it is to have an Indigenous teacher who can show the kids the value of their own culture and language."

When she was at secondary school in Ivalo, there was little mention of Sami languages or life until policies changed and it became possible to have lessons in Sami. The lessons were only one hour a week, and all ability levels met at the same time after all the other compulsory lessons were finished. Kata explained:

> But it was fun. Then we could speak Sami with the teacher. He was Inari Sami, and from Inari village. We were reading, writing stories and listening to his stories and speaking our language…. He taught us also Sami music—he had made a Sami music book—I still remember the songs we used to sing. My father had taught them, too, in primary school. (personal communication, May 24, 2013)

Kata remembers quite clearly the first time she was given political advice on how to be a Sami person and not lose her Sami identity. When it was time to leave the village school, her father discussed preserving Sami identity with her and the other students who were leaving at the same time. He explained what to say when asked about their native language:

> [When] the headmaster asked us about our native tongue, we should answer her that our native tongue was Sami. If the headmaster would say that on her form there isn't any native tongue called Sami, only Finnish and Swedish, we should say that she has to write [down] the third language and make it known, that it is our native tongue. I remember we just answered, after one another, that our native tongue was Sami. She didn't demand any explanations after that. She just wrote down our announcements. I think she and my father surely had some conversations about the situations of our language in advance. (personal communication, May 24, 2013)

When asked if she thought stereotypical information was taught about Sami people, Kata replied, "I think it may be," with the stereotype that all Sami families have reindeer. "It is not only the stereotype in school books, but it occurs most stereotypically in the tourist business." Kata believes that all students need to learn basic facts about the Sami people and understand that each Sami language is an endangered language. "If a language disappears, it is a loss for the human culture—the less languages we have, the less opportunities we have to understand ourselves, as human beings, how we think, who we are." Kata went on to explain,

> I think the most important thing is to teach every pupil to see the value of human diversity. After, or besides they learn that, they can be interested in understanding the history, art and livelihoods of the Sami people. Sami languages or history should be …subjects at school for everyone. (personal communication, May 24, 2013)

Ante. I met Ante while observing for two days at the Sami Education Institute in Inari, a vocational high school and college that focuses on Sami *doudji* (handiwork), language, culture, reindeer husbandry, and other vocational programs. Additionally, the Sami Education Institute offers short courses for adults in specific Sami crafts. Again, to share my culture with the students, teachers, and administrators, I gave a short presentation on Cherokee crafts and ways of life while wearing my traditional Cherokee regalia. After the presentation, the students gathered around me and asked me questions about the creation, use, and care of the various parts of my regalia. A short course in boot making was in session, so some students were particularly interested in my traditional pucker-toe moccasins. I took them off and passed them around so they could see the work more clearly.

Ante was part of this group of students, and in addition to asking questions about my moccasins, he asked how my finger woven belt was created and if the design had any meaning. After a brief discussion on the whys and hows of Cherokee finger weaving, he offered to guide us to the studio that he shares with his father where they both create *duodji*. The studio was a short drive from the Sami Education Institute, and we met him there later in the afternoon.

The workshop was small and dim, and in the front was a small showroom with a working studio behind it. Ante's father was present, but he returned to the studio section to focus on his work after a quick greeting in North Sami. Ante gracefully and fluently answered my questions in English and agreed to an email exchange to answer the questionnaire. Astounded by the quality of the craftsmanship of the various *duodji* items, I purchased a wooden cup that both Ante and his father had worked on, as well as a traditional leather pouch with silver thread embroidery.

Ante's voice. Ante described himself as a craftsman who lives and works in his birth village, Inari. He works alongside his North Sami father in their silver and Sami crafts workshop. His mother lives in Helsinki where Ante also lived from 1995 to 2007. Ante explained:

> I was raised in a closely-knit Sami family in Inari before moving to Helsinki after finishing lower elementary school at the age of 13. In Helsinki, I was submerged in a totally different environment and my Sami roots faded into the background. In Helsinki I studied through upper elementary, gymnasium, and took computer science from Helsinki University….Now I'm working on reclaiming my father's North Sami language and cultural heritage. (personal communication, May 4, 2013)

When asked what he learned in school about the Sami people, Ante replied:

> As I recall from my years in upper elementary school in Helsinki, there was one 10 centimeter long paragraph in one textbook, which covered some basic things and a picture of Sami people in their traditional dress. It wasn't even one page long. (personal communication, May 4, 2013)

Ante believes that most stereotypical information about Sami people comes from the Finnish media and tourism industry. In his experience, nothing was taught about the Sami in public schools. To remedy this,

> Education should include at least a day about the various Sami [people] in Finland and also other countries to make sure that children understand that it [*Sapmi*] is a nation different from the Finns and their issues. It is also very important the Sami parliament be given the resources to produce the teaching material since only the Sami themselves are proficient enough in their own culture to be able to teach others about it. (personal communication, May 4, 2013)

Ante further believes that it is important to teach about the current issues of Sami people and how the Sami parliament is working to improve conditions for Sami people.

> It is also good to teach about the [Sami] cultures in general and their history and especially the assimilation policies during the 20th century. Sami people need allies, and without understanding the whys and wherefores about their struggles it is difficult to side with them. (personal communication, May 4, 2013)

Ante also communicated poignantly about his views on what else is needed in general Finnish education:

> I've witnessed a lot of racism and discrimination against not just Sami people but also against other minorities as well. So, one hugely important thing which also isn't covered in public education is discrimination and racism. I can't recall any discussion about minorities and their issues in Finland. It's like they were deliberately silenced in schools. The only mention of racism at school was at gymnasium and it was about 20th century racism in the U.S. Not that it wasn't important as well, but to completely disregard the conditions of Finland and its minorities…Finland is still lingering in the outdated ideas of nationalism and has forgotten its minorities and its own rich culture…I think it is because of this hole in public education that I have to say I feel I'm living in one of the most racist countries in Europe. (personal communication, May 4, 2013)

All three research participants wanted to participate in this study as a way of increasing visibility of Sami problems within the Finnish

education system.

Discussion

All three research participants voice the idea that there is a deep chasm in Finnish education in which Sami voices and presence have long been ignored in curricula for the general population. In addition to the lack of presence in most general education and art courses, these research participants expressed to me that the media and tourist industry promotes stereotypes of Sami people. The lack of acknowledgement of the role Sami people play in Finnish history and contemporary Finnish life is an effect of colonization in a settler-state nation. The voices of these Sami educators and artisans reveal the deep need for education that focuses on awareness-raising about Sami history, colonization, and cultures. There is a need for teaching anti-racism at all levels for all students in art education as well as other subjects.

Finland is well known for its excellent education system, however, there seems to be less focus on social justice for Sami people and other minorities. Though I did not focus on the topic of social justice in this study, it raises questions about the role of social justice in art education curricula in Finland. I encourage other researchers to study this phenomenon.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Social Action

Other researchers have found a need for education to focus on awareness-raising and critical understanding of the legacy and effects of Sami colonization (Kuokkanen, 2005). This study supports these findings and adds additional voices of Sami people to the field. Education about the Sami people is important because of their liminal and endangered position in global society (Keskitalo et al., 2011). Proper education is important both in *Sampi* as well as globally; roughly 50% to 75% of the Sami people in Finland live outside of the Sami area, with a tenth of them in Helsinki areas (Lehtola, 2011; Mäenpää, 2013). Since the majority (75%) of under-10-year-old Sami speaking students in Finland live outside the Sami domicile area, it is imperative that Finnish university teacher education programs explicitly instruct pre-service teachers in cultural knowledge needed to teach Sami students (Keskitalo et al., 2012a).

All students across the globe need to be taught a respect and appreciation of their own and others' cultures (including the Sami) as an essential and cross-sectional feature of the curriculum with the most important goal being an increased understanding and solidarity between various groups (Keskitalo et al., 2012a). Art educators around the world need to create intercultural curricula that resist the naïve and inadvertent support of colonialism that continues to reinforce unequal power relationships (Lai, 2012). Art educators are in a unique and important position to assist with global decolonization efforts, as our curricula often focus on the arts and crafts of many cultures. By creating art lessons that include the issues that Sami people face in their lives, we as art educators can help raise awareness and help advance decolonization efforts.

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The author wishes to thank the Distinguished Fulbright Award in Teaching program and her many hosts while in Finland for making this study possible.

Rumi: A Cosmopolitan Counter-Narrative to Islamophobia

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ABSTRACT

I present the poetry and life of the influential Sufi scholar Rumi in order to counter the prevalent Islamophobic images of Muslims in the media. Rumi's philosophy epitomizes a cosmopolitan sensibility that embraced cultural diversity. One of Rumi's most important legacies for our contemporary world is how his work creates bridges between Western and Islamic cultures. I suggest that the true cosmopolitan value of Rumi's poetry can be realized if Rumi's poems and philosophy are situated within their specific cultural and historical context, and are appreciated alongside the works of contemporary artists from the Islamic world who carry on Rumi's legacy. As such, the artwork of Iranian-America artist Shirin Neshat is also discussed in relation to Rumi. I argue that art educators can play an important role in combatting bigoted perceptions of Muslims by incorporating the art of significant artists from the Islamic world, both past and present – such as Rumi and Neshat –in their curriculum.

KEYWORDS: Muslims, Islamophobia, Rumi, Shirin Neshat, Cosmopolitanism

In July 2012, a fourteen-minute amateur film called the "Innocence of Muslims" was released on Youtube, depicting Prophet Muhammad as "a womanizer, a homosexual, a child molester and a greedy, bloodthirsty thug" (Kirkpatrick, 2012). This resulted in outrage and deadly clashes on the streets of Cairo, Benghazi, Tunis, Sydney, and Paris. On November 13, 2015, three teams of Daesh (ISIS or ISIL) fighters carried out a coordinated terror attack in various parts of Paris. The attackers killed and wounded hundreds of innocent individuals as a way of spreading their apocalyptic, anti-western, fundamentalist Islamic ideology (Wood, 2015). In the aftermath of this tragedy, Marine Le Pen's National Front party won two regional elections in France, giving voice to the growing anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments (Chrisafis, 2015). These events demonstrate a growing presence of far right parties in European Parliaments as a result of mounting fears of Muslims invading Europe (Allen, 2016). In the United States, Donald Trump's 2016 presidential candidacy is a testament to anti-Muslim and anti-Immigration attitudes. At the time of this writing, Trump has notoriously called for an all out ban of Muslims from the country. Judging solely by these events, there seems to be a fundamental conflict of morals and values between the West and Islam. To describe this conflict, Samuel Huntington (2011) coined the term "the clash of civilizations." According to his influential thesis in the book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (2011)*, cultural and religious differences were to become the primary source of conflict in the post-cold war world.

Fortunately, there is a counter-narrative to the theory of the clash of civilizations. Just as in the West, Islamic societies are diverse and heterogeneous. Within this diversity, there are many individuals and factions who aspire for basic human rights and democratic values. In the Sufi tradition of Islam, for example, there is also long history of inclusivity and openness to all individuals, in spite of religion, race, creed, or class. The poetry of Rumi personifies the cosmopolitan spirit of Sufism. Rumi's wisdom and philosophy still resonate deeply in the contemporary context, providing art educators with a compelling artistic figure whose life and poetry challenges prevailing negative stereotypes of Muslims.

In this essay, I use the words of Rumi to counter the notion of the "clash of civilizations." I argue that Rumi's life and poetry embodied a cosmopolitan philosophy, which views humans of different cultures as belonging to the same community in spite of differing values, beliefs, politics, cultures, and religions. This open and inclusive view of humanity, which has historical roots in both Eastern and Western philosophy, provides a much needed bridge among cultures. Art educators can play a key role in countering Islamophobic views by engaging in cosmopolitan conversations with great artists from the Islamic world. There is much to be learned from the unique cultural heritage and universal humanity of artists like Rumi.

Islamophobia in Western Media

Let us begin with a simple exercise. Write the word "Muslim" on a blank sheet of paper and draw a circle around it. Then begin to mind map any words you associate with this word. According to Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008), most Americans who have been asked to do this exercise associate "Muslim" with violence and oppression using terms such as Osama bin Laden, 9/11, suicide bombers, jihad, veiling, and the Middle East. The authors raise the astute question: why, for so many Americans, has "Islam become synonymous with the Middle East, Muslim men with violence, and Muslim women with oppression?" (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008, p. 4). Such pervasive stereotypes have deep historical roots. In his seminal work on orientalism, Said (2003) traced the roots of modern representations

of the East to the early nineteenth century, which saw a proliferation of interest among Western thinkers, politicians, and artists in the vast regions that extended from China to the Mediterranean. Said (2003) posited that even the most sympathetic and romantic depictions of the East were always inextricably linked to the imperialist ambitions of Western colonial powers. In art and literature, this has led to gross misrepresentations that conflated cultures and places and reduced people from diverse regions into a few essential qualities.

In many ways, this fixed overgeneralization of diverse cultures and peoples has taken a sinister turn since the events of September 11th. The menacing images of fundamentalist terrorists ardently determined to destroy the civilized world are common within the popular imagination. On any given day, one can flip on the television and hear about ambitions of Daesh to install an Islamic caliphate, or watch fictional television shows such as *Homeland* and *24* about a terrorist plot being disrupted by the heroics of some protagonist. Yet, one is hard-pressed to find any portrayals of the considerable divergence of attitudes, political views, and cultural backgrounds of Muslims around the world. Equally rare are positive images of well-known Muslims representing their own heritage and politics in the popular discourse. This lack of representation, along with harrowing images of senseless violence, are two key factors responsible for exasperating racist stereotypes of Muslims, and also many non-Muslims who appear to be of Middle-Eastern descent.

Definition of Islamophobia

The Runnymede Trust (1997), a British think-tank founded to promote racial equality, produced an influential report titled "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All" in order to address growing concern over the exclusion and discrimination against Muslims in the United Kingdom. This document first brought the term Islamophobia into common usage. The pressing question has been raised as to whether this term represents a phenomenon distinct from other forms of xenophobia, and researchers have identified many similarities among Islamophobic, racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigration attitudes (Allen, 2010; Helbling, 2010, 2012). Yet, the complex and at times turbulent history of interactions between the West and Islamic world and the political conflicts that dominate the news and ignite the popular imagination with images of violent, radical Muslims warrant a unique framework for examination.

According to the Runnymede Trust (1997), Islamophobic attitudes can be characterized with eight "closed" viewpoints of Islam, which include viewing Islam as a monolithic bloc, inferior to the West, violent, aggressive, and antagonistic to Western values. This "closed" perception of Islam fails to account for many basic facts. For one, Islam is not reducible to any particular culture, language, or politics. Muslims live all over the world—in South and East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North America—and have vastly differing views on religion, politics, and ethics, depending on where they live. Moreover, within Islam, there are traditions that are inclusive and open to cultural and religious diversity. Rumi is one example of a great Muslim teacher, poet and philosopher.

The Poetry of Rumi

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim
Not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen
Not any religion or cultural system.
I am not from the East or the West
Not out of the ocean, or up from the ground
Not natural or ethereal
Not composed of elements at all
I do not exist.
I am not an entity in this world or the next
Did not descend from Adam or Eve
or any origin story.
My place is the placeless
A trace of the traceless
Neither body nor soul
I belong to the beloved
have seen the two worlds as one
and that one called to, and known
first, last, outer, inner
only that breath breathing human being. (Rumi, 1997, p. 32)

These are the words of thirteenth-century Persian poet Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi, or simply as he is known to much of the world, Rumi. Rumi was born into a family of theologians, and as such he had been schooled in the knowledge of his day at a time when the Islamic world was flourishing in the fields of physics, mathematics, astronomy, and theology. At the time of his father's death—at the age of twenty-five—he took over the role of Maulvi (spiritual master) at his father's school, and went on to live an ordinary life of a religious scholar: teaching, meditating, delivering sermons, and helping the poor. The ordinary was transformed into the extraordinary upon a chance encounter with Shams of Tabriz, a beggar in rags who became Rumi's friend and spiritual guide. The two would spend tireless nights talking and discussing matters of the soul. Of those nights, Rumi wrote:

When I am with you, we stay up all night.
When you're not here, I can't go to sleep.
Praise God for these two insomnias.
And the difference between them. (Rumi, 1997, p. 106)

On one such night, Shams disappeared without a warning, never to be seen again. Rumi was devastated and began searching everywhere for his kindred spirit and master. The futility of his search led him to the realization of the ultimate union.

The minute I heard my first love story
I started looking for you, not knowing
how blind that was.
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.
They're in each other all along.(Rumi, 1997, p. 106)

Rumi was a poet of the heart, and love was at the core of his poetry. Although this love was often expressed towards Shams of Tabriz, this was not meant as an expression of a romantic relationship. Rather, Rumi viewed this love as the force that binds the universe, in a similar vein that physicists talk about the gravity, magnetism, and the strong and weak forces. For Rumi, all the various forms of love, from the love one has for one's children to the love between teacher and disciple, were connections to the divine. Thus, in Rumi's poetry one encounters an Islamic scholar who embraced the sensuous beauty that is universal to all humans.

If you want what the visible reality can give, you're an employee.
If you want the unseen world, you're not living your truth.
Both wishes are foolish,
but you'll be forgiven forgetting, what you really want is love's confusing
joy. (Rumi, 1997, p. 92)

It is not only what Rumi wrote that was significant, but also how he composed his poems. Many of Rumi's poems were not written down by him, but were in fact spoken while he engaged in ecstatic dancing as he listened to music. Often, he would simply take hold of a column and spin in circles, while his students noted the words that streamed out of his mouth. Rumi's spontaneous outbursts of singing and dancing in crowded markets and on empty sidewalks became more frequent and fervent after his encounter with and the subsequent departure of Shams. His dance was an outward expression of a deep spiritual longing. Rumi's dance also became the inspiration for the iconic Whirling Dervishes, who still perform their ritualistic dance to audiences all over the world. Every gesture of the Dervishes' dance is now stylized and has symbolic and spiritual meaning. The Dervishes' dance is an act of aligning the corporeal with the movements of the earth, sun, moon, galaxies, specs of dust, cells in body, and atoms that make up matter. They hold one hand open and point at the sky, receiving God's benevolence, while the other arm is directed to the ground, because one must always be rooted in the earth.

Watch the dust grains moving
In the light near the window.
Their dance is our dance.
We rarely hear the inward music,
But we're all dancing to it nevertheless. (Rumi, 1997, p. 106)
In your light, I learn how to love
In your beauty, how to make poems.
You dance inside my chest,
Where no one sees you,
But sometimes I do,
And that sight becomes this art. (Rumi, 1997, p. 122)

Through creative raptures, Rumi intuited a sense of beauty and oneness with the universe. The residue of this process was his poems, which embody a deep wisdom and love. Yet these poems can also make a profound impression on the reader, provoking thought and reflection about one's own inner being. As such, writing poetry in this manner was for Rumi a means of generating and deepening knowledge and understanding. This knowledge is not merely an abstraction of facts and concepts, but it is rather always intertwined with one's being and life. For Rumi, poetry was ultimately the process by which one's life is lived.

Rumi's Life as a Cosmopolitan

Rumi was born in September 1207 in the eastern edges of the Persian Empire near the modern day city of Balkh, Afghanistan, which was inhabited by Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews during his lifetime (Lewis, 2003). Rumi's father, Baha al-Din Valad, was a prominent member of the local religious community as a Quran scholar, teacher, and Sufi mystic. When Rumi was a child, his family relocated from his birthplace in part due to the advancements of Genghis Khan's Mongolian army. At first, his family settled in the city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan, which was a major hub on the Silk Road. This ancient trade route connected merchants and travelers from China to the Mediterranean. A few years later, the family moved again, heading for a pilgrimage towards Mecca and eventually settling in the city of Konya, Turkey (Lewis, 2003). Along this journey, Rumi encountered the rich cultural mosaic of an ancient land.

The decision of Rumi's family to settle in the western regions of

Anatolia may have been influenced by the possibility of living in a cosmopolitan center that had recently become Islamicized. Living in Konya offered Baha al-Din, and later Rumi, the prospect of reaching a wide and diverse audience to teach "the rites, beliefs and theology of Islam" (Lewis, 2003, p. 12). The population of this area had historically been mostly Greek, but in the eleventh century it was conquered by Seljuk Turks and populated by Turkmen tribesmen and Turkish Muslims. Furthermore, many people from Persia and Central Asia fleeing Genghis Khans' encroachment had found their home in Konya. During the Seljuk era, neighborhoods in major cities tended to segregate along religious lines, "with Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian and Muslim quarters, and the Muslim population further tended to congregate along sectarian lines" (p. 284). Although a Sunni Muslim, Rumi maintained cordial relations not only with Muslims from various schools, but also with the diverse population of thirteenth century Konya. In his life, Rumi was a cosmopolitan who had been exposed to different cultures and belief systems by travelling to different parts of the world, and living in a multicultural urban centre. Rumi's openness to different cultures was inspired by Sufi philosophy, which views all humans as belonging to one human community regardless of race, culture, class, or creed.

Sufism as a Cosmopolitan Philosophy

Rumi's cosmopolitanism was rooted in the context in which he lived and the basic beliefs and assumptions he held as a Muslim. Rumi's worldview derived from the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic philosophy. Rumi was also a Sufi, and his life's work was deeply inspired by other mystic poets and teachers that preceded him, including Attar, Sanai, and his father Baha al-Din. Sufism is a mystical subset of Islam, which had its beginning shortly after Mohammad's death. However, many of the central tenants of Sufism can be traced to traditions that pre-date Islam, and Sufism shares common tendencies with other mystical traditions (Shah, 1968). A key philosophical belief of Sufis is that the individual has a direct connection with the divine. A common literary trope utilized by Sufi writers is to refer to various forms of human love as allegorical to the love of the divine.

As a Sufi, Rumi also believed that the essence of divine love was not limited to any social class, race, or religion. In his poem, Rumi spoke of his essence as being that of a "breath breathing human being," and this basic humanism permeates his poetry and teaching, in which one encounters numerous stories and folktales from religions and cultures other than his own. Rumi often told stories about Moses, Solomon, and Jesus, and expounded on these tales to draw out deeper philosophical ideas. Equally common were stories about the delight of being drunk on wine or sexual pleasures, which, in spite of being blasphemous to orthodox Muslims, were used by Rumi as allegorical devices to grab the attention of common people to reveal deeper spiritual meanings. Rumi told these stories in part to appeal to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious populace of Konya.

During his lifetime, Rumi's sermons grew in popularity and were attended by peoples of all faiths. Among his disciples were Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. Rumi spoke several languages to communicate with the local populace. He was a master of his mother tongue, Farsi, and as a Muslim scholar, he had also acquired expertise in both colloquial and classical Arabic. As a result of living in Konya, Rumi had learned some colloquial Turkish and Greek, which he incorporated in his sermons (Lewis, 2003). Rumi's openness to various cultures, languages, and religions was also reflected in the reaction to his death in 1273, which resulted in a funeral that was attended by Muslims, Christians, Jews, Greeks, Arabs, and Persians mourning his passing (Wines, 2004).

Rumi's openness to the diversity of cultures and religions is also a core tenant of Sufism. As Shah (1968) pointed out:

> The connection between the ancient practical philosophies and the present ones is seen to have been based upon the higher-level unity of knowledge, not upon appearances. This explains why the Muslim Rumi has Christian, Zoroastrian and other disciples; why the great Sufi 'invisible teacher' Khidr is said to be a Jew; why the Mogul Prince Dara Shikoh identified Sufi teachings in the Hindu Vedas, yet himself remained a member of the Qadiri Order; how Pythagoras and Solomon can be said to be Sufi teachers. (p. 124)

As a Sufi, Rumi understood that there are many paths to the divine, and all religions and doctrines were external manifestations of a deeper knowledge that binds all sentient beings. As Rumi said, his origin was "the placeless," and he was not confined to any particular "religion or cultural system" (Rumi, 1997, p. 32). However, Rumi's poetry and teaching were simultaneously infused with symbols and allegories from the specific cultures and religions common to the place and time in which he lived. As a teacher, Rumi understood the sensibilities of his local audience, and he used various techniques such as poetry, jokes, tales, whirling, and dancing to allow his disciples to enter into a knowledge that transcends race or creed. Rumi's teachings were firmly rooted in his local milieu, in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious city of Konya. As such, Rumi's teachings are in many ways inseparable from the local context for which they were intended. However, the core of these teachings strived for a form of knowledge that

transcends place and time. Rumi's poems are of their place and time; simultaneously they are "placeless" and "timeless." In his life, Rumi embodied a cosmopolitan sensibility of openness to dialogue with various cultures. In a similar spirit to cosmopolitan thinkers that came after him (Appiah, 2006; Kant, 1992; Nussbaum, 1997), Rumi's cosmopolitanism was rooted in his local context, while affirming a universal sense of moral obligation to all human beings.

The Legacy of Rumi in the Contemporary World

Today, Rumi is a global phenomenon. In Turkey, his legacy has been carried on by his followers after his death, along with the foundation of the Mevlevi Order. The ceremonial dance of the Whirling Dervish is performed by this order today. Further, Rumi's mausoleum in Konya is among Turkey's major attractions, drawing in thousands of tourists from all over the world. In Iran, there has been a proliferation of scholarship about the mystic's life and poetry in the last fifty years, and his major work, the Masnavi, is often colloquially referred to as the Persian Bible. Rumi is also an inspiration to a generation of Iranian artists, including the classical musicians Shahram and Hafiz Nazeri, who reinterpret Rumi's lyrical poems through their compositions. Similarly, Rumi's poems are incorporated in the Qawwali music of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, in the work of renowned artists such as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, who reanimates his words in Urdu and Punjabi. In the spirit of Rumi, these artists bring to life his cosmopolitan sentiments by performing to audiences all over the world.

In the West, Rumi's fame has grown considerably in recent decades. In 1997, the Christian Science Monitor declared Rumi the best-selling poet in America (Marks, 1997). Rumi's inspiration can also be felt in the works of several contemporary artists in various domains. For instance, in 1998, New York fashion designer Donna Karan released her spring line with musical interpretations of Rumi's poems by Deepak Chopra playing in the background. In the same year, Philip Glass and Robert Wilson (1998) released "Monsters of Grace," which is a multimedia chamber opera with libretto from the works of Rumi. This work draws on the translations of American poet Coleman Barks (1997), who has made Rumi's words accessible to anglophone audiences by re-interpreting them in free verse. Barks often recounts an encounter with friend and fellow poet Robert Bly who handed him several scholarly English translations of Rumi's work and asked him to release the poems from their scholarly cage (Barks, 1997). Barks'accessible re-interpretation of Rumi is one important factor in the widespread appeal of Rumi in America today. Furthermore, this widespread appeal to audiences in both the East and West has meant that a key legacy of Rumi in our contemporary world is in creating bridges among cultures. It is for this reason that on the 800th anniversary of Rumi's birth, UNESCO named 2007 the year of Rumi (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2007).

Lost in Translation

Rumi's poetry embodies a cosmopolitan spirit that transcends cultural and religious boundaries in our contemporary world. However, several authors have raised concern over the manner in which anglophone readers have adopted his poems. One source of contention simply lies in the difficulty of translating the poems into English. Rumi had a masterful command of classical Persian, and he artfully manipulated the rhyme, meter, syntax, and grammatical structures of the language to convey tone, mood, and meaning. Moreover, his poems are rich with allegories and symbols that are largely foreign to readers who are not acquainted with his culture. Most anglophone readers, however, encounter Rumi through the free verse translation of Coleman Barks, who neither speaks nor reads Farsi. Barks relied on existing scholarly translations to create his renditions. A comparative analysis of Barks' translations and the earlier scholarly versions revealed that while the scholarly versions were mostly accurate but at times too literal, in Barks' translations, many of the references to Islamic ideas were omitted for the sake of clarity and readability (Thornton, 2015). For El-Zien (2000), a more serious concern is the Western commercial adoption of Rumis' work. El-Zien (2000) stated,

> The popular...perception of Rumi's Sufi tradition in the United States does not capture the perennial philosophy to which Rumi belongs. Instead, it brings a form of vague spirituality entangled in relativity and temporality. Rumi's verse is seen as an enjoyable spiritual product to be consumed in order that one may relax and become more productive after listening to it. (p. 83)

El-Zien coined the term "New Sufism," in reference to the New Age movement, to describe what he deemed to be a purely commercial venture. To make his case, El-Zien examined four key tenants in Sufi philosophy, including the relation of human love to divine love, both in scholarly and popular translations. He concluded that in all cases, the "New Sufi" approach strips these concepts from their Islamic roots. Furlanetto (2013) argued that many of the contemporary popular adaptations of Rumi fail to realize the cosmopolitan potential

of Rumi, instead falling into the representational traps of orientalism. In Said's (2003) analysis, many of the representations of the "Orient" were produced in the West for Western consumption, failing to account for the particularities of the cultures they represented. Likewise, Furlanetto (2013) argued that a discussion of the historical specificity and philosophical traditions to which Rumi belonged are largely absent in popular translations.

These critiques of the translation of Rumi for Western audiences reveal some of the underlying challenges in developing a cosmopolitan outlook in the contemporary world. On the one hand, Rumi's poetry aspires towards a universal ideal that is embracive of cultural and religious differences. As such, his poetry can play a vital role in building bridges among people all over the world. Translations that make Rumi's poetry accessible to wide audiences are vital for creating bridges. However, the act of translating the writings of an ancient Muslim thinker for Western audiences is not an innocent nor neutral endeavour. Translators make crucial choices in terms of what they include and omit, and there is evidence that significant aspects of Rumi's Islamic heritage have been omitted to appease a wider readership. The act of translating a Muslim poet is inexorably tied to questions of representation and appropriation. In the contemporary milieu, it is vital to draw links among cultures based on our similarities and shared humanity. Equally important is the need to be respectful of differences and attend to the specificities of other cultures. This paradox calls for a more nuanced and critical understanding of cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism

In a general sense, cosmopolitanism refers to the belief that all humans belong to a single community, and have a shared morality in spite of differing values, beliefs, politics, and religions. This term derives from the Greek "kosmos," meaning world, universe, or cosmos, and "polis," or citizen; thus, a cosmopolitan can be understood as "a citizen of the world." This notion dates back to the fourth century BC, and the philosophical tradition of the Cynics. For the Cynics, being a citizen of the world meant rejecting allegiance to a specific city or state. This view was characterized as a negative formulation of cosmopolitanism that rejects local allegiances and obligations (Kleingeld, 2012). The Stoics later took up this term in the third century BC, developing a more positive conception differing from that of the Cynics. For the Stoics, cosmopolitanism meant affirmation of moral obligation toward all people regardless of origins (Kleingeld, 2012). The Stoics affirmed local affiliation, believing that every citizen simultaneously belongs to their local community and to humanity at large (Nussbaum, 1997). In this formulation, a world citizen is a member of a single moral community, and at the same time, a citizen of a particular city or state. In the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant elaborated on the Stoic's moral theory of cosmopolitanism by developing a legal, political, and economic framework for world citizenship. In the Perpetual Peace, Kant (1992) proposed a model for peace amongst nations, which was rooted in the cosmopolitan principle of moral obligation to humanity. Kant regarded cosmopolitanism as an attitude of being open and morally concerned about all human beings, in spite of culture or creed, as members of a global community. For Kant and the Stoics, cosmopolitanism necessitated moral commitment to local states and nations, as well as the global community. For instance, in today's world, a sense of moral commitment means supporting all victims of terrorism, including refugees fleeing attacks in Syria and Iraq. Rather than viewing refugees with fear and suspicion because they are Muslim, a cosmopolitan would recognize the basic humanity of these individuals in spite of the differences in their cultures, religions, and belief systems.

Rootless and Rooted Cosmopolitanism

Today there is a discrepancy in how cosmopolitanism is understood. Contemporary theories of cosmopolitanism can be divided in two categories: one derived from the Cynics' expression of extreme individualism, and the other from the Stoic and Kantian ideals of moral commitment to all humans (Lettevall, 2008). The former represents a kind of rootless cosmopolitanism where the individual rejects any connections to his or her culture or history. The latter is a form of cosmopolitanism in which an individual's connections to his or her roots are affirmed, and differences among cultures and individuals are considered to be an integral part of global citizenship. The question of how we can respect our moral obligation to all humans while affirming our differences is particularly pertinent in the twenty-first century, given that in our interconnected world, fundamental differences exist among cultures, religions, and individuals. In this context, it is vital to resist rootless forms of cosmopolitanism that deny the connection of the individual to culture, politics, or history. The antidote to the fallacy of "the clash of civilizations" is not extreme individualism, but rather an understanding of cosmopolitanism that is rooted in the local, open to difference, and committed to moral obligations to all human beings. It is inevitable within the global context that univer-

sal moral concerns will clash with local customs, beliefs, and values. Choosing between local affiliations and global humanitarian obligations can be a complex matter. As a response to this complexity, Appiah (2006) suggested a theory of cosmopolitanism based on the model of a conversation. He explained,

> there are some values that are, and should be, universal, just as there are lots of values that are, and must be, local. We can't hope to reach a final consensus on how to rank and order such values. (p. 31)

For Appiah (2006), conversations among people from different ways of life can enlighten and inform, and in some instances these conversations can be vexing. A cosmopolitan understands that people are different, and "there is much to learn from our difference" (p. 19). In our contemporary milieu, encountering different cultures, worldviews, and ways of life is inevitable. One does not need to be a world traveler to encounter different cultures. In most North American cities, communities from all over the world co-exist. We encounter other cultures through our television and computer screens, through movies and popular culture. It is also possible to encounter different cultures through art, music, and poetry. There exists no culture on the planet that does not have an artistic tradition. There is much that can be learned by engaging in cosmopolitan conversations through art. Therefore, educators can provide powerful counter-narratives to the negative images of Muslims by looking at Muslim artists, musicians, and poets who also embraced the cosmopolitan ideal of belonging to the human community.

Contemporary Reinterpretation of Rumi by Shirin Neshat

Similar to other Sufi masters and poets before and after him, Rumi was a man of "timelessness" and "placelessness," who brought his knowledge and experiences "into operation within the culture, the country, the climate in which he" lived (Shah, 1968). However, the cultures, nations, and political atmospheres of the places that Rumi lived in Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey have inexorably changed since Rumi's time. Rumi's world was in many ways dissimilar to the interconnected, globalized world we live in today. Fortunately, neither Rumi nor his cultural heritage are merely relics of a distant past. Rumi's poems continue to inspire contemporary artists in the Middle East, South Asia, and beyond. These artists are also members of the global community, which today is connected through the intricate webs of emails, websites, mobile devices, and economic and geopolitical landscapes. Certain artists who share a cultural heritage with Rumi provide powerful and pertinent reinterpretations of his poetry within the contemporary milieu. These artists offer valuable insights for our cosmopolitan conversation by connecting Rumi's cultural roots to the realities of our contemporary world.

The Iranian-American artist Shirin Neshat is a salient example of a cosmopolitan who treads between two cultures. Through her photography, films, and videos, Neshat explores themes of gender, identity, and her complex relationship with her homeland, which she was forced to leave due to the Islamic revolution. In her renowned photographic series *Women of Allah* (1993-1997), for example, Neshat explores femininity in relation to Islamic fundamentalism and the military in Iran. In *Turbulent* (1998), Neshat draws on the poetry of Rumi to deliver a critique of the Islamic Republic's prohibitions on public performances by female artists. In this two-screen video installation, the viewer encounters two singers. The male singer on the left screen is Shoja Azari, an Iranian-American filmmaker and visual artist, and the female singer on the right is Sussan Deyhim, an Iranian-American Sufi singer, performance artist, and human rights activist. The theatre on the left is occupied by a handful of men, wearing the same formal white shirts; the theatre on the right is empty. At first, the male singer steps onto the stage to applause, and delivers a heart-rending performance of one of Rumi's "Poems of Passion." This song is a recording of the famed Iranian classical singer Shahram Nazeri. While the man is singing, we can see the silhouette of the female singer facing the empty theatre on the left. Once the male singer is finished and receives his applause, the muffled voice of the female singer starts to take over, and the camera on the left begins rotating to reveal her face. The recording was done by Deyhim, who delivers a jarring, passionate, and enthralling vocal performance that defies the conventions of classical Persian music. For Neshat, Deyhim "subverts every rule of traditional music and pioneers a style of her own, while the male singer remains with the perimeter of convention" (Neshat, Danto, & Abramovic, p. 45).

In Neshat's articulation, the female singer is not a passive victim of Islamic patriarchy. She is a creative force that contributes to her culture by transgressing its conventions and boundaries. On the one hand, Neshat is deeply rooted in the philosophy, music, and poetry of her culture. On the other hand, she challenges the cultural conventions that relegate the creative expression of women to the realm of the private. She does this by using poetry. About poetry, Neshat said:

> Whatever I do is deeply rooted in the poetic language that I really believe is inherent in Iranian blood. When you look back at Iranian history, particularly modern history, an

> atrocious history, a very dark history, Iranian people seem to have embraced a language of poetry as the most subversive way to cope and deal with the world that they're living with. It's the only place where I could really say everything beyond the lines. (Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012)

Poetry has indeed been a powerful weapon for Iranians to challenge oppressive governments that silence political dissent. Neshat makes extensive use of poetry in her repertoire. This includes the poetry of modern Iranian feminists such as Forough Farrokhzad as well as the great Sufi masters such as Rumi, Hafez, and Omar Khayam. For *Turbulent*, Neshat used the words of Rumi to send a subversive message:

> How long can I lament with this depressed heart and soul
> How long can I remain a sad autumn ever since my grief has shed my leaves
> The entire space of my soul is burning in agony
> I believe in love.
> I swear by love.
> Believe me my love
> How long like a prisoner of grief can I beg for mercy
> You know I'm not a piece of rock or steel
> but hearing my story even water will become as tense as a stone
> If I can only recount the story of my life
> right out of my body
> flames will grow
> (Rumi, 2002, p. 18)

This poem, in its original context, was a lament by Rumi about his separation from his master, Shams of Tabriz, and also his separation from god. In the context of Neshat's work, the poem takes on new layers of meaning. Phrases like "depressed heart and soul," "prisoner of grief," and "right out of my body flames will grow" take on a revolutionary undertone. In this rendition, Rumi's words are a rallying cry to fight against a repressive, patriarchal regime that compromises the rights of women. This critique, however, is not an outright rejection of Islamic culture and values. On the contrary, it embraces the rich heritage of Sufi poetry to give voice to the significant contributions of women in this culture. In this sense, Neshat manages to capture the nuances, contradictions, and complexities of Muslim identity in the contemporary world. Marina Abramovic summed this up eloquently in a letter to Neshat:

> While you consciously and consistently resist stereotypical representations of Iran and Islam, I have never thought of your work as dogmatic or exclusive. Rather, it acknowledges the full complexity of Muslim identity, specifically as perceived through female eyes, and the full richness of Persian culture. (Neshat, Dento, & Abramovic, 2010, p. 7)

Contemporary artists such as Shirin Neshat have a vital role to play in cross-cultural cosmopolitan dialogue. Neshat situates her cultural heritage within the contemporary world, and acknowledges the complex forces that shape Muslim identity. Moreover, Neshat's work offers a blatant challenge to Islamophobia, which sees Muslims as a monolithic bloc opposed to Western values. Islamic societies, like all societies, are divergent and multifaceted. Within these cultures, there are individuals and traditions fighting for democracy, justice, and human rights. Neshat's work illustrates that universal human values are not categorically opposed to Islamic value, but rather ingrained in Islamic cultures. As such, this artwork represents the cosmopolitan spirit that is rooted in the realities and complexities of the local, while aspiring for the universal value of creative freedom in artistic expression.

Cosmopolitanism in Art Education

Art educators can play a vital role in countering Islamophobia by enabling students to engage with conversations about artists and thinkers on cosmopolitan facets of the Islamic world. Rumi is simply one great artist and thinker among countless others in its rich history, from whom art educators can draw inspiration. In academia, many of the philosophical legacies and contemporary debates trace their roots to Western thought: post-structuralists responding to the structuralists who were influenced by Marx and Nietzsche, who were responding to Kant and Hegel, who drew inspiration from Plato and Aristotle. It is a lost opportunity if the intellectual legacies of cultures outside of this Western discourse are excluded. Likewise, in art classrooms, the history of art is understood in a fairly linear fashion: pop art came after abstract expression, which came after Surrealism, Cubism, Impressionism, Romanticism, Baroque, the Renaissance, and so on. Where does this leave Persian miniature paintings, Japanese woodblock prints, African masks, and the totem poles of First Nations peoples? How do we take seriously the immense artistic legacy of cultures outside this canon, without trivializing them or sanctioning them to the distant realm of the exotic other?

When engaging in cosmopolitan conversations with different cultures, it is vital to avoid a rootless approach to cosmopolitanism that detaches the individual artist from his or her cultural heritage and the specificity of the context where the art was produced. Superficial treatment of an artist's repertoire that does not account for historical context can be harmful in enforcing a false dichotomy between 'Western' and 'Other.' I recall, for example, my own high school art

history textbook, which included entire chapters on Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism. There was also one chapter titled *Non-Western art and cultural influences*, which lumped together various unrelated artistic forms from Asia, Africa, and South America (Brommer, 1996). All artistic traditions have historical roots and local idiosyncrasies, which ought not be diminished. Cosmopolitan conversations in art education need to account for this specificity. When discussing Rumi, for instance, it is vital to consider the religious, cultural, and historic context in which they were created. Rumi's cultural roots inspired his creations, and learning about his cultural context enriches any reading of his poems. In fact, one of the great values of encountering art from other cultures is that works of art provide a window into different beliefs, values, and ways of life. It is also vital for us to be cognizant that cultures change and evolve over time; as such, the understanding of any artistic tradition ought to account for contemporary beliefs, values, and ways of life as well. The potential of Rumi's poetry to engender cosmopolitan conversations between the West and Muslim culture will only be fully realized if Rumi's words are rooted within his cultural context on the one hand, relating his cultural legacy to the contemporary world on the other.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that Rumi offers a cosmopolitan counter-narrative to the media's Islamophobic representations of Muslims as a monolithic bloc opposed to Western values. In his life and poetry, Rumi embodied a cosmopolitan sensibility that was simultaneously rooted in the particularities of its time and place, and appealed to our shared humanity. However, the translations of Rumi from the original Persian to popular English versions have tended to uproot Rumi from his historical and cultural roots in order to appeal to the sensibilities of the Western market. The accessibility of these translations has made Rumi a well-known literary figure in America; as such, they have played a tremendously important role in building bridges between the West and Islamic culture. However, I have also cautioned that the cosmopolitan potential of Rumi's poetry will not be fully realized if historical context and cultural specificity are absent from exploration and discussion. This is because, as Appiah (2006) pointed out, cosmopolitanism is not a final solution to a problem that must be solved, but rather an ongoing cross-cultural conversation that acknowledges cultural difference and specificity. We stand to learn a great deal about our common humanity from our differences.

In order to situate Rumi's poetry and teaching within his cultural heritage, I suggested a strategy of reading his poetry alongside the reinterpretations of contemporary artists from the Islamic world. Particularly, I discussed the artwork of Shirin Neshat because her work explores the intricacies, contradictions, and complexities of Muslim identity in the contemporary world. Neshat's body of work is simultaneously critical of Islamic fundamentalism and rooted in the rich traditions of Persian culture that have been shaped by Islamic doctrine since the seventh century. As such, Neshat's translation of Rumi epitomizes a cosmopolitan spirit that is rooted in the specific culture of contemporary Iran, and at the same time, strives for universal human values of freedom, democracy, and gender equality. Rumi and Neshat are two examples among many great Muslim artists that art educators can use in their classrooms to counter narrow perceptions of Muslims. Knowledge about their artistic forms and expressions can shed some light on the complexities, heterogeneity, and basic humanity of Islamic cultures. The knowledge and teaching about cosmopolitan Muslim artists would be an antidote to fear, bigotry, and terrorism that is widespread in Western media and culture.

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Media Resistance and Resiliency Revealed in Contemporary Native Art: Implications for Art Educators

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ABSTRACT

Historic and contemporary media misrepresentations of Native American people in visual/popular culture—such as Edward Curtis's photographs, Wild West Shows, museum exhibits, Boy Scout and school enactments, art, literature, toys, cartoons, and sports mascots—have been linked with cultural narratives that represent and reinforce the colonization and forced assimilation of the indigenous North American people. Some contemporary Native artists are challenging these dominant historical narratives by expressing their personal, communal, or cultural values and aesthetics to engage viewers in counter-storytelling as a form of resiliency.

The purpose of this article is to examine media representations and contemporary Native art using historical contexts and Indigenous aesthetics and worldviews. The paper is framed by the scholarship of contemporary Native art educators, art historians, art critics, artists, and their allies, starting with recommendations by art educators who advocate teaching about contemporary Native art to improve the ways Native people are perceived and treated in contemporary contexts. Conceptual examples are provided throughout the article to illustrate the concepts of image/narratives (Pauly, 2003), counter-storytelling, counter-image/storytelling, Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005), and Indigenous aesthetics. Next, traditional image/narratives historically used as tools of oppression are juxtaposed with works by artists who challenge traditional hegemonic narratives through counter-image/storytelling, humor, design qualities, and reinterpretations of historically meaningful Indigenous art forms. Finally, recommendations are provided for art curriculum development and teaching approaches advocated by Native American authors from the Museum of Contemporary Native Art (MoCNA), the Museum of the American Indian, and the Indian Mascot and Logo Task Force.

Historic and contemporary media misrepresentations of Native North American people in visual/popular culture—such as Edward Curtis's photographs, Wild West Shows, exhibits in museums, Boy Scout and school enactments, art, literature, toys, cartoons, and "Indian" sports mascots—have been linked with culture narratives and discourses of meaning and power that have been used to justify colonization, aggression, oppression, and assimilation of Native American people. Increasingly, contemporary Native American artists are actively critiquing and resisting these narratives and discourses – challenging them through production of artwork using their own personal, communal, or cultural values and aesthetics. This *counter-storytelling* as a form of cultural resiliency allows artists to "brush history against the grain" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 257); that is, to affirm their own histories and to (re)construct and dignify "the cultural experiences that make up the tissue, texture, and history of their daily lives" (Giroux, 2003, p. 51).

Drawing from the scholarship of contemporary Native American art educators, art historians, art critics, artists and their allies, and critical pedagogy frameworks (Tavin, 2003), this article articulates ways to examine media representations in contemporary Native art using historical contexts and Indigenous aesthetics and worldviews. The terms "Native" and "Indigenous" are used throughout this paper in addition to the terms "American" and "Indian," which reflect a colonial legacy with regard to people indigenous to North America. I have included tribal affiliations when authors self-identify. This paper offers a lens through which teachers can engage with their students in the study of contemporary artwork, stories, and aesthetics as described by Native American artists or as interpreted by Indigenous art historians or museum curators. These artworks interrupt traditional colonial narratives though re-storying/counterstorytelling methods using images and narratives to foreground Indigenous epistemologies and memory. This paper contributes to the literature and efforts by Native people to advance their own sovereignty, identity, and well-being, as advocated by scholars such as Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013).

This article begins with recommendations by art educators who advocate teaching about contemporary Native art to improve the ways Native people are perceived and treated in contemporary contexts. Conceptual tools including the use of image/narratives (Pauly, 2003), counter-storytelling, counter-image/storytelling, Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005; Grande, 2004; Writer, 2008), and Indigenous aesthetics are described. Next, examples of image/narratives historically used by the dominant culture as a form of oppression are paired with works by artists who challenge historical memory by using counter-image/storytelling, humor, design qualities, and re-appropriating historical artforms to open space for dialogue that includes their own points of view. Finally, practical suggestions and recommendations are offered for art curriculum development and arts-based education, drawn from sources such as the Museum of Contemporary Native Art (MoCNA) in Santa Fe, the

Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and the Indian Mascot and Logo Task Force in Wisconsin.

The Need to Teach About Contemporary Native Art in Art Education

Art education scholars (Ballengee-Morris, 2008; Bequette, 2005, 2009; Delacruz, 2003; Eldridge, 2008; and Stuhr, 1991, 1995, 2003) have emphasized the need for art educators to teach about the art of contemporary Native artists, issues, indigenous aesthetics, and lifeways. Sanders, Staikidis, Ballengee-Morris, & Smith-Shank (2010) have cautioned about the ethics of representing Native people in research and classrooms. Laurie Eldridge (2008), a Cherokee art teacher and scholar, recommends:

> Teaching 'backwards' on a historical timeline can emphasize that Native American people are alive, their cultures are alive, and they continue to thrive in contemporary American society despite centuries of colonization … Art educators can play an important role in improving the ways that Native American people are perceived in mainstream American culture by teaching about Native American arts in the contexts of the contemporary lives of the artists who create them. (p. 3)

In addition to improving the perception of Native American people by others, teachers should study the lives and art of contemporary American Indians in order to address issues of social justice, educational equity, sovereignty, and cultural sustainability for Native people.

Image/Narratives

When Eldridge (2008) told her elementary students she was of Native American descent, they asked her, "Do you live in a teepee? Do you ride a horse to school?" (p. 1) Unfortunately, many people in the United States associate Native American people with stereotyped caricatures, not living people like their teacher. In this case, Eldridge's students likely associated the word Native American with an image of a Plains "Indian" man in full regalia riding a horse and living in a teepee. Pauly (2003) calls this propensity to link stereotypical words, images, and cultural narratives that are intertwined within historical discourses of meanings and power relations an "image/narrative."

Image/narratives exist within discourses and networks of culturally-learned representations, meanings, and power relations, which influence the ways people think, feel, imagine, and act. According to Hall (1997), words and images stand for things that producers encode and viewers decode based on conceptual maps we carry around in our heads. Freedman and Combs (1996) contend that individuals either consciously or unconsciously retrieve image/narratives at a particular moment to fulfill their needs, fantasies, and desires. These images and narratives influence and justify conceptions people have of themselves and of others, which in turn shape the social values, attitudes, power relationships, and actions that play out in their daily lives. Educators can make visible these image/narratives by actively interrogating them, and by exposing students to the art and perspectives of diverse contemporary Native artists who challenge the dominant ideologies that have traditionally served to maintain asymmetrical relations of power and privilege in society.

Children learn image/narratives through sociocultural interactions: within their families, at school, and through popular culture experiences with toys, movies, cartoons, books, video games, "Indian" sports mascots, and holiday enactments. In the case of Eldridge's classroom, the image/narrative held by her students was one that reduced the cultures of over 500 Indigenous nations to a few decontextualized homogenized pictures and stories. This is hardly surprising, however, when we consider that their social and cultural experiences were likely limited to the narrow, hegemonic, stereotypical depictions of Native American people in mainstream media.

Image/narratives about the Indigenous of the Americas have evolved over history and have been used to justify aggression, oppression, and assimilation. The story of the Plains Indian man with his horse, headdress, weapons, and teepee was constructed and romanticized in the early 20th century, and was coupled with the story of the "Vanishing Race" (Beck, 2010; Deloria, 1998) to legitimize imperial narratives such as Manifest Destiny (justifying "White" European land claims and removal of Native people on the American continents). The dominant image/narratives attached to Native American people also underpin the notion of social Darwinism (Hofstadter, 1944), which posits that stronger, more sophisticated cultures will thrive and triumph, while weaker, less evolved cultures inevitably fade into extinction. Popularized though Edward Curtis's photographs, Wild West Shows, exhibits in museums, Boy Scout and school enactments, art, and literature, these narratives are explored by artists below.

Counter-storytelling and Tribal Critical Race Theory

According to artist and scholar John Paul Rangel (2012), many contemporary Native artists use counter-storytelling (Delgato &

Stefancic, 2000; Yosso, 2006) as a strategy to resist the dominant discourse by "producing work that challenges romanticized notions, stereotypes, and racism" (Rangel, 2012, p. 39). In addition to confronting Western constructions, these artists make art to "assert Indigenous perspectives on creating art, cultural meaning, knowledge production and the material circumstances of actual Native people" (p. 39). The image/narrative concept can be combined with counter-storytelling to become counter-image/storytelling, where the image(s) associated with the story are challenged alongside the sociocultural and historical narrative(s) embodied in the story. Such counter-image/storytelling opens space for reimagining a story or narrative, and for expanding the discourse around who Native American people are, how they are depicted and positioned, and by whom. Indeed, counter-image/storytelling disrupts hegemonic views of Native American people through the situated practice of cultural production. Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) argues that educators who are committed to social change through the arts must recognize that cultural production for democratic engagement is the way forward because it is "a process in which the very boundaries and limitations of every context are open to debate" (p. 228).

Rangel (2012) employs Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005) to critique the ways colonialism has material consequences for Native people that affect them "physically, intellectually, economically, politically and spiritually. . . includ[ing] governmental policies, tribal sovereignties, decimation of sacred lands, language shift/loss and systematic cultural and physical genocide" (Rangel, 2012, p. 40). In his conception of TribalCrit, Brayboy (2005) goes beyond Critical Race Theory to emphasize the material consequences of colonialism, imperialism, and consumerism in the United States. He stresses the need for Indigenous self-determination and recognition of the sovereign nation-to-nation status between Native Nations and the United States government. While many Native people maintain distinct cultural identification with a particular sovereign nation, language, tradition, and value system, some do not. Indigenous education scholars such as Grande (2004) and Haynes (2008) contend that Natives are not like other subjugated groups who struggle for inclusion; rather, they strive to have their legal and moral rights to sovereignty recognized. From inception, Indian education aimed to "colonize Indian minds as a means of gaining access to Indian labor, land, and resources" (Grande, p. 19).

Indigenous Aesthetics

How do Indigenous scholars and artists propose valuing contemporary Native art and experiences? Some scholars have argued for common pan-Indigenous aesthetic concepts, while others have focused on aesthetics informed by artists' contexts or worldviews that promote personal, communal, and cultural resiliency. Christine Ballengee-Morris (2008) (Cherokee- Eastern Band) recommends that art educators interpret the art of Native American artists using multiple trans-indigenous aesthetics such as parallel time and interconnections, which she believes cross tribal, national, geographic, and cultural borders. She writes,

> [F]rom a parallel time; the past and future are in the present; therefore the items, histories, and traditions are constant but at the same time in process (Jojola, 2004). Viewing indigenous arts, practices, and places from this perspective, necessitates considering contemporary (historical), narratives (individuals/tribal), philosophies (spiritual/clan) and semiotics simultaneously (Pewewardy, 2002) . . .that includes colonial histories and (post)colonial complexities. (pp. 31-32)

Phoebe Farris (2006) also describes interconnections and a pan-Native aesthetic when she observes, "as artists and indigenous peoples here in the Americas we do not usually separate art from healing or spirituality" (p. 253).

While many art critics assess Indigenous arts using formal qualities, art historian Nancy Mithlo (2011c) (Chiricahua Apache) argues that Native Americans commonly value art for the Indigenous knowledge and memories of cultural experiences embedded in the object (as well as the decorative and utilitarian qualities). She advises viewers to "understand the whole context of Native histories, personal life trajectories, and U.S. political policies that shape and inform the work" (p. 24). Choctaw-Chickasaw curator Heather Ahtone (2012) advocates consulting Indigenous artists themselves to understand the ways that local Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, connections to place, community, cultural expression, histories, and traditions may inform their work. Similarly, Sherry Farrell Racette (Timiskaming) (2011a) argues,

> The objects of everyday life, whether tools, blankets or items of dress, confront, provoke memory and are reanimated by human gesture. Objects are viewed for their potential for reactivation but perhaps more importantly, for the history and memory of actions they hold within themselves. (p. 42)

Some contemporary artists rework historical forms that are meaningful to their communities in new ways to provoke multi-layered discussions about the past in contemporary settings, such as Marcus Amerman's (Choctaw) beadwork portraits, Sarah Sense's (Chitimacha) reworking of Chitimacha basketry, Alan Michelson's

(Mohawk) wampum belts, Erica Lord's (Athabascan/Inupiaq) prayer ties, and Marie Watt's (Seneca) use of blankets employed in naming ceremonies that also recall small pox-infected blankets distributed to Natives.

Rangel (2012) applies concepts of relationships, community, hybridity, counter-storytelling, survivance, and indigenization of space to Indigenous aesthetics. Indigenous relationships signify connections to community and respect for the earth, families, and traditions. Many Native people experience hybridity by participating in many cultural, ethnic, national, and spiritual spheres as a member of a sovereign nation within a colonial country. Survivance (Vizenor, 1999), a combination of survival and resistance, might be enacted through counter-storytelling. The "indigenization of space occurs when Native artists reclaim a location through art or performance" (Rangel, 2012, p. 34).

Figure 1. Curtis, E.S., *Sioux chiefs*, photograph, 1905, 15.1 x 20.2 cm. Retrieved from http://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3g10000/3g12000/3g12400/3g12466r.jpg Washington, D.C: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

Historical Construction of Native Image/narratives in Popular Culture and Counter-Image/Storytelling with Indigenous Aesthetics

How have popular image/narratives about the Indigenous peoples historically been represented in the American media? According to Deloria (1998),

> In the 1800s and 1900s, many non-Natives depicted both Indians and children as naïve, simple, and natural. Children were sometimes viewed as savages in need of civilizing, and Indians were often seen as children of the Great White Father. (as cited in Eldridge, 2008, p. 1)

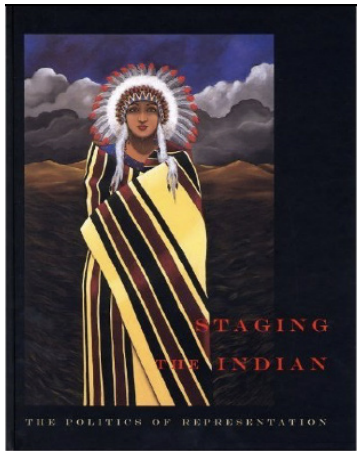

Figure 2. Judith Lowry, *My Aunt Viola*, 1996, [painting] acrylic on canvas. [book] Berry, Sweet, Hauser & Pritzker (2001).

At the turn of the century, the idea of the "Vanishing Native" was popularized by Edward Curtis's photography (see Figure 1). In the book *Staging the Indian: The Politics of Representation* (Berry, Sweet, Hauser & Pritzker, 2001) (see Figure 2), several contemporary Native artists critique Curtis' work including Judith Lowry (Maidu), Marcus Amerman (Choctaw), James Luna (Lusieno), Shelley Niro (Mohawk), Nora Naranjo-Morse (Santa Clara Pueblo) and Bently Spang (Cheyenne). For example, on the cover painting, Judith Lowry represents her aunt Viola from a faded photo taken of her when she was asked to dress up "as an Indian" at a county fair wearing a Plains-style man's war bonnet in exchange for admission.

Native people were also "staged" in exhibits such as the 1893 Columbian World Exhibition, ethnographic dioramas in the American Museum of Natural History, and "Wild West" shows like "Buffalo Bill" Cody's performances (see Figure 3) that toured the United States from 1893 to 1906. Cody earned his nickname by killing thousands of buffalo to supply meat for the railroad.

Frank Buffalo Hyde challenged that legacy when he incorporated Buffalo Bill, an image of his beloved buffalo, and Buffalo wings in his painting *Buffalo Bill #1* (see Figure 4), which appeared in his 2012 show entitled "Ladies and Gentlemen, This is the Buffalo Show." Hyde grew up on the Onondaga Reservation in central New York

Figure 3. Poster, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World*. 1899. Retrieved from http://img0.etsystatic.com/005/0/6847292/il_fullxfull.374180536_qrww.jpg

Figure 4. Frank Buffalo Hyde, *Buffalo Bill #1*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 60" http://frankbuffalohyde.com/artwork/2595646_Buffalo_Bill_1.html Courtesy of the artist.

where he helped watch over his tribe's buffalo herd. In his artwork, he uses the buffalo as "an allegory for North America" (Rangel, 2012, p. 158). Hunted almost to the point of extinction, the buffalo is "an important symbol for Native American people who valued the animal" (p. 158). According to Hyde, his buffalos often gaze at the viewer as a "homicide detective, always there, witnessing and observing" (ibid). The concept is shown in *Buffalo Field with Mother Ship* (see Figure 5), which asks the viewer "to examine their perceptions of Native Americans and contemporary Native art" (p. 158). Hyde uses the landscape to convey "timelessness" with paranormal elements such as orbs or UFOs, and humor by including the South Park character Cartman. Rangel observes an "underlying connection to settler colonization and manifest destiny as the mother ship is hovering over seemingly unclaimed land" (p. 159). Lowry and Hyde's work exemplify art as counter-image/storytelling by indigenizing the symbols and disrupting the colonial gaze.

Figure 5. Frank Buffalo Hyde. *Buffalo Field #20 Mothership*, 2012, [Painting] Acrylic on Canvas, 40" x 60" http://frankbuffalohyde.com/zoom/1400x720/2595641.html Courtesy of the artist.

Started in 1910 and 1912, Boy and Girl Scouts advocated "playing Indians" by making Indian-like costumes, performing dances, and singing songs that mimicked Indian cultures but claimed authenticity to the youth. Teachers were influenced to make pan-"Indian" artifacts and enactments in schools.

Tourists, including art educators, traveled to the Southwest to buy Indian art without learning the context, function, or symbolism embedded in the art they collected. Some art educators were attracted to Hopi Kachinas, yet they did not know that making replicas of sacred objects such as Kachinas, Navajo (Dineh) sand paintings, or Iroquois false face masks were forbidden practices, as Remer (1997) and D'Alleva (1993) recommend doing in their books.

In summary, photographs, exhibitions, shows, scouts enactments, art, and literature emerged at the turn of the 20th century to support stereotyped image/narratives of a homogenized noble or violent "Indian." Imitations have perpetuated these image/narratives in "cowboy and Indian" films and television shows, cartoons like Disney's™ *Peter Pan* and *Pocahontas*, "Indian" sports mascots and logos, and toys like Legos'™ Wild West sets.

These image/narratives are all the more powerful without other diversified media representations to balance them. According to a study of prime time TV done by Children Now (2004), there were no Native American characters in any episode in the study's sample. A study of Native American youth (Children Now, 1999) ages 9-17 from 20 tribes in four cities showed that the absence and negative representation of Native American people in the media are deeply felt by Native youth.

> As one Comanche youth observed, 'Nobody really talks about our group,' and when they do, it's about 'reservations,' 'casinos,' 'selling fireworks,' and 'fighting over land.'… One Seattle boy told of a rare empowering experience with the news, 'See, there's a pow-wow in Albuquerque. It's called the Gathering of Nations. They announced it on TV…I was really surprised…It was cool.' (p. 4)

Youth spoke about the need for diverse Native representation on television and in popular culture. Art teachers can contribute to this need by teaching about contemporary Native art, artists, and cultures.

"Indian" Boarding Schools: An Example of Historical Media Representation and Resiliency

Several museum exhibitions and Native artists have addressed the representation of Native students who attended the federal boarding schools in Canada and the United States. While children of European ancestry were "playing Indian," Native children were forced to attend boarding schools where they were segregated from mainstream education and forced to assimilate to "White" ways, which contributed to the idea that Natives had disappeared. Starting in 1879, children from over 500 Canadian and U.S. cultures were taken from their homes, forced to cut their hair, required to wear mainstream clothing, forbidden to speak their own languages or follow their cultural practices, and taught to be laborers or domestic servants. Photographs of the students were taken to justify this "civilizing mission."

A contemporary permanent exhibit challenging these representations, *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience*, opened at the Heard Museum in Phoenix in 2000. Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima (2000), the authors of the book that accompanies the exhibition, write:

> Indian boarding schools were the key component in the process of cultural genocide against Native cultures, and were designed to physically, ideologically, and emotionally remove Indian children from their families, homes and tribal affiliation. From the first moment students arrived at school, they could not 'be Indian' in any way – culturally, artistically, spiritually, or linguistically. Repressive policies continued to varying degrees until the 1960s when activism, reassertions of tribal sovereignty, and federal policies supporting tribal self-determination began to impact educational institutions and programs. (p. 19)

The authors discuss the stories of boarding school students, some of whom utilized resiliency to survive and resist assimilation. Others found life difficult without familial love and protection; many died, yet a few enjoyed their experiences. Angel de Cora, a courageous young Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) art educator, made a difference at Carlisle Indian School from 1906 until 1915 (Archuleta, 2000). Trained in fine art, she taught her students how to appreciate Native art and create their own symbolic designs.

Many argue that the federally enforced removal of children from their families, the harsh conditions they endured, and the lasting scars left by the boarding schools require a national U.S. debate and an official apology – like the admission of guilt given to Japanese internment survivors – as the Canadians have done. In 2008, the Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper (Harper, 2008) apologized to 150,000 children and their families for an unjust policy that had caused great harm. The Canadian government also created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to hear the survivors' stories and educate Canadians about them. An exhibit, *Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools* (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2002), has traveled to over 23 venues in Canada since 2002 to encourage a national dialogue.

Contemporary Native Artists Respond to the Boarding School Experiences

Artists Marcus Amerman, Steven Deo (Euchee/Muscogee), Tom Fields (Cherokee/Creek), Dorothy Grandbois (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), and, Ryan Rice (Kahnawake Mohawk) respond to the boarding school legacy in their art. The first photograph of Navajo student Tom Torlino (see Figure 6) was taken when he arrived at the Carlisle Indian School in 1882, and the second at an unknown later date.

Tom Torlino's image appears in Marcus Amerman's beadwork *Postcard* (see Figure 7) within the "U" and "N" of the word country. Rangel (2012) writes,

> The use of "U" and "N" "are intentional in suggesting 'something undone'" in Tom Torlino; Amerman stated, 'he was un-Indianized. He doesn't have a light in his eye. I see that metaphor for the civilizing process; it takes the light and the willingness to live' (personal communication, February 4, 2012). (p. 132)

Amerman's beadwork is an excellent example of counter-image/storytelling and resiliency. He updated a familiar Santa Fe postcard

Figure 6. Tom Torlino, Navajo, Carlisle School Student, before and after circa 1882, public domain photograph. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/24/Tom_Torlino_Navajo_before_and_after_circa_1882.jpg

Figure 7. Marcus Amerman. *Postcard*, 2002, beads and thread on canvas 11" x 17". Retrieved from http://www.marcusamerman.com/creations/beadwork.html

depicting images that critique the past with images that show experiences significant to him by re-interpreting the beadwork. The "I" represents the Lakota Leader Crazy Horse. Next, in the "N," Amerman is dressed in his race car suit. Two buffalo and a tornado are evident inside the "D," perhaps suggesting the destruction of the buffalo herds. The image of John Herrington (Chickasaw), the first Native astronaut, is beaded inside the next "I". The "A" shows the Blue Angels F/A-18 Hornets in formation, which Amerman calls a "symbol of transcendence" (Rangel, 2012, p.132). Inside the second "N" he depicts his Osage goddaughter. Amerman shows himself wrapped as a mummy with a nuclear explosion in the background within the "C;" an image of a tidal wave is located inside the "O;" a volcanic eruption is illustrated within the "T;" lightning is represented in the "R;" and an image of earth taken from space is seen in the "Y." The nuclear explosion, tidal wave, volcanic eruption, and lightning are symbols of power for Amerman. After delving into Amerman's personal narrative within the postcard format, students could study postcards in their cities and create images based on their own experiences.

Teaching History and Representation Using Contemporary Native Art

This section explores resources teachers might use to study the art of contemporary artists who critique historical and contemporary representations and narratives about Native people. To study how other contemporary Native artists have expressed their feelings about the boarding school experience and other historical events, teachers might consider using the book, exhibition, and website located at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI, 2012), entitled *Who stole the tee pee?* (Nahwooksy & Hill, 2000). The authors explore four themes: "Changing Reservation Realities," "School Bells and Haircuts," "Tolerating Tourists," and "Beyond Smoke and Mirrors," featuring the work of Steven Deo (Euchee/Muscogee), Tom Fields (Cherokee/Creek), Dorothy Grandbois (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) and, Ryan Rice (Kahnawake Mohawk).

For example, in Steven Deo's work (see Figure 8) children from a boarding school are represented with red marks over their mouths to depict the silencing of their language and way of life. Superimposed over the children is the word "equal," along with similar words in Deo's Muscogee language, one of the most endangered languages in the world.

Ryan Rice playfully interrogates his school experiences in a book of photographs of himself behind collage items with captions such as: "You're Indian?" "You don't look Indian." "Say something in Indian." and "I have a friend who is Indian, do you know him?" (p. 49). In addition to exploring the history of Indian Boarding Schools, Steven Deo has done remarkable prints, sculptures and installations in response to his family's history during the "Trail of Tears" and their relocation to Oklahoma where he was born. Deo's *End of the Trail* (see Figure 9) sculpture takes the form of a suitcase composed of 80 shoe tops that Deo said are meant to communicate the "metaphor for travel and dislocation" (Jones, Depriest, & Fowler, 2007, p. 12), as well as the convergence of so many tribal groups who were crammed into Oklahoma.

Figure 8. Steven Deo, *Indoctrination #3*, 2000, mixed media, collection of the artist.

End of the Trail reflects the history of Deo's ancestors. In 1830, Congress passed and President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, mandating the removal of Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muscogee Creek, and Seminole from their homelands east of the Mississippi to Oklahoma even though the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the Cherokee's lawsuit to stay in their homeland. Between 1831-1837, hundreds of thousands of people were forced to walk the "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma, sometimes during frigid winter weather, where many suffered and died.

The Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), the only Native-run museum of contemporary art in the country, is another resource for teachers seeking information. Their free online curriculum entitled *Manifestations* (Mithlo, 2011a) is intended to compliment the book *New Native Art Criticism: Manifestations* (Mithlo, 2011b). The book includes historical essays, photographs of artworks, and biographies about 60 contemporary Native artists written by 14 Indigenous authors. It is a rich research tool that teachers can use to

Figure 9. StevenDeo, *End of the Trail*. 2000, mixed media, shoes,18"H X 26"W X 10"D.

speak knowledgeably about Native art. Other recommended books about contemporary Native art include Deats and Leaken (2012), Hill (1992), McFadden and Taubman (2002), Russell (2012), Sanchez and Grimes (2006), Touchette (2003), and Racette (2011b). Rangel's (2012) dissertation provides in-depth interviews with eight contemporary Native artists who demonstrate counter-storytelling.

Teaching Politics and Identity: Art and Action about "Indian" Mascots and Logos

Teachers might consider adopting the *Manifestation* curriculum's organizing themes: 1) continuity and change; 2) politics and identity; 3) adaptation and survival; and 4) reclamation and revival. While exploring the theme of politics and identity, the text recommends studying the work of Charlene Teters, a Spokane artist, activist, and current professor at the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA). Her art reflects her concerns about representations of Native people in "Indian" mascots and logos.

Teters juxtaposes stereotypic images found in popular culture and images of commodification in contrast to a painting displaying an image and texts with personal significance in her life. Her artwork,

Figure 10. Charlene Teters, *What I Know About Indians: Slum-Ta Self-Portrait*, 1991, Installation, (Touchette, 2003, p. 7)

entitled *What I Know About Indians: Slum-Ta Self-Portrait* (see Figure 10), includes a painting of herself as a child seen through the image of a red Chicago Blackhawk Hockey logo, a woman in a stereotypical cartoon from Lil'Abner, and barcodes that she silkscreened onto plexiglass mounted in front of and projected over her painting. The viewer is challenged to see the child through the images. The girl peers through images of Native stereotypes and commodification associated with her identity. Teters produced this artwork in response to the image and performances of "Chief Illiniwek," a sports mascot at the University of Illinois, whose presence she encountered with her children and protested as a graduate student (Delacruz, 2003). As one of the founding members of the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media, Teters has lectured widely about the painful and racist implications of mascots. Teters tells her own story and explains her artistic process on her website (Teters, 2012) and in two excellent films (Rosenstein, 1996 and KNME TV, 1996), both available for free online. Although Chief Illiniwek was retired in 2007, Native American logos and mascots still dominate national franchises and high school teams. Art teachers might ask their students to explore artworks like Teters' by investigating what the students perceive, what intertextual connections they make, and what image/narratives reflect discourses of meaning and power in terms of self-representation, identity, and sovereignty.

Students will probably mention stereotypes found in mass media. Stereotypes are caricatures designed by members of one group of people to typecast another group into a standard, and usually inaccurate, conception. Images are commonly linked to old racist historical stories. These image-narratives often function to reduce members of cultural groups into exaggerated and inferior characterizations of sameness that dehumanize people, making them more vulnerable to racist treatment.

Teachers could share Teters' website and films to contextualize her work and then re-interpret it from an individual artist's viewpoint. Teters interrogates the ways people are taught to view and stereotype her community's identity and enact racist behavior at sporting events. Although stereotypic images are commonly used to sell a product or a sports team, they ridicule people whose identities and cultures are associated with it. In contrast to logos, students should research and interview specific Native people to learn that they have complex and diverse cultures, histories, art, clothing, architecture, personalities, and appearances. Next, students could investigate how images in their own mass culture intersect with the images found in their individual cultures, and create art about what they discover regarding how their own identities are shaped or influenced by popular culture. Some of Anne Thulson's (n.d) teaching with elementary students shows how she has addressed some of these goals with second grade students.

Teters's story suggests that students need not separate art from social action. A case in point: the Wisconsin Indian Education Association's Indian Mascot and Logo Task Force (Munson, 2011) has worked for over 20 years to educate students, parents, and legislators, and to pass legislation aimed at eliminating Indian mascots in Wisconsin schools because mascots encourage students to perform racist acts through cheers, images, and dress. A 10-minute film on their website called "Taking a Stand" tells about a group of high school students who testified about the ACT 250, a law to eliminate these mascots. High school students can be encouraged to make plays such as "Kick," a play performed by Delanna Studi in which she enacts nine characters with different points of view on the mascot issue (Howard, n.d.), or make films (Morton & Ohlman, 1998), both of which are available on Munson's webpage (2011). Even though ACT 250 was signed by Governor James Doyle in 2010, Munson (2012) reports that there are still 33 Wisconsin schools with "Indian" mascots, with an enrollment of 25,504 students who also impact other schools' students when they play them in sports.

Other Recommendations for Teaching about Contemporary Native Art

Diversity
Art teachers should teach that Native American art is made today by multifaceted and varied individuals who may or may not draw inspiration from their Native ancestry. Teachers might invite local Native American artists to present their art, or encourage students to research the contemporary arts in their students' home cultures, which can then be linked with local concerns specific to Native nations today. Students might create art or make films to express their understanding or advocate for their cause.

Context
It is important for teachers to research contextual information about how artists construct meanings from their own points of view in books, artists' websites, videos, or in person. For example, students could visit the websites of artists' mentioned in this article, find artworks that interest them, investigate why the artist created the artwork, and interpret what story the artist may be thinking about or questioning through their art.

Identification
Teachers should research how artists want to be identified, such as by their preferred name and tribal affiliation, rather than using general descriptors such as "Native American artist." For example, some Navajos may refer to themselves as Diné or Dineh.

Curriculum Inclusion
Since contemporary Native artists make such varied and powerful art works, it is not difficult for teachers to integrate their art into most subject matter units they teach. This not only makes content learning engaging and meaningful, but it also highlights the depth and breath of Native art while underscoring its relevance to academic learning through a variety of themes, skills, art forms, and creative processes. Teachers might also develop presentations to show diversity in contemporary Native art, or delve deeply into one artist's work.

Creating Art
Students can derive inspiration from Native art, but they should not be encouraged to imitate it. Instead, students should be encouraged to respond to the themes presented by Native artists by engaging in their own artistic processes to express their own ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Individuality
When students understand aspects of Native artists' lifestyles and the sociocultural contexts that inform their art, it helps them to realize that many Indigenous people live conventional lives, wear common clothes, and reside in houses and apartments. They may or may not be visually identifiable as Native, practice their traditions, live on reservations, or identify with their ancestral culture.

Conclusion

Native scholars and their allies recommend that teachers and students study the art of contemporary Native artists while exploring artists' Indigenous aesthetics, cultural contexts, and related social justice issues such as sovereignty and equity. Some artists have challenged the impact of cultural experiences in their lives, U.S. policies, and representations in popular culture. Historically-constructed media representations and stereotypic image/narratives should be interrogated and counterbalanced by presenting Native art created by diverse people whose art contributes to counter-image/storytelling and personal, communal, or cultural resiliency.

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Why is it not Just a Joke? Analysis of Internet Memes Associated with Racism and Hidden Ideology of Colorblindness

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses how Internet memes associated with racism can be analyzed and pedagogically utilized through the theoretical frame of Critical Race Theory. The assumption of the study is that Internet memes, as a site of ideological reproduction, can show one aspect of racial discourse. I consider Internet memes regarding race and racial issues as racial humor in this study. I gathered a total of 85 memes addressing or connected to racism primarily from the Memecenter website (www.memecenter.com). In this study, I analyzed their forms and content to consider how these memes deal with racism in different ways. Methodologically, this study implements critical discourse analysis in combination with multimodal discourse analysis. Through this study, I found that the majority of Internet memes about racism perpetuate colorblindness by mocking people of color and denying structural racism. I argue that challenging colorblindness through critical analysis of Internet memes and creating counter-memes will enhance students' critical awareness of racial issues.

Overt Jim Crow racism is rarely found in public discourse; there has been a decline in overt racist talk (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). This might explain why one of my students challenged me about showing racist Disney movie clips in a college art class. The student argued that the video I showed was outdated and we no longer see "that kind of racism" these days. I agreed with him in the sense that the video clips were from the 1970s and 1980s; from our current perspectives, the clips were extremely and obviously racist. However, I did not agree with his idea that we are no longer exposed to racism in media. Overt racist discourse has been replaced with covert colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) or denial (van Dijk, 1992). Bonilla-Silva (2006) explains that colorblindness is a gentler form of racism or "racism lite," which operates in a covert, subtle, and institutional way (p. 3). In a similar vein, overt racism in media and pop culture has been altered from aggressive racism to subtle colorblindness.

Critical race scholars consider race an important factor that affects peoples' lives. John Calmore contends, "Racism operates so effectively that we seldom distinguish serious racist harms from a variety of other harms that categorically run from 'bad luck' to 'natural catastrophes'" (as cited in Powell, 2008, p. 792). Even though critical race theorists have heavily influenced my perspective, I admit that engaging students in discussions of racial issues in the classroom is not an easy task. In the era of political correctness, phrases such as "I don't see people's color, I see individuals" become a way to avoid the discussion about racial issues. Nevertheless, being truly colorblind is an unachievable goal given that we are both consciously and unconsciously aware of people's phenotypic traits.

This project stemmed from the question: how can art educators engage students in discussions of racial issues in their classrooms? As a way to bring racial issues to the art classroom, I examined Internet memes about racism. Goldberg (1993) considers racialized expressions in Internet culture "in terms of a field of discourse" (p. 41). I started this project by collecting Internet memes including the phrase "that's racist." "That's racist" is popular as a catchphrase among Internet users and is widely used in Internet memes. Ulaby (2011) points out that saying "that's racist" becomes a way to avoid difficult discussions of racism among young people. Additionally, Google Trends (2015) shows a steady growth of search queries for the keywords "that's racist." In this sense, "that's racist" memes can provide an understanding of critical aspects of racial discourse in Internet memes. I also included different types of Internet memes associated with racism in order to expand the variety of my data.

An assumption underlying this study is that Internet memes on racism should be investigated as a site of ideological reproduction. Popular discourse including humor is an ideal lens through which to examine how everyday interaction and social dynamics influence and are influenced by ideology and the social structure (Sue & Golash-Boza, 2013). Many researchers study Internet memes as a prism for looking into certain aspects of contemporary society and culture (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006b; Milner, 2013; Shifman, 2013, 2014b). Given that digital media and the Internet have become a more compelling means to participate in art activities (National Endowment for the Arts, 2010), I assume many teenagers and young adults know and are actively involved in Internet meme culture. Moreover, Internet memes can show unfiltered thoughts and comments due to their anonymity. Internet culture is especially significant in the study of racial discourse in that the Internet became one of the most important mediums available to those who post racist invectives with impunity (Hill, 2008). Weaver (2011a) also states that the Internet is one of a few sites where racist humor can be accessed

and shared without being censored. Thus, I chose memes addressing racism in order to explore their hidden ideology and discuss pedagogical implications of how to employ memes to examine racial issues in art class.

The aim of this study is not to analyze the impacts of Internet memes on racism; rather, the intention is to analyze the racial discourse embedded in popular Internet memes and explore how colorblindness is ingrained within them. I argue that the majority of Internet memes associated with racism should be critically analyzed and challenged because of their hidden ideology of colorblindness. Thus, I suggest that art educators utilize Internet memes for the purpose of exploring racial issues and colorblindness. First, I review literature on Internet memes, critical humor studies, visual culture education, and Critical Race Theory. Then, I discuss the findings from my critical discourse study on Internet memes and suggest possible ways to employ Internet memes in art classes as a way to raise color-consciousness – a critical understanding of how race matters, how racism works, and how issues around race and racism affect people's lives (Ullucci & Bettey, 2011).

Internet Memes in Art and Visual Culture Education

In this section, I discuss the concept of Internet memes, humor studies on Internet memes, critical racial and ethnic humor studies, and visual culture inquiry in art education, in order to situate the study on Internet memes within art and visual culture education. I consider Internet memes addressing racism as a part of racial jokes. Numerous scholars studying humor examined the psychological, historical, and social aspects of racial jokes; some scholars view racial jokes as a benign form of humor (Davies, 1998), and some critical scholars put an emphasis on dehumanizing aspects of racial jokes (Billing, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Husband, 1988; Kuipers, 2006; Weaver, 2010, 2011b). I particularly shed light on several critical studies on racial jokes, which examine possible negative impacts and ethical concerns of racial jokes.[1]

1 In order to highlight critical aspects of racial jokes, I do not cover other humor studies that may be relevant to this study, such as a historical approach to nature of humors (i.e. superior theory, relief theory, and incongruity theory) and humor in visual art (see Klein (2007) for the study of humor in historical and contemporary artists' works).

The Concept of Internet Memes

Dawkins (2006) coined the term "meme" in his book, *The Selfish Gene*, which was first published in 1976. He proposed the concept of "meme" as an element of culture encompassing fashion, ideas, religion, and so on. He notes that memes are transmitted from brain to brain through the process of imitation. Based on his idea, the traditional definition of "meme" indicates units of cultural transmission that "diffuse from person to person, but shape and reflect general social mindsets" (Shifman, 2014b, p. 4).

On the other hand, the current definition of memes within Internet culture is generally associated with user-generated online contents in the form of image macro, video, .GIF, etc. In this paper, I refer to this type of meme as an "Internet meme" in order to specify the terminology. Shifman (2014b) defines Internet memes as "(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users" (p. 41). In a similar vein, Davidson (2012) states that the uniqueness of Internet memes is "the speed of their transmission and the fidelity of their form" (p. 122). According to Davidson (2012), three components of Internet memes are "the manifestation, the behavior, and the idea" (p. 123). The manifestation indicates that Internet memes are external, observable phenomena. The behavior refers to an individual's action to produce Internet memes, such as photographing or manipulating pictures. The last component – the ideals of Internet memes – are the concepts or ideas that the memes convey.

Drawing upon Dawkins' (2006) concept of memes, Knobel and Lankshear (2006b) examine characteristics of Internet memes. They borrow three key characteristics from Dawkins' work: "fidelity, fecundity, and longevity" (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006b, p. 201). Rather than suggesting that Internet memes exemplify fidelity because they are passed on from mind to mind intact, Knobel and Lankshear (2006b) understand "fidelity" in terms of "replicability" since the majority of Internet memes are modified and remixed over the process of transmission from participant to participant. They note that "remixing," including "modifying, bricolaging, splicing, reordering, superimposing, etc.," is an important practice of producing Internet memes (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006b, p. 209). This aspect resonates with Gude's (2004) postmodern principles, such as "appropriation," "juxtaposition," "recontextualization," "layering," and "hybridity"

(pp. 9-10). Shifman (2014b) also states that the diffusion of Internet memes is amplified through competition and selection.

In addition, Knobel and Lankshear (2006b) explicate three characteristics of Internet memes contributing to each meme's fecundity. The first is humor, including quirky humor, satire, and social commentary. The second component is rich intertextuality, which refers to the layering of cross-references to popular movies, cultural events, artifacts, and practices. The last characteristic, "anomalous juxtaposition," is used for "maximizing the susceptibility of the idea being passed from mind to mind." (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006b, p. 215). This kind of juxtaposition is usually made through putting incongruous images together, and can be provocative or simply odd.

Shifman (2014b) also suggests that Internet memes are "cultural information that pass along from person to person, but gradually scale into a shared social phenomenon" (p. 18). He goes on to say that Internet memes impact people on the macro level in that they shape people's mindsets, forms of behavior, and actions, despite that they are spread on a micro basis. He also delineates means of repacking that enable Internet memes to be reproduced. Two main repackaging mechanisms are mimicry and remix. Mimicry involves recreating a specific text by different people; remixing is a new strategy that refers to technology-based manipulation such as Photoshopping or adding sound to an image.

Internet Memes as Internet Humor

Humor has been studied in multi- and inter-disciplinary fields including but not limited to psychology, philosophy, sociology, literature, and linguistics. This is because humor is one of the most pervasive elements of public culture, which is a central aspect of everyday life and interaction (Pickering & Lockyer, 2005). With the advent of the Internet, humor has become a dominant mode of online communication, and humorous content has significantly increased in scale and speed of diffusion (Shifman, 2014a). Furthermore, the themes and formats of humor are diversified in the Internet-based environment. Shifman (2014a) defines Internet humor as "any type of humorous interaction or performance that is manifest on the Internet" (p. 390), and insists that the main characteristics of the Internet, which are multimedia and global reach, have significantly influenced the new types of Internet-based humor (Shifman, 2007). One of the notable Internet-related shifts in humor is that Internet humor is no longer predominantly verbalized; rather, it is heavily based on visual formats that can be diffused quickly and easily across the world (Shifman, 2007, 2014a).

Internet humor has been highly linked to popular discourse with Internet memes since 2010 (Shifman, 2014a). Though not all Internet memes are humorous or intended to make jokes, humor is a key component in many (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006b). Humorous Internet memes often manifest as quirky and situational jokes through remixing pop culture and commercial imageries. However, humor is sometimes used to generate social commentary memes as well; successful social commentary memes reach people at a high speed, get attention from the public, and ultimately raise awareness on a social practice or event (Knobel & Lankshear, 2006a, 2006b). Shifman (2014a) notes that "humorous Internet memes are often employed as forms of political and social participation" (p. 393). Shifman (2014b) also argues that Internet memes can be "forms of persuasion or political advocacy," "grassroots action," and "modes of expression and public discussion" (pp. 122-123).

Critical Studies on Racial and Ethnic Humor

In this section, I introduce studies of critical racial and ethnic humor in order to argue that Internet memes about racism should be critically studied even though they are "just jokes." Despite resistance in humor scholarship regarding the possible negative impacts of humor, there is a growing body of literature that addresses the negative aspects of racial humor; the field is labelled critical humor studies (Weaver, 2011a). Critical humor scholars take humor very seriously (Pickering & Lockyer, 2005). Studies in critical humor put an emphasis on offensiveness and its negative consequences, which are often overlooked. Billing (2005a) notes that the "just joking defense of ethnic or racial joke-telling" is based on an assumption that humor should not be taken seriously or considered genuinely racist (p. 29). For instance, some scholars contend that ethnic humor is a benign and innocent form of expression (Davies, 1998), and is widely enjoyed by racial and ethnic minorities (Rappoport, 2005). Nevertheless, my argument in this study is aligned with critical scholars who have paid attention to the hostile and dehumanizing aspects of racial and ethnic humor (Billing, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Husband, 1988; Kuipers, 2006; Weaver, 2010, 2011b).

As I mentioned above, the purpose of critical studies on humor is associated with the question of offensiveness in humor (Pickering & Lockyer, 2005). It is also related to ethics of humor, which concern effects of humor (Morreall, 2005). Humor is heavily dependent on context; depending on the joker, audience, time, and place, a joke can be perceived as funny or not funny (Pickering & Lockyer, 2005). Therefore, people may perceive the same joke very differently based not only upon the person-to-person context where the joke is told, but also the "ideological and political context that can affect the meaning and understanding of the joke" (Billing, 2005a). Thus, regardless of intention, the consequences of humor depend on the circumstances and political and ideological context; negative consequences, whether they are intended or not, should not be overlooked.

Racial and ethnic humor have significant consequences in the current American context, which can be named as the era of political correctness and colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Rosenberg, 2004; Ullucci & Battey 2011). Racial or ethnic humor is defined as "humor directed at racial and nationality groups, denigrating alleged attributes of those groups" (Schutz, 1989, p. 167). Weaver (2010), on the other hand, uses the term "racist humor" instead of racial and ethnic humor. He explains that "where humour has a racist potential, in relation to stereotype and inferiorisation used, it remains accurate to label it racist humor" (p. 537).

In the era of political correctness, the idea of a critical approach to humor may be considered particularly disturbing (Billing, 2005b). This is due to an exculpatory approach towards humor that considers it a harmless and benign form of communication (Weaver, 2011b). Furthermore, positive functional explanations of humor tend to focus only on positive aspects of humor, such as a means to improve one's life (Billing, 2005b; Weaver, 2011b). Billing (2005b) argues that humor has been seen in terms of both "positives" and "negatives," and the "positives" have been more prominent in studies by psychological and humor scholars. Comparatively little attention has been paid to potential mental and physical consequences of humor, especially as a form of ridicule (Weaver, 2011b).

Situating the Study on Internet Memes within Art and Visual Culture Education

This study can be situated within a broad range of educational studies on visual culture. It is difficult to define visual culture due to its rhyzomatic nature (Duncum, 2001; Wilson, 2003).[2] Yet, it can be generally understood in terms of visual artifacts (visual) and the social, cultural, and historical context in which the artifacts are produced, distributed, and used (culture) (Duncum, 2001). According to Duncum (2001), the shift to visual culture within art education represents "a recognition of a vastly changed cultural environment, which includes a new symbiosis between new technologies, new economic arrangements, and changed social formation" (p. 103). Many art educators have vigorously discussed this new paradigm of visual culture (Carpenter & Tavin, 2010; Chalmers, 2001; Duncum, 1990, 2001, 2002, 2010; Freedman, 1994; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Garber, 1995; Tavin, 2000; Wilson, 2003). Freedman and Stuhr (2004) state that a critical aspect of visual culture pays attention to "issues concerning the power of representation, the formation of cultural identities, functions of creative production, the meanings of visual narratives, critical reflection on technological pervasiveness, and the importance of interdisciplinary connections" as well as a wide range of visual artifacts (p. 816). Visual culture inquiry in art education requires "a substantial shift in what is to be known about images and thereby has far-reaching implications for changing the pre- and in-service training of teachers" (Duncum, 2002, p. 7). Furthermore, it necessitates new curriculum, content, and instructional strategies to move the focus from conventional and didactic approaches to creative and critical inquiry (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004).

From this perspective, Internet memes, which are visual artifacts produced and shared online, are a part of visual culture. *The Journal of Visual Culture* published a special issue on Internet memes in 2014, and many researchers discussed the cultural and historical trajectory of Internet memes as well as their notions, characteristics, and aesthetics. Educators who have been exploring the incorporation of digital arts and new media in art education also touch on the topic of Internet memes as a part of digital arts (see Black, Castro, & Lin, 2015).

The study of Internet memes is a current topic of interest among numerous forms of visual culture in art education. For instance, March (2013) studies the function of Internet memes in online activist

2 Visual culture can be considered rhyzomatic, which reflects the complex notion that it occurs, moves, and evolves sporadically without a root or center (see Duncum (2001) and Wilson (2003) for the conceptual explanation of visual culture).

spaces. She organized the public response to the child sex abuse scandal at Pennsylvania State University by using Facebook in 2011. Through the analysis of functions and themes of Internet memes posted on the Blue Out Facebook event wall, she creates an argument about the Internet meme and its role in art education. March (2013) insists that Internet memes created by people on the webpage were art-based activism and the efficient transmission of Internet memes can benefit the social justice goals. Digital tools elicit more user interaction; therefore, she believes that Internet memes can facilitate active online dialogue and share social justice values. While March (2013) studies the content and functions of Internet memes on a specific website from a social activist perspective, De la Rosa-Carillo's (2015) study focuses on exploring Internet memes as an art-based research instrument. Unlike the majority of research on Internet memes, which views the forms and processes of Internet memes as passive objects to be studied, he attempted to actively use Internet memes to respond to academic topics. Through generating Internet memes as a process of learning and researching, he argues that Internet memes should be considered as a craft and a language, rather than mere Internet objects. The second phase of his study engages young students at a summer art camp where he facilitates reading, writing, and remixing memes as an art-making process. He discovers that the language of Internet memes incorporates storytelling, visual thinking, remix, and technology in art education. Overall, his study expands the notion of Internet memes and proposes the pedagogical practice of employing Internet memes as a visual language.

Critical Race Theory and Colorblindness

Critical Race Theory (CRT), the theoretical framework of this study, emerged in the 1970s and is built upon critical legal studies and radical feminism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixon & Rousseau, 2005; Leonardo, 2013). Delgado and Stefancic (2012) define the CRT movement as "a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (p. 3). Because the CRT movement in legal studies is rooted in struggles to seek justice, liberation, and empowerment, its goal is socially active (Tate, 1997). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), the basic tenets of CRT are; 1) "racism is ordinary, not aberrational" (p. 7), 2) the majority of people in America have little incentive to eradicate racism since racism advances the interest of Whites, 3) race is socially constructed, 4) racial relations are shifted in response to social needs, and 5) CRT values the unique voice of color to apply their perspectives to assess law's master narratives.
These tenets are related to those of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who introduced the term CRT in educational scholarship. They state three propositions in their foundational study. The first is that race has been a significant factor in determining inequity in American society. This is the common premise of CRT; structured racial oppression is embedded in an educational reality (Leonardo, 2013). The second proposition is that American society is based on property rights. They contend that democracy should be disentangled from capitalism, and explicate through Manning Marable's work that "Traditional civil rights approaches to solving inequality have depended on the 'rightness' of democracy while ignoring the structural inequality of capitalism" (as cited in Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 52). They insist that property is also related to education in many ways: through taxes, funding, curriculum as intellectual property, and so on. The last proposition is that the intersection of race and property provides a tool to analyze social inequity.

Dixson and Rousseau (2005) provide an overview of literature on CRT in education from 1995 to 2005, and describe common themes that exist in CRT studies in education. First, CRT pays attention to the voices of people of color, especially their experiential knowledge. Therefore, CRT scholars often utilize personal narrative as a valid form of evidence to show inequity or discrimination. The second theme is a restrictive and expansive view of equality. They point out that many educational scholars employ these contradictory views in order to analyze the nature of inequity in education. The other theme is the problem of colorblindness. I will discuss this concept in depth in the next section.

Colorblindness

If CRT is an umbrella term encompassing critical studies of racial equity in American society, colorblindness is a lens for analyzing racial talks. Bonilla-Silva (2006) calls colorblindness "a new racism" that reproduces inequality through "subtle, institutional, and apparently nonracial" ways (p. 3). As "a revealing metaphor for the dominant ideology of race in America," colorblindness hinders people from seeing race as a significant factor in equity and social justice (Rosenberg, 2004, p. 257). Rosenberg (2004) states that "those who favor a colorblind society fail to see that race, especially skin color, has consequences for a person's status and well-being" (p. 257). Ullucci & Battey (2011) argue that colorblindness not only plays a role

in contributing to a collective ignorance, but also reduces the fight against the impact of racism.

Through intensive two-year long survey studies conducted in universities and the Detroit metropolitan area, Bonilla-Silva (2006) finds four central frames of colorblind racism: "abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism" (p. 26). He explains,

> 1. *Abstract liberalism* "involves using ideas associated with political liberalism and economic liberalism in an abstract manner to explain racial matters" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 28).
> 2. *Naturalization* is a strategy to explain away racial phenomena by calling them natural occurrences.
> 3. *Cultural racism* uses culturally based arguments to explain injustice and the position of minorities.
> 4. *Minimization of racism* proposes that racial discrimination is bygone and no longer a crucial factor affecting minorities' lives.

According to Bonilla-Silva (2006), people use these frames in order to deny social inequity and racial factors in minorities' lives. These frames are closely related and have been taken for granted as dominant ideologies. For instance, he introduces one college student's answer about African-American students' low academic achievement. The student mentioned that Black students' failure is due to their lack of personal motivation, not discrimination. He argues that this statement shows a mixture of the cultural racism frame, the belief of meritocracy, and individualism. By bringing down group-based discrimination to an individual level, racial inequality is justified. Moreover, individualism excuses racial segregation and Whites' racial preference (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), and the meritocratic frame is used to ignore contemporary racial factors at the institutional level.

Methodology

One of the goals of this study is to understand and examine Internet memes relevant to racism as a racialized discourse. In order to analyze hidden beliefs and ideologies of the multimodal form of Internet memes, I employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as research methodologies. Note that both CDA and MDA are not single methods nor theories; rather, they are collective studies or approaches (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2011; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA and MDA are complementary and sometimes brought together as critical multimodal discourse analysis (see O'Halloran, Tan, Smith, & Podlasov, 2011). MDA rests upon social semiotics and attempts to analyze multi-modal texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Social semiotics is an approach to understanding how people communicate and produce meaning through various means in specific social settings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2001). This is where MDA and CDA align. The relationship between communicative artifacts and social realities and contexts is where those artifacts are situated. CDA argues that "language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power" (Gee, 2011, p. 68).

As Fairclough (1995) states, CDA is more than a research methodology; it includes collective studies to dissect the function of language in the production of ideology and power in the certain social and political contexts. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), CDA is interested in "studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach" (p. 2). CDA emphasizes the interdisciplinary approach to understand how language functions in transmitting knowledge and exercising power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 7).

The goal of CDA is to explain naturalization, or how ideological representation comes to be seen as non-ideological common sense (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough notes that this critical concern is absent in descriptive discourse works. He continues,

> The critical approach has its theoretical underpinnings in views of the relationship between 'micro' events and 'macro' structures which see the latter as both the conditions for and the products of the former, and which therefore reject rigid barriers between the study of the 'micro' and the study of the 'macro.' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 28)

Based on this understanding, I attempt to disclose beliefs and ideologies hidden in the Internet memes associated with racism. In other words, I analyzed their forms and contents to study how memes deal with racism in different ways. I examined how images have addressed the meaning of racism, how they address racial issues, and what ideological assumptions are hidden in the coupling of visual

images and texts.
A criticism of CDA is its tendency to analyze visual images as if they were linguistic texts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) also point out that CDA is mostly confined to language or verbal parts of texts. From this perspective, MDA can contribute to broaden works of CDA (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) by studying how visual strategies are used to convey certain messages (Aiello, 2006). There is also a criticism of MDA that suggests multimodal studies do not consider enough for the reader, listener, and viewer (Gibbons, 2012). I attempted to compensate for this criticism of MDA by looking at comments on each Internet meme. Nonetheless, I admit that this is not sufficient to consider the reader's side since I did not interact with people who made memes or left comments. Among the many approaches of MDA, I particularly employ visual social semiotics drawn upon the work of Roland Barthes (Aiello, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2001) in order to analyze the visual aspect of Internet memes.

Data Collection and Analysis

I gathered memes including the words "racism" and "racist" primarily from the Memecenter website (www.memecenter.com) for four weeks in October of 2015. The Memecenter is a user-based website where people can create and share their own memes. Users can see popular memes at a glance through daily, weekly, and monthly top-rated memes. I selected this particular website as my sample since it hosts a comprehensive set of memes. Memecenter also allows users to leave comments or images on each meme; this function allows for an examination of interactions between users on the memes I collected.

As of October 18, 2015, I found 7762 Internet memes on Memecenter by searching memes including the key phrase, "That's racist." I collected 85 memes based on their relevance to the topic and popularity. The website offered functions of pushing a "like" button and sharing through other Social Network Services, so I gauged the popularity of each meme and how widely it has been shared by checking the numbers of "likes" and "shares." I took screen-shots of each Internet meme and saved them in my personal computer. I also saved each webpage address in a separate file to access later if necessary.

At the beginning stage, I only collected Internet memes including the phrase "that's racist." After collecting over twenty memes, I found different forms of memes talking about racism that were popularly shared and modified. For instance, the Internet meme featuring the movie character the Joker and a Black man appeared often.[3] I expanded the range of data to Internet memes relevant to racism. After taking screen-shots and saving Internet memes, I named each file with their original names given by the creators. In a separate notebook, I wrote down key words describing each meme.

Once the data collection ended, I reviewed all data and the key words I recorded. Then, I grouped them into different themes: cultural stereotypes, embodied racism (biological racism), denial of racism, racist media/commercial images, crimes committed by people of color, immigrants, police brutality, criminal justice, and Black/White binary (see Table 1). Some memes fell into more than two different groups. After thematic grouping, I grouped them by characteristics such as stereotypes against African Americans, Asians, Mexicans, and Middle Eastern people, mocking physical appearance of people of color, police abuse, crime, racially intensive commercials, sign, merchandise, etc. (see Table 2).

Table 1: Themes and Frequency of Internet Memes

Themes	*The Number of Memes*
cultural stereotypes	24
embodied racism	8
denial of racism	7
racist media/commercial images	19
crimes committed by people of color	15
immigrants	2
police brutality	5
criminal justice	2
Black/White binary	8

3 I found over ten Internet memes that are made with four consecutive images of the Joker and a Black man. These types of memes convey racial jokes that focus on Black people. For more information about these memes, refer to http://www.memecenter.com/fun/1016082/the-jokers-racist.

Table 2: Racial/Ethnic Groups Represented in Internet Memes

Racial/Ethnic Groups Represented in Memes	*Frequency*
African Americans	74
American Indians	1
Asians	5
Jewish	1
Mexicans and Mexican Americans	3
Muslims	1
Whites	2

I used a Barthian visual social semiotics approach as suggested by van Leeuwen (2001) in order to analyze visual components of the Internet memes. MDA is based on social semiotics, which consider semiotic action as social action in social context and power relations (Aiello, 2006; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Aiello (2006) states that social semiotics could benefit from referring to Barthian's work, "especially in relation to the role of denotation in naturalizing culture or connotative messages" (p. 100). The crucial idea of Barthian visual semiotics is "the layering of meaning" (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 94). The first layer, which is the layer of denotation, deals with the question of "what, or who, is being depicted here" (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 94). The second layer is the layer of connotation, which asks: "what ideas and values are expressed through what is represented, and through the way in which it is represented?" (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 94). I analyzed the first layer by describing "denotative signifiers" and "denotative signified"[4]; then, I moved to the analysis of the connotative layer by examining the style of memes, such as framing, focus, distance, and so on (van Leeuwen, 2001). Table 3 details an example of my visual analysis process.

4 The signified and the signifier are the components of the sign in Saussurean terminology (Barthes, 1967). While the signified is "a mental representation" of "a thing" or a concept, the substance of the signifier is material, such as sounds or images (Barthes, 1967, p. 42).

Table 3: Visual Analysis Example

	Denotative Signifier	*Denotative Signified*
The First Layer	A guy with darker skin and buzzed hair	A Black man
	Jumping (above the fence)	Jumping over the fence
	A building and houses in the background	Residential area
	Text in the center of the meme "Jumping over fences and shit because I heard a police siren"	He is jumping over fences because he heard a police siren
The Second Layer	*Connotation*	
	The focus is on a Black man. The text located in the center indicates that the quote is relevant to this man. A young Black man is running away from police because he might have done something illegal. But he is smiling as if it is common.	

In addition, I focused on intertextuality, which refers to "the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 84). In other words, I paid attention to how the meanings of the image are constructed not solely in the image itself, but through the connection to other meanings carried by other images. The effects of the images are also carefully considered. Rose (2007) states that a critical visual methodology requires the researcher to "take images seriously," "[think] about the social conditions and effects of visual objects," and consider one's own way of looking at images reflectively (p. 12). From this perspective, I identified key themes in Internet memes and tried to find hidden and explicit messages by paying attention to details and considering their social effects (Rose, 2007). The three major themes I identified were: "that's racist" memes exemplifying racism and stereotypes, othering through embodied racism, and the denial of racism.

Findings

"That's Racist" Memes: A Jest Pointing out Racism Versus Stereotyping People of Color

The image macro that is usually included in the "that's racist" memes features a child yelling with the caption, "That's racist!" (see Figure 1). For the most part, an animated GIF of this black child yelling is combined with or followed by politically incorrect or racially intensive images, commercials, online comments, etc. An example is the juxtaposition of Figure 1 with a video clip of a Disney movie considered to be racist.[5] In this case, the "that's racist" meme can be understood as a type of jest to point out racism which is often seen in our everyday lives and media.

Figure 1. "That's racist" Meme https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyu2jAD6sdo

Figure 2. "That's racist" Meme https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVViqUNeKeg

Another type of "that's racist" meme carries typical racial stereotypes. Figure 2 shows a modified meme based on Figure 1; it adds images of a basketball, a slice of watermelon, and a box of KFC fried chicken. These images are associated with racial and cultural stereotypes against African Americans. I also found similar forms of memes showing racial and ethnic stereotypes against Mexicans, Muslims, and Asians. For example, "That's waisis" memes mock the accent of Asian people.[6] One might think this genre of memes is a mere joke that will barely affect the public's mindset or lead to negative consequences. However, I found numerous comments about negative stereotypes against people of color on the comment sections under each meme. The top-rated comments were mainly about other racial stereotypes against groups of people, such as Mexicans, Asians, and Middle Eastern people. Weaver (2010) points out that the structure of a racist joke does not always cause offence; rather, the "audience also play a constitutive role in constructing offence" (p. 545). Thus, racial discourse surrounding these memes reflects negative stereotypes and colorblindness regardless of the creators' intention. Furthermore, critics of racial humor deny that racial and ethnic humor containing unappealing stereotypes against certain groups of people are harmless (Billing, 2005a). For instance, Husband (1988) argues that the repetition of racial and ethnic jokes serves to solidify stereotypes in society and perpetuate racism.

The dominant amount of Internet memes mocking people of color reflects historical racism perpetuated in our everyday lives. Among the 85 memes I collected, 64 were associated with racial/ethnic stereotypes, mockery, denial of racism, and overt racism. Even if the intention of these memes is satirical, they function to create a space where people can mock and ridicule people of color. Furthermore, racial and ethnic humor should not be discussed in terms of the speaker's intentions, but with regard to its impact on people of color and the whole society. Hill (2008) points out the danger of the linguistic ideology "personalism, which holds that the meanings of utterances are determined by the intentions of speakers" (p. 64). She argues that the meaning of utterance is "the complex product of long chains of historical negotiation" (p. 64). Additionally, van Dijk (1992) explains how this linguistic ideology of personalism is used to deny racism. According van Dijk (1992), one of the strategies of denying racism is "intention-denial" saying, "I did not mean that" or "you got me wrong" (p. 92). The possible negative impacts of racial humor are usually nullified by assuming the intention of racial humor is not malicious. Through these types of denials, one can evade the responsibility for the possible negative consequences of racial humor. However, if there are possible negative consequences of racial humor, ethics and responsibility of humor should be critically discussed.

Racial Representation: A Way of Othering through Embodied Racism

The other major problem of Internet memes about racism is that their racial representation is a detrimental way of "othering." Leonardo (2013) asserts that, "representing race is always a relational

5 Refer to http://www.memecenter.com/fun/298534/thats-racist

6 Refer to http://www.memecenter.com/fun/3454611/proof-that-facebook-is-racist

enterprise inasmuch as it works through the politics of difference" (p. 119). Difference itself is not a problem. However, race as a field of representation needs to be challenged since Whiteness is normalized. This is also connected to the Black/White binary that is widely accepted in racial discourse. Under the Black/White binary, Blackness is often depicted as evil, irrational, and uneducated in contrast to Whiteness. Ladson-Billings (2005) contends that the issue of the Black/White binary is "the way everyone regardless of his/her declared racial and ethnic identity is positioned in relation to Whiteness" (p. 116). For example, Figure 3 implies that the Black man is thinking about stealing the bike by juxtaposing images of many bikes hanging on the wall and a Black man saying "SHHHHHEEEEEEEEIIIIITT." Of all of the memes that I collected, more than ten described African Americans as committing larceny; they often depict bikes and people wearing masks or running away. The images of black masks and the act of running away connotes the crimes committed by African Americans. Some memes also depict Mexican Americans as illegal immigrants by juxtaposing a picture of people hiking and using phrases that imply illegal border crossing.[7] This racially discriminatory representation also supports cultural racism, which blames the culture of the minority as a cause of inequity and a strategy of colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

Figure 3. Who put bikes like that? http://www.memecenter.com/fun/1782141/who-put-bikes-like-that

Additionally, I found that racial representation is closely connected to embodied racism in Internet memes. Weaver (2010) states that

7 Refer to http://www.memecenter.com/fun/344470/mexico.

biological racism emerged from colonial race science, philosophy, and anthropology, and appears in "embodied racial humor" (p. 549). Biological racism ascribes the cognitive, behavioral, and cultural characteristics of "other" to the racial corporeality and "constructs boundaries and places certain civilized bodies on the inside of favorable categories, and uncivilized 'others' on the outside" (Weaver, 2010, p. 549).

Figure 4 is one example showing colorblindness and embodied racism. In Figure 4, a Black anime character wearing a turban is followed by the "that's racist" meme, which implies that the character can be considered a racist representation. The meme continues by adding an Asian character and old man saying "I don't SEE anything wrong with that." The capitalization of "SEE" implies that Asians have small eyes, and thus a physical trait of Asians becomes the object of ridicule in racial jokes. This meme not only conveys the idea of colorblindness in that racism is a matter of perspective, but also makes jokes about phenotypical and physical characteristics of people of color. Therefore, the meme in Figure 4 is a distinct example of embodied racism.

Figure 4. Racism is Just a Matter of Perspective http://www.memecenter.com/

fun/4748373/racism-is-just-a-matter-of-prespective

Weaver (2010) defines "racist humor" as humor that has "a racist potential, in relation to stereotype and inferiorisation" (p. 537). If people of color are portrayed as foolish, indolent, or criminal in the memes, those can be considered as racist humor. Weaver (2010) argues that Internet-based racist jokes coupled with embodied racism represent "the expression of a form of repressed racism that, in other situations, is the subject of social disapprobation, and is not a part of a white supremacist network" (p. 552). The other significant issue of racial representation is that it comes with material consequences (Leonardo, 2013). Leonardo (2013) notes that, "once institutionalized, the effects of representation have a way of perpetuating themselves, creating even more intricate webs of images. They have material consequences, especially representations that tap into a society's collective racial unconscious" (p. 116).

The Denial of Racism and Minimizing its Impacts

The last major finding is the denial of racial oppression. While I found eight memes that clearly show the denial of racism, there are more than twenty memes that covertly deny racial oppression by blaming people of color for injustice. The denial of racism manifests as a rhetoric insisting that racism is a matter of perspective or racial injustice that comes from faults of people of color rather than the social system. The meme titled "It's only racist if it's a Black guy, just like its only terrorism if it's a Muslim" is a good example (see Figure 5). It denies police brutality against people of color by implying it as case-by-case. Moreover, it depicts Black people as biased and too sensitive about police brutality. In the last segment of Figure 5, an African American guy is yelling with anger and saying "THIS IS RACIST AND POLICE BRUTALITY! DAMN COPS." On the Internet, capitalization of letters usually implies shouting. On the layer of denotation, a facial image of an African American man yelling with a quote in all capital letters represents his anger; on the layer of connotation, the meme implies that African Americans overreact to police brutality. Even though only seventeen people shared this meme through their SNSs, over 1200 people pushed the "like" button. Some people addressed disagreement with this meme on the comment section. However, the top comment,[8] which gained 80 up-votes,

8 For more info about the image and comments, refer to http://www.memecenter.com/fun/5162071/its-only-racist-if-its-a-black-guy-just-like-its-only-terrorism-if-its-a-muslim

states that that police brutality is irrelevant to racial oppression, but rather reflects people's biased reactions. This is the strategy of "minimization of racism" which Bonilla-Silva (2006) describes as one frame of colorblind racism. In a similar vein, Figure 4 also shows the denial and misunderstanding of racism. Its title, "Racism is just a matter of perspectives," is a typical colorblind rhetoric, which reduces the systematic and institutional level of racial oppression to the matter of personal perspective.

Figure 5. It's only racist if it's a Black guy, just like its only terrorism if it's a Muslim http://www.memecenter.com/fun/5162071/its-only-racist-if-its-a-black-guy-just-like-its-only-terrorism-if-its-a-muslim

On the other hand, Figure 6 poses a question about the fairness of the criminal justice system. This meme juxtaposes two news stories about the three-billion-dollar fraud committed by ex-mortgage CEO

and a Black homeless man stealing 100 dollars. An image of the Joker with the catch phrase "justice isn't blind, it's racist" attracts attention with the purpose of raising a question about colorblindness. Though the meme does not provide enough background to judge the fairness of the legal cases, it is successful in questioning our so-called post-racial society. Many people responded to the meme by leaving numerous comments, including more memes with a surprised face or other evidence of racial inequity. From this perspective, the meme in Figure 6 raises awareness of racial issues and effectively challenges colorblindness.

Figure 6. Justice isn't blind, it's racist http://www.memecenter.com/fun/1389757/are-they-even-serious

Powell (2008) argues that the individual frame of racism, which is a narrow merit-based and individualist viewpoint, misdirects our attention from systematic and structural racial issues. Instead, he proposes the structural racism framework that highlights the "cumulative" impact of racial discrimination within and across domains (p. 796). He suggests that the reason many African Americans and Latino/a are living below the poverty line is related to their lifelong relationship to not only the labor and housing market, but also to educational and criminal justice systems. Though I found one example of memes addressing structural racism (see Figure 6), most Internet memes do not show this connection between structural racism and minority groups' lives. Rather, they perpetuate colorblindness by saying that racism is a personal issue.

Implications

I found that racism manifested in various ways in Internet memes, including stereotyping, othering, and the denial of structural racism. One of the key themes throughout many racist memes is colorblindness, which is widely accepted and justified through different strategies (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). For example, some of my university students have talked about affirmative action as reverse-discrimination. Internet memes not only reflect these thoughts, but are also a factor that impacts people's understanding of racial issues. Thus, I argue that Internet memes can be an effective channel to discuss colorblindness and racial issues, and I suggest possible activities for engaging university students in the discussion of racial issues by using Internet memes. As I mentioned in the literature review, few educational researchers have discussed using Internet memes as a pedagogical tool. Just as teaching students how to create memes for visual language or social activism is significant, teaching critical analysis of Internet memes is necessary to challenge the dominant ideology. Knobel and Lankshear (2006a) note that the analysis of memes can include

> where and how certain memes were most likely acquired; what effects these memes have on decision-making, mindsets, and action; the effects these memes may have on other people; and what ethnical decisions must be made with respect to passing on, or not passing on, certain memes. (p. 85)

I employ Duncum's (2010) seven principles for visual culture education, including "power, ideology, representation, seduction, gaze, intertextuality, and multimodality" (p. 6) as a frame of critical questions for meme analysis. Duncum's (2010) principles provide a guide post for art educators who would like to examine various forms of visual culture with their students. Possible educational activities are two-fold: critical questions which can be used to analyze Internet memes about racism, and a counter-meme making activity. The suggested ideas are geared toward university students.

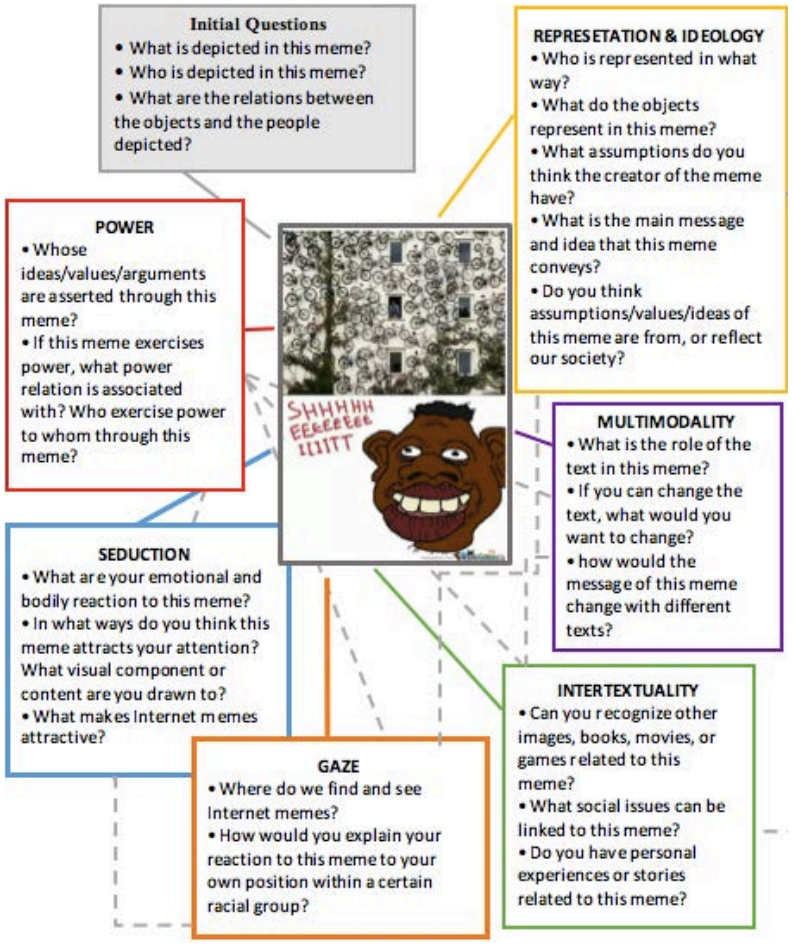

Figure 7. Critical Questions for Internet Meme Analysis

Creating counter memes to challenge colorblind memes is another way to raise critical consciousness. A counter-meme is an Internet meme created as a reaction to other problematic memes. Knobel and Lankshear (2006a) define "counter-meming" as "the deliberate generation of a meme that aims at neutralizing or eradicating potentially harmful ideas" (p. 86). For example, Godwin (1994) created counter-memes in order to subvert the prevalent Nazi comparison in Internet memes and mass media in the 1990s. Godwin (1994) found problematic comparisons on Usenet newsgroup discussions between Nazism and government regulation, such as gun regulation or birth-control. In order to challenge this trivialization of the Holocaust, he coined the term "Godwin's law" to point out the illogical and offensive comparisons to Nazism or the Holocaust during the political discussion (Godwin, 1994). The term "Godwin's law" spread fast through online discussion boards at that time (Godwin, 1994) and it is still commonly used and manifested in Internet memes. Like "Godwin's law," students can create Internet memes to counter colorblindness by showing examples of social injustice (see Figure 6) or sharing their own counter-narratives.

Since Internet memes have the power to engage students in the art-making process, art educators should be involved in creating them. This topic is beyond the scope of my study, but I should note that the Internet meme has a different aesthetic than fine art or school art styles (Effland, 1976). Douglas (2014) names it "Internet ugly" and states that it can be sometimes intentionally chosen as a dialect or created without specific aesthetic intentions. He contends that Internet ugly is usually manifested in Internet memes due to its bottom-up creation system. Since this ugly aesthetic is the core value of Internet culture (Douglas, 2014), art educators should study this different aesthetic and how to embrace it as a part of our pedagogical practice.

Conclusion

Internet memes have the potential to open a new door to engage students in art activities that are closely connected to their lives. The Internet itself has enhanced voluntary participation in the variety of activities through two-way communication. For instance, Kellner and Kim (2009) argue that YouTube is a new space for activism and dialogical learning communities where individuals become deeply involved in democratic knowledge production and mutual pedagogy.

Nevertheless, we also need to be mindful of the possibility of misleading and misrepresenting aspects of Internet culture. Shifman (2014a) contends that Internet humor is not particularly subversive; rather, Internet users tend to circulate conservative humors. This contradicts theory arguing that Internet humor has "the potential to express the voice of marginalized and disempowered groups" through the liberation from the institutional structures (Shifman, 2014a, p. 391). Similarly, I found that the majority of meme creators and commenters misunderstand not only the meaning of racism and racial issues, but also the detrimental impact of systematic racism. I contend that educators can effectively rectify this misunderstanding and teach students to question the dominant ideology by examining

popular Internet memes in the classroom.

Desai (2010) argues that students should develop "racial literacy to identify and critique racial discourse in popular culture, media, and other sites of visual culture" (p. 23). Kraehe, Acuff, Slivka, and Pfeiler-Wunder (2015) also note that talking about race and racism in the art classroom is one way to counter racial injustices by bringing to light the narratives of people affected by racial oppression. Nevertheless, teaching about racism is not an easy task in that it is accompanied by intellectual and emotional challenges for both teachers and students. Lee (2013) suggests that teachers encourage attentive and nonjudgmental classroom conversations. He also proposes that teachers should thoughtfully respond to students' questions and set the tone that welcomes open inquiry in racial issues. Another way to start a racial dialogue is to introduce visual culture that can facilitate conversations about racial issues. Desai (2010) used visual culture to open dialogue about how race relations affect our lives and shape our beliefs about different racial groups. In a similar vein, teaching students how to critically analyze Internet memes about racism and creating counter memes can enhance their understandings of racial issues and give them an opportunity use their own voices to challenge the racial status quo.

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Teaching for Respect and Understanding of Difference: Social Media and Contemporary Art as Vehicles for Addressing Racism

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses how social media is used to promote visual art exhibitions and performances related to racism and racist practices. Current examples of such art exhibitions and performances are highlighted. Curricular strategies are suggested for using social media in teaching students about racism and its effects using Critical Race Theory, the examination and discourse of mainstream media, visual culture, historical and contemporary artworks, and creating and publishing counter-narrative responses via social media.

KEYWORDS: social media and art, implicit-bias in art, socially engaged art curriculum, art-based counter narratives, critical race theory

As a middle-aged Black woman artist/educator, racism has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Having grown up in the protective bubble of Washington, DC, aka "Chocolate City," I did not consciously encounter Black-White racism until I entered college. In my experience, until that time, "racism" consisted of skin tone prejudice perpetrated by Blacks on other Blacks. Regardless, racism of any sort is repugnant. Given my experiences as a P-16 student, I strive as an educator to ensure that my pre/in-service art education students understand the devastating effects of subtle and overt racist practices on young people. I encourage them to actively create teachable moments about respect for diversity through their curriculum and everyday interactions with learners. While individual access to the Internet and digital technology is a privilege, there are many ways teachers can use digital media resources in their schools and classrooms as a means of teaching students to question and critically reflect on the visual culture messages they are exposed to on a daily basis.

Digital Media and the Cyclical Nature of Anti-Racist Activism

When the media thrust the relatively unknown young presidential candidate Barack Obama front and center, I, like many Black Americans, was cautiously optimistic—have we finally attained respect as human beings of intellectual and sociopolitical equality? Or is this just a fluke—a combination of circumstances and timing? Needless to say, like many Americans, I placed too much hope in one man to effect widespread attitudinal change. I thought, "Now we have a powerful general in the highest office of the land to wage war on racism; real change will happen." Unfortunately, acts of racism became even more rampant than in recent years, and they were widely publicized via digital media. I had hoped that President Obama would organize a national committee on race relations, encourage town halls across the country on the subject, and get people in conversations that might engender respect for difference, but instead he had beer with Henry Louis Gates and James Crowley. I'm not faulting our president—the list of issues he inherited upon entering office was massive, and has grown—but he is the ideal person to initiate dialogue on race relations in our country that would hopefully lead to perspective transformation, understanding, and respect for difference. National leadership on respect and appreciation of racial and ethnic difference could open up dialogue on other contentious issues: women's rights, religious freedoms, LGBTQ rights, immigration rights, etc. Social media platforms could be used to broaden the discussion beyond physical realms into virtual spaces, providing opportunities for more people to participate and interact.

The cycle of anti-racist activism is on the upswing; the election of an African-American President acted as a catalyst, much as the O.J. Simpson trial, the Rodney King beating, and the civil rights and anti-slavery movements of the past did. As a consequence, ideologies concerning politics, economics, gun control, religion, race, ethnicity, age, education, and gender continue to be hotly contested issues, developing into causes that result in divisive and often violent actions. Mainstream and digital media outlets bombard us with heinous acts of prejudice and counter-narrative responses. Against this backdrop of social divisiveness and media proliferation, educators need resources to assist them in generating positive classroom/community models.

Contemporary Art Practice and Social Media

Social media has been used effectively to promote sociopolitical grassroots activism as well as visual and performance counter-narratives. For example, a wide range of work has been captured by and disseminated through social media, including *Black Lives Matter* and *Occupy* performances in New York, Washington, DC, and other cities. An illustration of the power of social media to propagate ideas can be found in artist Sonya Clark's deconstruction of the Confederate

flag, as promoted on a variety of social media platforms and blogs including the *Huffington Post*. Shortly after Clark's "Unraveling" performance, video of filmmaker Bree Newsome's daring climb to remove the Confederate flag flying over the South Carolina State Capitol went viral on social media. This confluence of events led to the removal of the flag. Discussion of the emotions surrounding this contentious symbol illustrates how conflicting ideologies contribute to racial unrest.

> *Unraveling* by Sonya Clark. Her [Clark's] upcoming performance at Mixed Greens Gallery, 'Unraveling,' combines her [Clark's] interest in symbols, race and identity with a passion for unconventional takes on traditional craft techniques. Clark will invite audience members to collaborate with her in deconstructing the many threads of the polarizing emblem, along with special guests including curator Lowery Sims and civil rights [law professor] Olatunde Johnson. The physically time consuming and demanding ritual will allow visitors to reflect on the ways the state and country have changed over the past 150 years, as well as what changes we're still waiting for. (Frank, 2015, para. 8)

Figure 1. Unraveling and Unraveled by Sonya Clark. Photographed by Taylor Dabney

I recently displayed artwork in a juried exhibition entitled, *Implicit Bias: Seeing the Other-Seeing Our Self*, shown simultaneously in several gallery spaces across Washington, DC. That exhibition also harnessed the energy of anti-racism in contemporary social movements as explained on exhibit websites:

> *IMPLICIT BIAS – Seeing the Other: Seeing Our Self* is an exhibition that will engage and investigate the issues of racial disparity in our country, as well as help us visualize what an equitable future might look like. This show will not solely depict an introspective view of Bias, but extends to more prevalent matters, such as injustice in all its forms; police, judicial, education, voting rights and urban planning for example. (Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, 2015)
>
> We are living in important and dangerous times, where racial bias has stepped into a place that can no longer be ignored. *IMPLICIT BIAS – Seeing the Other: Seeing Our Self* is an exhibit that strives to reflect these serious matters with honesty, integrity and an urgency these times deserve. (Busboys and Poets, 2015, para. 3)

The exhibit was on view from September through December 2015 at the Joan Hisaoka Gallery at the Smith Center for Healing and the Arts as well as Busboys and Poets restaurants across the city. The Busboys and Poets website provides a contextual understanding of their space:

> Busboys and Poets is a community gathering place. It's a space where racial and cultural connections are consciously uplifted…a place for art, culture and politics to intentionally collide… Both visual and performing arts are a constant and daily part of the Busboys' environment and experience. By creating such a space, Busboys and Poets believe they can inspire social change and begin to transform the community and the world. (Busboys and Poets Tribal Statement, 2015, para. 1)

To promote this citywide exhibition, the curators launched a social media campaign consisting of Instagram, Facebook, and blog posts. Participating artists were asked to promote the exhibition through their online contacts. Promoting art exhibitions and socially engaged art practice online has become more common. It is less expensive and further reaching than mailing postcard invitations and disseminating posters and flyers. Artist and curator talks connected to the exhibition were organized and promoted through social media, blogs, local arts organizations, and college websites. Using social media to promote such events makes it possible for interested participants to add these

events to their email calendars or apps such as Eventbrite. Of course, there are also drawbacks to promoting events through social media. It assumes that potential participants have access to digital media and the Internet, which many do not, and this presents a social justice issue in itself.

Social Media as a Curricular Tool

Like myself, several of the artists in the exhibition are educators with an active art practice. This exhibition, promoted exclusively through social media, presents an ideal teaching opportunity for the artist/teacher participants. Social media outlets promoting the exhibition along with images of their own and others' work could be used to demonstrate to students how and why social media is effective in publicizing sociopolitical art and issues. "The art classroom… encourage[s] critical thinking to understand the events that shape our world. If major media outlets present a hegemonic viewpoint, the public [may assume] they have the necessary facts to form their opinion on…media issue[s]" (Patton, 2005, p. 86). As a curriculum resource, social media can provide opportunities for students to participate in critical discourse on racism by examining how the mainstream media portrays certain groups, unpacking stereotypes and misconceptions and having students create their own counter-narratives on racism. There are many art websites, digital gaming, and portfolio platforms (e. g., Artandresponse.com, WochenKlausr, Archive.org, and Behance) that depict works influenced by sociopolitical events. An examination of these cyber art communities in conjunction with the news stories that inspired them provide a rich minefield of visual culture responses for students and teachers to navigate. Additionally, through the use of free blog, game design tools, and website building software such as Wix.com and Wordpress.com, students and teachers can construct their own class blog, video game, or website and encourage feedback through survey tools and comment boxes (Patton, 2005).

Students might also create serious Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) using "what if" scenarios connected to discriminatory practices. "ARGs are open-ended interactive narratives that are collectively played by participants in real time using a variety of Interactive Social Media including blogs, wikis, short text messages (SMS), digital video, podcasts and so on" (Clark, Mejias, Cavana, Herson & Strong, 2011, p. 171). Serious ARGs are used to imagine and simulate possible solutions to real-life social ills (Clark et al., 2011). Clark et al. (2011) had their students create serious ARGs to address the issue of racism and other forms of discrimination on their college campus. The researchers sought to discover whether or not serious ARGs could provide other ways of understanding, and perhaps combating or eradicating racism and other types of discrimination; provide mechanisms that allow participants to act otherwise both inside and outside of the social network; be used as a tool to confront issues that are difficult for people to address face-to-face. (Clark et. al., 2011, p. 171)

Their goal was two-fold: to raise awareness of racism on campus and facilitate a campus-wide, solution-focused discussion on racism and other forms of discrimination.

Art educators should make use of mainstream and social media platforms to be informed about local exhibitions and performances such as the one in which I participated. Student and/or teacher generated media could be used to open a dialogue with students and teachers in other schools and communities through a variety of formats. Some of these may include: classroom blogs, Instagram, Snapchat, serious ARGs, and Facebook posts of students' written and visual responses to racist sociopolitical events including songs, poetry readings, theatre, video games, television shows, movies, sports, and other aspects of visual culture that consciously and unconsciously influence our thoughts and actions on topics like racism and other social inequities.

Examining Art Education and Social Media through a Critical Race Theory Lens

Using social media and a Critical Race Theory lens to reflect on the racist media and visual culture students encounter on a daily basis could serve to effectively educate them on respect for difference in place of a national government-based initiative. Critical Race Theory (CRT) has its roots in critical legal studies and legal theory (Bell, 1987; Harris, 1993), focusing on "race as the primary lens for exploring legislation and its political enactments" (Chapman, 2007, p.157). As an educational approach, "CRT has explicitly sought to develop its conceptual constructs out of the experiences and stories of people of color in order to destabilize the presumed neutrality of universality of Whiteness" (Kraehe & Acuff, 2013, p. 297). CRT connects to, broadens, and extends the field of critical theory, "a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of People of Color" (Solorzano, 1997, p.6).

CRT theorists (Davis, 1989; Lawrence, 1987) contend that racism comprises at least four factors:

1. It has micro and macro components;

2. It takes on institutional and individual forms;
3. It has conscious and unconscious elements;
4. It has a cumulative impact on both the individual and group. (Solorzano, 1997, p. 6)

Through a CRT lens, examination, analysis, and critical discourse on contemporary art that focuses on racism and racist practices allows both teachers and students to identify and discuss these four dimensions of racism from a depersonalized perspective. In this way, some contemporary art initiates the process of recognizing racism and the institutional barriers it creates for people of color. For non-White students in particular, awareness of these obstructions are the first step in overcoming them and developing strategies for success. For White art teachers and students, an understanding of Critical Race Theory provides a lens through which to take up anti-racist engagement from a stance of solidarity and more effective activism.

Any critical reflection exercise on racism should begin with a definition and discussion of stereotypes. Examples taken from social media outlets, YouTube, the film industry, and art works are an excellent starting point. Every student can personally connect to the concept of stereotyping through fashion choices, youth culture, cuisine, gender, etc. as a means of understanding how stereotypes are applied and can be hurtful. From here, conversations that challenge and transform stereotypes can take place. A discussion on power and privilege could follow after reading the still prevalent "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (McIntosh, 1989).

Next, inviting students to engage in oral, written, visual, and performed critical discourse on racism and how it is perpetuated through mainstream media, as well as publishing their responses on social media outlets, provides them with a sense of empowerment in grappling with thorny issues that can be overwhelming. Voicing stories of situations that rendered one powerless can affect the oppressor and become self-empowering for the oppressed. Critical race theorists advocate for the formulation and exchange of personal stories because "stories serve as interpretive structures by which we impose order on experience and it on us" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 57). These experiences could also encourage students to be proactive in launching racism awareness initiatives within their own school communities (Darts, 2006).

One of the best ways to begin such a dialogue is through a critical self-examination of one's implicit biases. Prior to discussing mainstream media's covert and overt racist practices, teachers should have students write down and discuss their definitions of racism, and consider having students take one of the online implicit bias tests produced by Harvard University as part of Project Implicit:

> Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition - thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. The goal of the organization is to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a "virtual laboratory" for collecting data on the Internet. (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)

Additional approaches would be to compare and contrast art works and sociopolitical events from the Civil Rights era to contemporary art works and sociopolitical events. For example, the works of Faith Ringgold (*Die Nigger Flag for the Moon, American People Series: Die*), David Hammons (*Injustice Case*), Sonya Clark (*Unraveling*), Fred Wilson (*Mining the Museum*), and Hank Willis Thomas (*A Common Misunderstanding)* would expose students to both traditional and conceptual ways of making art as well as subtle and obvious approaches to the effects of racism and racist practices. Through these pedagogical approaches students question: What remains the same? What has changed? In what ways has/does socially engaged art practice encourage critical discourse and perspective transformation? How has social media impacted awareness of and response to racist practices? What can I do to make a difference?

Social Media Promotional Images from *Implicit-Bias, Seeing the Other, Seeing Our Self*

Below are some of the images from the exhibition that were included in the social media campaign, along with suggestions for how they might be used in teaching. Each of the artists' websites feature artwork addressing other social justice themed topics that teachers might consider using as a curricular resource.

I created this piece (see Figure 2) after two months of collecting articles from *The Washington Post* on gun violence. I collaged the headlines, creating an image transfer plate as a background for a mixed media relief print. Students could follow mainstream print media for a specific time period and social justice issue, then create a collage of articles and headlines to critique mainstream media approaches to the issue. What/whose story is told? What viewpoints are highlighted or ignored? How might they create a visual counter-narrative? What "headlines" would they create to illustrate their perspective? The works could then be posted on social media to initiate glocal (both global and local) conversation and feedback.

Figure 2. Recipe for Disaster (Author)

Figure 3: Abaya with Flag Pin by Helen Zughaib

Helen Zughaib, born in Beirut, Lebanon, came to the US to study art. Her colorful work visualizes Arab American life, focusing on women in particular (http://hzughaib.com/press.html). In viewing her work, students could be asked, "What does it mean to be American?" "What does an American look like?" "What stereotypes are associated with being American?" Students could then find magazine images of 'Americans' or create drawings. The teacher could display students' images alongside art works such as Zughaib's (see Figure 3) and begin a conversation about stereotypes and how they affect our perspectives and attitudes. Students might then be asked to examine popular video games for images of 'Americans' and use critical discourse to address how these games perpetuate stereotypes.

Figure 4. A Tale of Two Hoodies by Michael D'Antuono

What symbols and artifacts are associated with racism? Students could be asked to create a list of racist iconography. What makes these artifacts/symbols contentious? What do we think about the people we see associated with them? Students could be asked to create a visual counter-narrative using one or more of the artifacts/symbols from their list. Images could be uploaded to a class blog for students to comment on. D'Antuono's work (http://artandresponse.com/) provides strong visual commentary on social justice issues and has garnered a lot of controversial media attention that itself could be part of a lesson on First Amendment rights, art, and the media (see Figure 4).

Figure 5. Loosie Law by Justyne Fischer

After viewing YouTube clips of a variety of racially motivated aggressions, students could study Fischer's large format woodcut series of victims of racially motivated police brutality (see Figure 5)—Garner, Rice, Davis, and Martin (http://www.justynefischer.com/home)—and discuss techniques for creating simple visual narratives of complex racist events. They could then study the animation and video work of Hank Willis Thomas (*A Common Misunderstanding*, http://www.hankwillisthomas.com) and collaborate on the creation of digital animations of their narratives.

Conclusion

Social media greatly influences young people's attitudes and responses to visual culture imagery and messages. Thus, incorporating aspects of social media into the art curriculum provides real world, relevant, engaging, culturally responsive, and accessible ways for art educators to involve learners in critical discourse on difficult sociopolitical content. Using social media resources and visual art works that resist compliance with mainstream media messages teaches students to question and challenge mainstream media and visual culture messages rather than blindly accept them, and allows them to create self-empowering counter-narratives of events that impact them in unconscious and conscious ways.

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Investigating Race and Racism through African American Art and Artists

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ABSTRACT

Inspired by Victor Lowenfeld's teaching at The Hampton Institute (1939-1945) in Virginia, this study will explore why and how I address issues of race and racism in my classrooms at Francis Marion University in South Carolina, in which I regularly have more than 50% African American students. Methodologically, this study is grounded in critical race theory (CRT) that grew out of the critical legal studies movement in the 1970s and made its way into the field of education in the mid 1990s (Kraehe & Acuff, 2013). I believe that racially and culturally responsive teaching plays a critical role in helping students come to understand their ethnic self-esteem, cultural diversity, and social inclusion. Therefore, we as educators broadly need to re-evaluate our content and teaching goals in terms of the cultural, ethnic, racial, and social diversity of our students. Then, we will be able to renew and expand the role of art education in a democratic society.

KEYWORDS: Social Justice, Race, Racism, Self-Esteem, Self-Identification, Victor Lowenfeld

According to the *New York Post* on December 5, 2015, Mr. Joseph filed a lawsuit in the Manhattan Supreme Court to sue the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) for showing four "racist paintings" by Italian masters – *The Crucifixion* by Francesco Granacci; *The Holy Family with Angels* by Sebastiano Ricci; *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* by Tintoretto; and *The Resurrection* by Perugino (Nussbaum, 2015). Joseph claimed that Jesus had "black hair like wool and skin of bronze color," but the paintings depicted Jesus as "white and blond" (para. 3). He insisted that the artists completely changed Jesus' race "to make [it] aesthetically pleasing for white people," and that caused him "personal stress." Mr. Joseph said, "I am suing in a public venue which by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 can't discriminate on a protected basis" because the Met showed the "offensive aesthetic whitewashing" of Jesus' images, which represented "an extreme case of discrimination" in a public institution (Boniello, 2015, para. 9). The Met responded, "when they were painted, it was typical for artists to depict subjects with the same identity as the local audience. This

phenomenon occurs in many other cultures, as well" (Neuendorf, 2015, para. 8).

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), according to BBC on July 8, 2015, also cancelled *Kimono Wednesdays* after protesters decried "the event as racist, saying it propagated racial stereotypes and encouraged cultural appropriation" (Bofferra, 2015, para. 3). At the event, visitors were encouraged to try on a kimono to recreate the painting of Claude Monet's wife, Camille, and pose in front of the original *La Japonaise*. The MFA finally released a statement on the website that the museum apologized for offending any visitors with the event. While the MFA reported that "this idea was to give visitors a 'tactile experience' with the kimonos made in Japan to understand and experience the painting in a new way" (Rodney, 2015, para. 1), the protesters regarded the event as "typecasting and exoticizing Asian Americans" (para. 2).

In today's society, there is plenty of talk on race issues in mass and social media. Recently, the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Tony Robinson, and Walter Scott led to national debates over the use of deadly force by law enforcement. These incidents greatly inflamed race and social justice issues because all of the deaths were of African-Americans. However, the topic of race is an entirely different story in many schools, classrooms, and communities (Desai, 2010). Teachers tend to avoid controversial subjects like social discrimination, injustice, equality, and racism. When they do take place, classroom conversations on such topics remain simplistic or superficial. There is plenty of research demonstrating that children notice race at a young age and begin to form stereotypes (Nadworny, 2015). Therefore, if we do not deal with racial factors in our classrooms, we are essentially telling our students to figure it out themselves (Dell'Antonia, 2014; Milner, 2015).

Race – the ways in which we identify ourselves and are identified by others – affects our lives and opportunities, and defines our attitudes, thoughts, and feelings within society (Bolgatz, 2005; Kraehe, 2015). Race also plays a decisive role in many people being treated differently based on their physical characteristics such as skin color or hair texture. Race is a social construct and is enacted in society in different ways (Lee, 2012). Racial silence, therefore, does not transcend racial distinction; rather, it continues to disregard and neglect the educational needs of non-Whites (Kraehe, 2015). We as educators can create opportunities for our students to learn about and address the critical issues of social justice like racism that affect their lives (Anderson, Gussak, Hallmartk, & Paul, 2010; Dewhurst, 2014; Quinn, Ploof, & Hochtritt, 2012). Quinn (2005) said, "What better tools and what better place, than the arts and art education?" (p.190).

Research Purpose, Method, and Rationale

What is the proper role of art educators in responding to basic social justice issues like racism and race relations? How can art educators successfully address issues of race and racism in their classrooms? "Awareness is the start" (Quinn, 2005, p.189). Primarily, it is important that teachers understand that racial experiences are real; they impact students' social experiences and cause their worldviews to be different from others. Lee (2013) regards this realization as a starting point for educators to effectively bridge any racial divide between themselves and their students. However, "don't stop there" (Quinn, 2005, p.190). We should "question, connect, critique, and take action" (Dewhurst, 2012, p. 89).

This research is inspired by Nazi-controlled Austrian refugee and art educator Victor Lowenfeld's teaching at The Hampton Institute in Virginia – which later became Hampton University, a historically black college. I investigate why and how I address issues of race and racism in my classrooms at Francis Marion University in South Carolina, in which I regularly have more than 50% African American students from low-income backgrounds. Jung (2015) indicated, "Racism is not just a problem of one university or of the south. Rather, it is a problem that is deeply embedded in the history, culture, and institution of the U.S. society" (p. 216). Therefore, we as educators need to re-evaluate our goals and class content in terms of the cultural, ethnic, racial, and social diversity of our students. "If not, we are…teaching [our students] to devalue their own backgrounds" (McFee, 1998, p. 7). I believe racially and culturally responsive teaching plays a critical role in how students themselves come to understand their ethnic self-esteem, cultural diversity, and social inclusion.

Methodologically, this study draws from Critical Race Theory (CRT), which grew out of the critical legal studies movement in the 1970s and made its way into the field of education in the mid 1990s (Kraehe & Acuff, 2013). According to Desai and Marsh (2005), CRT emerged from primarily minority scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power, especially during the post Civil Rights period. Thus, CRT examines critical issues of social justice, liberation, economic empowerment, legal and criminal justice, race and racism, biases and stereotypes, political power, and underserved populations (Bagley & Castro-Salazar, 2012; Bryant, Moss, & Boudreau, 2015; Jung, 2015; Kraehe, 2015; Kraehe & Acuff, 2013; Spillane, 2015). According to Patton, Ranero, and Everett (2011), it is a movement committed to changing and disrupting racism and its associated social, legal, political, and educational consequences as a means for challenging dominant systems of racial oppression (as cited in McCoy & Rodricks, 2015).

Although CRT is somewhat new to art education inquiry, it continues to emerge and expand as a theoretical framework and analytical tool for combating racism and other forms of discrimination (Jung, 2015; Kraehe, 2015; Spillane, 2015). It insists that *race* is a key part of understanding today's educational system, and is substantiated in several tenets. One important position is that racism is ordinary and common in the everyday experience of most people of color in the United States, because "white Euro American experiences often have been the standard by which all other racial groups' experiences are measured… the experiences and interests of whites are normalized" (Kraehe & Acuff, 2013, p. 297). Second, race and racism are not products of biology or genetics, but are socially constructed in response to the shifting historical and political circumstances of human relationships and thought (Bagley & Castro-Salazar, 2012; Bryant, Moss, & Boudreau, 2015). In other words, they are "not objective, inherent, or fixed" (Bryant, Moss, & Boudreau, 2015, p. 3). Third, CRT conceptualizes race as interdependent with other social classifications such as ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation, because no person has a static, single, and unitary identity (Bryant, Moss, & Boudreau, 2015; Desai & Marsh, 2005).

With the approach of CRT at the heart of my pedagogical practice, this study will also share instructional resources to prepare for and engage in meaningful discussions with students. I discuss African American artists – Jacob Lawrence, Aaron Douglas, and Faith Ringgold [1]– and their racial and social resistance, struggles, and distress. According to Samella Lewis (2003), there is still a need for more research and analysis of African American art and artists since they have been given little or no attention in the history of the United States. Jacob Lawrence said, "I've always been interested in history, but they never taught Negro history in the public schools… I don't see how a history of the United States can be written honestly without including the Negro" (HumanitiesWeb.org, para. 4). Nevertheless, Aaron Douglas said, "art and creative expression could bridge the gap between the African American and white worlds" (Kernes, 2007, p.6). He also believed in the power of education for positive change in African American life (Lewis, 2003).

1 There are many other important African American artists (i.e. Augusta Savage, Betye Saar, John Biggers, Kara Walker, Kerry Marshall, Laura Simpson, etc.) who have continually illustrated the historical, racial, social, and ethnic stories such as social discrimination, injustice, racism, and segregation of African Americans in U.S. society, but I chose three artists – Jacob Lawrence, Aaron Douglas, and Faith Ringgold – for this paper due to my personal interest in them.

Addressing Racial/Ethnic Self-Esteem through Art Education

> One of the greatest challenges for this nation is to ensure that achievement gaps in all areas of education among racial and ethnic minorities are eliminated. This includes the improvement of… educational experiences… and graduation rates of students from low-income backgrounds. The National Task Force on the Arts in Education believes that greater access to arts education can serve as an effective tool in closing the achievement gap, increasing the number of underserved students that achieve at the highest levels in education. (College Board, 2009, p.11)

Research shows that "people who feel good about their own race do better academically" (Nadworny, 2015, para. 4). Much research about racial identity has demonstrated that African American students have a negative self-image because one's self-concept is influenced by perceptions of the way one is viewed by others (Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan, & Rowley, 2004). Consequently, African American students have suffered from low self-esteem or self-hatred because of society's negative views of African Americans; people see them not as individual human beings, but rather as one racial group.

Findings from the research using "The Doll Test" (Brown, 1947) showed that a majority of African American children preferred to play with white dolls and identified the white dolls as having positive characteristics. Researchers concluded that prejudice, segregation, and discrimination created feelings of inferiority among African American children, who hated themselves for being 'black' or wished that they were 'white,' and damaged their self-esteem. Since then, many researchers have concluded that a majority of African Americans see themselves "not with members of the broader society, but with other African Americans" because of racial segregation in the United States and society's negative perceptions of their racial group (Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998, p. 716).

Today's neighborhoods, churches, and schools still remain racially divided; poverty, unemployment, occupation, and access to health care vary disproportionally by race (Helling, n.d). In public institutions, students' ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds are increasingly diverse. Milner (2003) stated that students of color will make up nearly half of the American student population by 2020. However, the majority of teachers are white, middle class, and female, so students of color are at higher risk of failing in schools (Desai, 2010; Milner, 2003). The field of art education must re-examine teaching practices to integrate sociopolitical issues like social justice, equality, racism, discrimination, and prejudice into art classrooms; art educators need to develop appropriate pedagogical

methods to be able to talk meaningfully and effectively with students of color in their classrooms. Teachers especially need to highlight social justice within art education to address the problems that arise as a result of what playwright Anna Deavera Smith (1993) calls "our struggle to be together in our differences" (as cited in Desai & Chalmers, 2007, p. 7), so we are able to renew and expand the role of art in a democratic society.

Understanding Racism: Victor Lowenfeld at Hampton Institute

Victor Lowenfeld is one of the most influential art educators of the 20th century, and is primarily acknowledged as the author of *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947), in which he structured his philosophy of art education. He viewed the role of art education not as the aesthetic product, but as a means for developing students' creative self-expressions "as a form of individual personality and identity formation" as well as "relationships with others" (Zimmerman, 2010, p. 85). He believed that it was educationally immoral to restrict any individual from creative art expression, regardless of any situation in life. As a European Jewish refugee art teacher at The Hampton Institute – a historically African American college – he deeply felt his students' conditions of discrimination, prejudice, segregation, injustice, and racism in the United States. According to his analysis and perspective of African Americans (Lowenfeld, 1945), Lowenfeld knew that the development of their self-identity was influenced or limited by their social experiences in the United States,

> At the present, the Negro artist as a member of a minority group is – like any other member of his race – very conscious of the restrictions enforced upon him through his minority status… I myself, being escaped from the claws of Hitler Germany, remember very well how my whole thinking and doing became paralyzed when Hitler marched into Vienna, the city in which I lived, and the only thought I was capable of was centered around the idea of how to get out of this hell. The awareness of the self and the problems arising from it is in value relationship to our physical, emotional, and mental freedom. (as cited in Holt, 2012, p. 11)

As a teacher for racially and socially marginalized African American students, Lowenfeld worked to resist attitudes and barriers of institutionalized racism and focused on his pedagogy as social justice art education toward the goals of inter-racial cooperation, equality, activism, resistance, and empowerment.

> Lowenfeld's program at Hampton was an antecedent in the struggle for civil rights as his African American students influenced the larger art world and helped create social change. It represents a historical exemplar of art education advancing social justice values as students and professors worked to break down…institutionalized racism through public art, leadership, and social responsibility. (Holt, 2012, p. 8)

He believed that students had intrinsic potential to find their own voices in the arts in order to pursue the complexity of their identities; the discovery of self-identification in the arts was therefore one of the basic factors central to creative expression (Young, 2013). African American scholar Samella Lewis, Lowenfeld's former student at Hampton, said:

> To work against segregation, prejudice… [Lowenfeld] encouraged us to use art as an instrument or a tool to combat serious deprivation and prejudice, and the evils of discrimination. He forced us to take a position in relation to humanity and inhumane treatment of other peoples. (Holt, 2012, p.12)

From his own personal experience, Lowenfeld knew that "a person should never deny her or his background" (Young, 2013, p. 51), but rather address his/her social, cultural, political, racial, and historical experiences in the arts creatively and sensitively because "the purpose for teaching the arts is to contribute to the understanding of the social and cultural landscape that each individual inhabits" (Efland, 2000, p.171). In the search for identity from cultural and social perspectives, he also believed in the importance of art therapy through arts education to develop students' creative thinking, psychological well-being, mental development, and confidence that their own thoughts were valuable, along with an understanding of their cultural heritage (Leshnoff, 2013). Lowenfeld had an inimitable relationship with his students, one that demonstrated his deep understanding of how racial discrimination, segregation, and prejudice affected his students in South. Lee (2013) signified that teachers' racial attitudes and dispositions towards students of color are "critical components in ensuring equality (equal treatment) and equity (fair and just treatment) in education" (p. 142), and that significantly impacts students' achievement and understandings of themselves and others.

Art as a Tool: Self-Identification, Cultural Diversity, and Democratic Society

> When I was in middle school, I was bullied for *not being black enough*, and when I transferred to a private high school,

> I was bullied for *being black*. I had so many insecurities when I started college, but it was the awesome art faculty at Francis Marion University and art itself that helped me gain confidence in myself. I don't regret being bullied; it had shaped me to be who I am and had transformed me to be sensitive to others. Turing negative energy and experiences into something positive is a creative way to live. ("The Art and soul of spring," 2016, p. 51)

Smith (1996) claimed, "When the African American really considered his or her own experience, a different style of art was produced…" (as cited in Young, 2013, p. 52). Many researchers have demonstrated that African American students who felt more positive about African Americans and about being African American had higher self-esteem (Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan, & Rowley, 2004). However, the art world has largely ignored or discredited non-European cultures while deifying European-descended artists and cultures. From the white dominated mainstream art world, European ethnocentrism has led to "the distortion, devaluation and even the abrogation of non-European art practices and aesthetics" (Bowen, 2008, p. 111). Chalmers (1978) criticized "racism as the cause of the Eurocentric bias in art education" (as cited in Bowen, 2008, p.104). We need to conduct extensive research on the differences in values, attitudes, behaviors, traditions, histories, and styles of lives held by diverse cultural and ethinic groups. For example, McFee (1998) asked:

> Look at what we are teaching them about art. Are we helping [students] … preserve and develop symbols that help them preserve their cultural continuity, to identify and communicate…? Are we able to help them retain and respect their own culture at the same time that we give them the choice of accepting and appreciating all the visual arts? (p. 8)

Lowenfeld acknowledged the importance of self-identification, and part of this process for African Americans began by understanding more about their African roots and inheritances (Young, 2013). At The Hampton Institute, his students had little exposure to African art; in an interview with student John Biggers,

> he recalled, "you have to remember that the word *black* meant the *devil*. It meant something negative… so Africa itself had a completely negative connotation" (see Clayton & McConnell, 1992). He later embraced art practice as a way to reflect the spirit and style of his identity and cultural roots: "I realized that I had a heritage, and inheritance that I was entirely unaware of before" (Biggers in Heyd, 1999, p.10). (as cited in Holt, 2012, p.12)

Lowenfeld used Hampton's African art collection to emphasize his students' cultural heritage, and he taught about African American artists who illustrated their struggles with education, culture, economic, and social deprivation in their art (Holt, 2012; Young, 2013). As an art educator at Fracis Marion University who teaches a majority of African American students, I also believe that "if art is not related to their own past experience, to their own goals, the beginning experiences upon which further learning in art can be built will not take place" (McFee, 1998, p. 20).

However, when I began my teaching in the South, I had little notion of where to begin and how to do so. From my second year of teaching in 2008, I assigned students to visit a local Florence County Museum to study Florence-born African American artist William H. Johnson, along with some historical works of art, and then write a short essay with several pre-assigned questions. I realized that students deeply engaged with the questions and came to understand cultural, social, and racial issues of civil rights, social justice, discrimination, segregation, and racism in the South as well as their own heritage and cultural background through the works of art.

> *Pee Dee Indians* and *Slaves* captured my heart in some way… There was a huge picture of an Indian that was amazing. It is a story filled with betrayal, defeat, reconstruction, and triumph. The Pee Dee Indians were warm-hearted people who were gracious enough to help defend explorers during the Yemasse War in 1715. They allowed *white man* to enter their land and eventually it was the *white man* who betrayed them and took their land over. As a result, the Pee Dee Indians had to endure great hardships caused by them, but by passing down their heritage, storytelling, and the cultivation of strong bonds allowed them to remain clan members. Surprisingly, the Pee Dee Indians today are located in Marlboro, Marion, and Dillon counties in SC… A room that focused on slavery was interesting, especially the painting of African American rice harvesters slavery time. (Dominique, 2015, p. 1)

> The painting I enjoyed was the Blue Bird Tea Room painting made in 1986. In the painting, there were wealthy *white* people sitting at the table, waiting to get served. The painting looked like a warm beautiful blue… I dislike that the Blue Bird Tea Room was only for *whites* and the African Americans had their own kitchen further north that was not nice at all like Blue Bird Tea Room. But this painting grabbed my attention… (Anderson, 2015, p. 1)

Among numerous works of art in the museum, African American

students were readily engaged in the works that were related to or connected to their racial roots. They also interpreted the works of art from their racial points of view. Therefore, when eduators are able to teach students about their own cultural legacies, it creates equal opportunities for all students from different social, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to function effectively in a diverse democratic society (Young, 2011).

Teaching Critical Issues of Social Justice through African American Art and Artists

> While people often assume that social justice art education must be based on controversial and overly political issues (i.e. race, violence, discrimination, etc.), that is not always the case. Rather, as long as the process of making art offers participants a way to construct knowledge, critically analyze an idea, and take action in the world, then they are engaged in the practice of social justice art making. (Quinn, Ploof, & Hochtritt, 2012, p. 7)

I believe one simple start is to include various issues of social justice through different works of art and artists from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds in the content of art classes. Art can be used to elevate and promote awareness of social justice; art educators can "facilitate social justice through various media, promote change and clarity, and generate healing, trust, and bridge building" (Gussak, 2010, p. vii). In this section, I will share limited instructional resources to explore the ways in which I have combined critical issues of social justice, especially race and race relations, with three African American artists – Jacob Lawrence, Aaron Douglas, and Faith Ringgold.

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000)

Jacob Lawrence said, "I am not a politician, I am an artist, just trying to do my part to bring this thing about … This is my genre… the happiness, tragedies, and the sorrows of mankind as realized in the teeming black ghetto" (HumanitiesWeb.org, para. 1-3). He often portrayed vital African American figures (i.e. Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, etc.) and periods in African American history. In particular, he was known for his 60-panel *Migration Series*, depicting portrayals of the Great Migration, when more than six million African Americans moved from the rural South to the industrial North after World War I for a better quality of life. However, African Americans experienced intensified levels of racial violence, ethnic riots, segregation, injustice, and discrimination on the way to the north as well as upon their arrival. Using primary colors with extreme simplicity, he illustrated the immeasurable struggles of African Americans as a result of their "Negro" race. Lewis (1990) stated, "he is a social artist of great ability who speaks loudly and clearly through his work" (p. 131).

Instructional Resource: Jacob Lawrence's *Migration Series* are co-owned by the Phillips Collection and the Museum of Modern Art. The following museum websites offer abundant teaching tips and tools, worksheets, games, and timeline information about Jacob Lawrence's life and works for teachers: Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series (http://www.phillipscollection.org/migration_series/index.html); Jacob Lawrence Over the Line (http://www.phillipscollection.org/sites/default/files/interactive/jacob-lawrence-over-the-line/html/nonflash.html); and One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series (http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2015/onewayticket/)

Aaron Douglas (1899-1979)

Aaron Douglas was one of the first African American artists to illustrate racial themes. He developed a distinctive style with the rhythms of restricted colors and silhouetted forms in fractured space. He combined modernist forms and African motifs with the harsh realities of African American life, history, and labor, including segregation, lynching, racial riots, human rights issues, and hope for a better future through his powerful paintings (Douglas, 2007). His most well-known works are large-scale murals portraying topics from African American history and contemporary life such as the Great Migration, the Proclamation of Emancipation, lynching, slavery, labor, Jazz music, and dance. He synthesized aspects of modern European, ancient Egyptian, and African sculpture. In particular, the four panels of *Aspects of Negro Life* at New York Public Library illustrate the African cultural background of American Negroes. They represented his distinctively modernist style with graphically geometric forms, African sculpture motifs, and African American Jazz music/dance. Douglas said,

> Our problem is to conceive, develop, establish an art era. Not white art painting black...let's bare our arms and plunge them deep through laughter, through pain, through sorrow, through hope, through disappointment, into the very depths of the souls of our people and drag forth material crude, rough, neglected. Then let's sing it, dance it, write it, paint it. Let's do the impossible… (Urton, 2009, para. 2).

In addition, Douglas believed in the power of education for positive change in African American life, founded the art department at

historically black Fisk University in Tennessee, and worked for nearly 30 years in teaching African American students (Lewis, 2003).

Instructional Resources: KU Spencer Museum of Art provides both Aaron Douglas Teacher Resources (http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu/resources/teacher_resource.pdf) and Family Guide (http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu/resources/family_guide.pdf), including a brief history and major figures of the Harlem Renaissance, a biography and the art of Aaron Douglas, and lesson/activity ideas for teaching. The Smithsonian American Art Museum (http://americanart.si.edu/pr/library/2008/douglas/douglas_wall_text.pdf) also offers detailed information about the museum's collections of Aaron Douglas and his works.

Faith Ringgold (b. 1930)

Faith Ringgold is best known for her narrative quilts, especially *Tar Beach* (1988); she combined storytelling, painting, and quilt making. In this work, a little girl named Cassie goes up to the roof and dreams she can fly. She imagines that she has the power (political, social, and economic) to make life better for her family. Regardless of any situation in life, Ringgold said, "I just decided when somebody says you can't do something, do more of it" (Ringgold, 1996, p. 8). She said, " I'm inspired by people who rise above their adversity. That's my deepest inspiration… I'm inspired by the fact that if I really, really want to, I think I can do anything" (p. 8). Ringgold has used her art to remark on racism, gender inequality, social class, and civil rights. Her earliest series, *American People* (1962-1967) and *Black Light* (1967-1969), explored her experience of violence and ethnic struggles as a black woman in the United States. In particular, her powerful works, *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger* (1969) depicted the word *die* behind the stars and *nigger* within the strips on the image of the American flag, and *The Flag is Bleeding* (1967) superimposed a depiction of three interlocking figures through a curtain of blood dripping from the flag's red stripes. She was arrested and fined for violating the Flag Protection Act of 1968, but she claimed, "It would be impossible for me to picture the American flag just as a flag, as if that is the whole story. I need to communicate my relationship with this flag based on my experience as a black woman in America" (National Museum of Women in the Arts, 2013). As a political activist and female artist, Ringgold has long been involved in the struggle for equality in race and gender; she is now one of the most important female figures in art: "My art is for everyone, but it is about me…" (Lewis, 1990, p. 164).

Instructional Resource: There are many educational resources for artist Faith Ringgold including books, websites, and blogs. The National Museum of Women in the Arts' American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold's Paintings of the 1960s: Educator Guide (https://nmwa.org/sites/default/files/shared/educator_guide-faith_rinngold.pdf) provides a valuable reference and teaching resources including classroom activities and handouts for teachers. In addition, there are great videos on YouTube that can be used to teach Faith Ringgold's works and life including Ringgold: Race and Segregation in New York (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5nz3lGaVes) and Faith Ringgold: Artist & Activist (9https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Comf9SetjRA0).

Today, African American artists are energetic participants in a cultural revolution. Driven by needs that are both aesthetic and social, they are in search of cultural identity, self-discovery, and self-esteem (Lewis, 2003). They are not dominated by the European aesthetic standards, but instead are responding to their own life styles by creating art from the depths of their own needs, actions, and reactions (Smith, 1996; Lewis, 2003). They are also unique in their artistic styles and themes, depicting personal struggles, political turmoil, cultural conflict, racism, social discrimination, and African American music and dance. Young (2013) stated that self-identification of African American artists was often influenced by the history of African Americans in the United States and their struggles against racism, segregation, and injustice.

Conclusion

I believe art education can foster understanding and serve the purposes of social justice. Bolgatz (2005) claims that talking about race and racism in many schools and classrooms is a meaningful activity for the following reasons:

- School is a place where students learn to live democratically.
- We have a moral imperative to teach students about social responsibility.
- Race and racism should be critical aspects of the school curriculum.
- Talking about race and racism helps students understand their worlds (p. 6)

I believe if we as educators are to promote justice, democracy, and academic integrity for students in our schools and improve their quality of life, we need to evaluate our curricular goals and ensure that they are relevant for our students and their needs.

Conversations about race should be critical topics for African American students – how race affects their lives, how racism worked in the past, and how it works today (Bolgatz, 2005). I believe such conversations profoundly affect our students' lives

and their prospects of being good citizens in constructing a society where everyone has equal rights. According to Lee (2012), teachers play a substantial role in how students learn what it means to respect, understand, and value diverse cultures in society. How future teachers define concepts like race, racism, and diversity will ultimately be reflected in their teaching, and their understanding of these concepts' overall impacts in what they choose to include and exclude in their curriculum. As an art educator, I believe we can teach students to understand the challenging issues of race, racism, and social justice in society through a more socially responsive visual art education to connect meaningfully to students' lives and lived experiences. Art educators should teach more than just 'art subjects' in the classroom.

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Media Arts Education in the ~~Post~~-Racial Classroom: An Interview with Janaya Greene About the Short Film, *Veracity*

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ABSTRACT

In the fall of 2013, during her senior year at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy in South Side Chicago, Janaya Greene wrote the screenplay for the short film, Veracity, in her film study class. With the support of their teacher, Mr. Eugene Hazzard, Janaya and her classmates participated in Scenarios USA's curriculum and national writing competition (www.scenariosusa.org). Middle and high school students in Chicago, New York, and Cleveland wrote stories and screenplays in response to the question, What's the Real Deal About Power and Place? Along with winning submissions from New York and Cleveland, a national selection committee chose Veracity to be transformed into a short film. Veracity explores what it means to come out in high school from the point of view of two African American female characters. In this interview, screen writer Greene talks with art education professor Karyn Sandlos about how media stereotypes shaped her experiences growing up, and how a film about same sex desire and friendship between two young Black women is provoking critical conversations amongst audiences of middle and high school students.

Keywords: media education, art education, stereotypes, sexuality, gender, race, LGBTQ relationships, curriculum, teaching and learning.

"The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different, rather than how we are similar."
–Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, 2009

The 2008 election of the first African American president of the United States prompted debate over whether or not this historic moment signaled a decisive "post-racial" move in the direction of equality. In the wake of the election of President Obama, the media discourse of post-racial America became a prominent framing device in a national conversation about race. While the term "post-race" is often invoked to bolster arguments about the fading significance of race in the meaning of contemporary social life, other definitions bring more complicated versions of the story of race and representation in America into focus. Squires, in *The Post-Racial Mystique: Media and Race in the Twenty-First Century* (2014), demonstrates how media discourses of post-racial America spin a vision of "an already achieved multicultural nation" (p. 6) built upon equal opportunity and access. Squires describes an aspirational media vision of post-racial America that addresses young people as individuals and consumers:

> Generation Millennial—also known as Gen M, the most multiracial generation in American history—are described as free to interact with a smorgasbord of cultures, races, ethnicities, and religions without any further need for political activism. They can literally pick and choose how racial identity matters to them, as well as take their pick of colleges, workplaces, neighborhoods, and consumer goods in ways their forebears who fought for racial equality only dreamed. (pp. 14-15)

Squires argues that mainstream media—including news, reality television and racially-charged comedy shows—draws upon neo-liberal post-racial ideologies in which serious consideration of the historical contexts and structures that produce racism is replaced by blame for individuals who make poor choices. According to Squires (ibid), a post-racial media discourse "helps facilitate a sense of safe diversity, satisfying the need to bring color into the frame without conflict" (p. 7). On these terms, race becomes a personal attribute to be celebrated or derided on a level playing field of diversity and difference.

In recent times, a very different, critical story has begun to emerge in response to neo-liberal media discourses of post-race. For example, journalist and author Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015), in his article, "There is No Post-Racial America," attempts to demystify media discourses of post-racialism as "moving beyond" race by acknowledging the persistent effects of systemic racism in shaping the lives and opportunities of people of color. Coates argues that in the context of Obama-era media discussions of race, "the term 'post-racial' is almost never used in earnest" (para. 1). For Coates, making earnest use of the term post-racial in a national conversation about race would mean moving beyond mythologies of racial harmony and toward historic frameworks; for example, mainstream media might examine the complicated and charged relationship between the history of U.S. slavery and recent events involving the detainment and shooting of unarmed African Americans by police. A post-racial conversation, according to Coates, is a place to foreground complexity by "asking the right questions about racism" (para. 1).

Middle and high school students across the U.S. bring their questions about race and racism to school every day. Students' questions about race and their knowledge of current and historical events are shaped by personal experiences within their peer groups, families, and communities, and upon the kinds of post-racial media stories and representations in which discourses of individual choice hold considerable sway. As Patricia Hill Collins (2009) points out, in *Another Kind of Public Education: Race, Schools, the Media and Democratic Possibilities*,

> Whether we like it or not, for youth, the media provides an education that often contradicts and supplants school-based learning. New technologies are the currency of youth, and critical education requires a media literacy that prepares youth to be critical consumers of media as well as cultural creators. (p. xi)

For teachers who are interested in the potential of media arts education as a means to help students unpack the oversimplifications of a post-racial media discourse, important questions include: What kinds of media resources are available to help art educators foreground the voices of students of color and LGBTQ students? How does youth driven media-making create space for exploring the conflicts and contradictions within students' experiences of race and racism?

This article explores these questions through an in-depth interview with a young author, 19-year-old Janaya Greene, about her experience of writing and co-directing *Veracity*, a short, educational film that explores issues of LGBTQ sexuality, race, homophobia, and belonging in a predominantly African American high school on Chicago's south side. The format of the article is informed by the methods of media arts-based researchers Ryoo, Lin and Grauer (2014), who use a visual essay to "explore the significance of a youth film production as a cultural form" (p. 128). Ryoo et. al., in their analysis of a short film made by a 17-year-old First Nations filmmaker, look closely at how the aesthetic possibilities of film enable the young filmmaker "to articulate the subtleties of human experience and work against stereotypes" (ibid). Research in visual culture and media arts education also places emphasis on the importance of aesthetic tools as a means for young people to address the issues that affect their lives with narrative and emotional complexity. For example, Brushwood Rose and Low (2014) suggest that media storytelling can be understood "not only as a source of empirical data, but as reflecting processes of creation and self-representation through which complex and contradictory meanings and experiences are revealed" (p. 30).

In this article, Greene reflects on her experience of writing, co-directing, and later screening and facilitating discussions about her short film for audiences of middle and high school students. Greene's film, *Veracity*, which can be viewed following a link at the end of the article, was produced by Scenarios USA, a national, non-profit organization "that uses writing and filmmaking to engage young people on issues of social justice, identity and health" (www.scenariosusa.org). Scenarios USA asks young people, "What matters to you?" and uses their responses to create a school-based curriculum and national writing competition that supports students in telling stories about the issues that affect their lives. While the stories are grounded in students' personal experiences, students also learn how to use fictional characters and scenarios to expand the possibilities for identification and create stories that other young people will be able to relate to.

In the fall of 2013, middle and high school students in three cities—Chicago, New York, and Cleveland—wrote stories and screenplays and created visual arts projects in response to Scenarios USA's curricular question, *What's the Real Deal About Power and Place?* With the support of their film studies teacher, Mr. Eugene Hazzard, Greene and her classmates submitted their work to Scenarios USA's national writing competition.[1] A selection committee of teachers, filmmakers and community stakeholders chose Greene's screenplay, *Veracity*, to be transformed into a short film.[2] According to Greene, "*Veracity* is about a girl named Olivia and her attraction to a new classmate at her school, Imani. Olivia is a cheerleader, and she is really outgoing. She could be the stereotypical popular girl, but she's not mean at all. She gets along with most people in her school. Imani had a girlfriend at her previous school and her mother didn't agree with it, so she was kicked out of her house. We just see Imani trying to stay low key and observe what is going on around her. She is not all that interested in making new friends or putting herself out there. *Veracity* explores the romantic interest between these two characters, and the pressures they face after they are outed."

1 Over 650 students from New York, Cleveland, and Chicago submitted writing and artwork to the national competition.

2 In New York City, the winning submission was high school junior Lani Pringle's screenplay for the short film, *Aleah*. This film explores themes of poverty, teen pregnancy, and domestic violence in teen relationships (https://scenariosusa.org/shop/real-deal-films/aleah/). In Cleveland, the winning submission was written by Skyler Edge, a high school sophomore. The film, *House Not Home*, focuses on the experiences of a gender fluid teenager who is navigating identity, bullying, and coming out (https://scenariosusa.org/shop/bullying/house-not-home/).

In the following interview, Greene talks about how media stereotypes shaped her experiences growing up, and how a film about same sex desire and friendship between two young Black women is provoking critical conversations amongst classroom audiences of middle and high school students. The interview is an example of what it can look like for a young person to resist post-racial media messages that treat identity as a preference or commodity for young people. Instead, Greene takes up an active position as critical storyteller and media-maker, taking seriously the multifaceted ways in which identity matters to youth of color and LGBTQ youth. The interviewer, Karyn Sandlos, a faculty member at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), worked in collaboration with Scenarios USA on the 2013 Real Deal Power and Place curriculum implementation in Chicago. Sandlos and Greene met during the filming of *Veracity* at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy.

An Interview with Janaya Greene

Sandlos – *Veracity* looks at how two main characters, Olivia and Imani, experience same sex desire and homophobia in high school. Olivia and Imani are both African American. The student population at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, where *Veracity* was filmed, is roughly 80% African American, and 15% Hispanic. Also, Roseland, the neighborhood where the school is located on the South Side of Chicago, is predominantly African American. Why was it important to you to tell this story in this particular high school?

Figure 1. Still from Veracity. Olivia in the cafeteria.

Greene – High school is a growing period. When I went to Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, I picked up on different ways people feel about same gender loving relationships. I'm from the South Side, from Brainerd Park, another African American neighborhood. I've grown up around Black people, so I felt like I wanted to say something about my community. A lot of the time when we talk about the rights of Black people, Black queer people are left out of the picture. Historically, that's just how it's been. Even today there are still people who say they are fighting for Black lives, but if it's not a straight Black life, it doesn't matter. I wanted to explore this in my film. Growing up, I heard a lot of people, my family members and friends, speak about the issues that affect Black people without being inclusive of Black people who are at different intersections.

Figure 2. Still from Veracity. Olivia and Imani meet in drama class.

Sandlos – How does *Veracity* try to challenge stereotypes about the experiences of LGBTQ young people in high school?

Greene – People think that you can look at somebody and know their sexual orientation. They will take what you wear and think that they can read you. Also, people will see masculine identified women and assume that they are lesbian, and they don't necessarily think that a feminine woman can be lesbian. That's something I wanted to challenge. That's why my character, Olivia, is a cheerleader. In high school, cheerleaders are looked up to. People don't often go after them. In *Veracity*, there is a scene where Olivia goes back to school the day after she and Imani are discovered together at James' party, and she finds a note in her locker with the word 'dyke' on it. She throws the note down on the floor and runs out of the school.

Sandlos – There is a lot at stake for Olivia, and also for Imani, who had to leave her previous school because of homophobia. How does *Veracity* try to capture the conflicts and contradictions these two characters are experiencing?

Greene – There is a scene in *Veracity* where Olivia goes looking for Imani, who is in the auditorium curating a set for drama class. It is the day after the party at James's house. In this scene, Imani tries to minimize what happened between her and Olivia at the party, claiming that she was drunk, even though she wasn't. Imani explains to Olivia how she ended up at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy. Even though Imani rejects Olivia in this scene, at the same time this conversation helps Olivia, and the audience, understand where Imani is coming from. She just got out of one difficult situation and she's not trying to hop into another one.

Sandlos – How does *Veracity* address the issue of young people providing support and resources to other LGBTQ youth?

Greene – Olivia is basically an outcast at school, eating her lunch in the bathroom by herself, and so on. In one scene, a girl named Sage approaches her in the bathroom and shares that she is bisexual. Sage gives Olivia a pamphlet for the Center on Halsted in Chicago,[3] and encourages her to join a support group for LGBTQ youth. There, Olivia meets other LGBTQ youth and hears their coming out stories, including a popular football player who was outed at his school. Olivia is able to identify with his experience. It's important that Olivia gets the information about the Center on Halsted from Sage, instead of from an adult or teacher. It helps Olivia understand that she's not alone; other young people are struggling as well.

Sandlos – When you were writing the screenplay for *Veracity*, there was a national debate going on about same sex marriage. What was the conversation like at your school?

Greene – It was an active conversation. There was a debate in one of my English classes. I remember an African American girl and a Hispanic boy who was openly gay. They were so close, like best friends.

3 The Center on Halsted is "the Midwest's most comprehensive community center dedicated to advancing community and securing the health and well-being of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people of Chicagoland" (http://www.centeronhalsted.org/cohoverview.html)

And she was against same sex marriage. I just didn't understand that.

Figure 3. Still from Veracity. Olivia in the restroom.

Sandlos – Did you feel like you were seeing a lot of contradictions in terms of how people thought about issues of sexuality and race, and how they tried to work out a position for themselves?

Greene – All the time. And it didn't make any sense. The teaching that we get about Black history in high school and middle school is so brief, and so 'cookie cutter,' it doesn't tell the whole story. I'm minoring in African American history in college, and I'm learning about Black LGBTQ civil rights leaders, like Bayard Rustin. He was so influential in Back history and civil rights, and in organizing the March on Washington, and he does not get credit because he was gay. Not all Black people are religious, but religion has played a big role in our history, and a lot of Black people use religion to defend their position that same sex marriage isn't right.

Sandlos – How did your thinking about LGBTQ relationships change through the process of making *Veracity*?

Greene - After many debates among family, friends and classmates, I realized that the issue was not, "Is being gay right or wrong?" but rather, "How do humans, gay or straight, deserve to be treated?" It's important to move beyond questions of right and wrong because everyone has an opinion. Naturally, people won't always agree. But what I think most people would agree on is that everyone deserves happiness. People owe each other the right to happiness. I think if it's looked at from that perspective more people will understand why it's important to accept LGBTQ relationships.

Sandlos – But people sometimes feel conflicted about having different allegiances. For instance, a person might wonder, how can I be religious and also support same sex marriage? The characters in your film are also conflicted. They aren't sure how they feel. There is internal conflict between wanting to be open about their experience of same sex desire, and wanting to be accepted by their peers and families. How is this kind of conflict important to the story that you wanted to tell in *Veracity*?

Greene – In high school your social life is such a big deal, and Olivia definitely cares about her status. I think that she knows that most of her peers are against same sex relationships and so she is conflicted between wanting to follow her heart and her desires, and wanting to stay safe in her position. For Imani, it's about safety, and having a place to stay. Being kicked out of the house is a reality for a lot of LGBTQ kids in high school. Imani's conflict is between staying safe and staying out of the spotlight at this school, and also liking Olivia.

Sandlos – You tried out several different endings for *Veracity*. Can you talk about this part of the writing process?

Greene – In the first ending I wrote, Olivia committed suicide. I chose that ending because when I did the research for this project, I was really shocked at the numbers of LGBTQ people who consider suicide and who commit suicide. I wanted my audience to see that the things you say can have a big impact, and the way you treat people has a big impact. Words can be very powerful. I ended up changing the ending. I found a way for Olivia and Imani to be there for each other. I didn't want people to think that suicide is the only option. That's not the end of the story for a lot of LGBTQ people.

Sandlos – So, you had to think a lot about the message you wanted to send through your film, and how that message would be received by an audience of your peers.

Greene – I wasn't aware at first that a lot of films about LGBTQ young people focus on suicide or self-harm. When I realized this, I didn't want this to be the only story being told. You want there to be so many variations on what the ending could be like for everybody.

Sandlos – What do you think the impact of this open-endedness is on young people who are watching your film?

Figure 4. Still from Veracity. Imani in the cafeteria.

Greene – The novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the danger of the single story. I think that people use what they see in the media to formulate opinions and help them understand things that feel unfamiliar. When you get that one story, or that one stereotype, if you are not a part of that particular group you might think, "that's how it is, that's how those people are." The ambiguity gives the audience a chance to come up with their own endings. All of them are possible. For people who don't identify as LGBTQ there is room to try to understand what Olivia and Imani are going through in a more active way.

Sandlos – What is it like for you to watch *Veracity* with an audience of your peers?

Figure 5. Still from Veracity. Olivia approaches her locker.

Greene – We did a premier in Chicago at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, and we did a smaller screening in a church with a mixed group of high school students who were Black, His-

panic, and White. It's still nerve-wracking for me to watch the film with other young people. The room gets super-silent when Olivia walks through the hallway toward her locker the day after the party and finds the note. When Olivia and Imani start making out at the party, some kids in the audience will make a big deal out of it. The hyper-sexualization of lesbians gets perpetuated in the way some young people react to this scene. But I think this is also an important scene to have in the film. Young people value other young people's experiences and perspectives. If they hear about something from someone who is on their level, they are going to be more open about it. They will feel like they can relate more. *Veracity* takes that approach from the beginning. The film is coming from a young person, so other young people feel like they can connect with that. Also, the film is short, so viewers feel like they move through a lot of emotions in a short span of time. For instance, young people find it hard to believe how quickly Olivia's peers flipped on her. They say, "I don't think it would have happened like that in my school," or "This happened to someone at my school." They start making these kinds of connections pretty quickly.

Sandlos – *Veracity* asks people to think about somebody's experience that might be different from their own. Why was this important to you?

Greene – I hope the film will help people understand that difference doesn't have to be bad. At the time when I was making *Veracity* I identified as bisexual, but I was not at all in a position to talk about it. I was thinking of ways I could hide my bisexuality from my family and peers. I didn't want to deal with it. Watching the film with other people was even more nerve-wracking because I felt like I was 'telling on myself.' I was asking myself, "How can you justify being straight and speaking on LGBTQ situations?" *Veracity* influenced me because I realized there was no point in fighting with myself.

Sandlos – When *Veracity* premiered in at the Columbus Drive Auditorium at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), there was a discussion about representations of same sex desire in TV and film. An audience member asked the question, "isn't it trendy now, to see women kissing and getting together with other women on TV?" How do you react to this question?

Figure 6. Still from Veracity. Olivia and Imani at the party.

Greene – Lesbians are hyper-sexualized in the media. Lesbian relationships aren't seen as serious relationships. The mainstream media and TV are feeding that image to us, and it is very simplistic. *Veracity* doesn't try to generalize about Black lesbian women's experience, or about Black people, for that matter. This is a very specific story, set in a specific time and place. When I was growing up, I heard about racism, but I did not know that the reason I was living in certain circumstances was because I was Black, or because I had Black parents. I didn't understand that when the media talks about these 'bad' neighborhoods on the South Side of Chicago, it's because of race. I knew that Chicago was the most segregated city in the United States, but I didn't understand why until I got to college.

I wanted my story to focus on Black lesbian characters because representation has always been a big deal for me. Growing up, I used to love *Teen Vogue*, but it shot my self-confidence because there just were no little Black girls in there. More recently, *Teen Vogue* has been doing much better, and I'm so happy about that. But when I was younger that magazine didn't serve me. A lot of things didn't serve me. So when I wrote the screenplay for *Veracity*, it was really important to me to represent Black people, and especially Black women. When we talk about representation, and when we talk about Black people, it's always Black men. Black women get silenced. In the media coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement, women like Sandra Bland do not get the kind of attention that they deserve. "Black people" is equated with Black men. Black women deserve to get their story told as well. If Black women watch something about women, it's mostly White women, and so we have to watch that and then we have to find something about Black people, and try to bring them together. We shouldn't have to go off and find different kinds of representations in order to piece together who we are.

Toward a ~~Post~~-Racial Media Arts Education

Greene's reflections on her film, *Veracity*, is a resource for contemporary media arts educators wishing to use media to craft a critical approach to a post-racial classroom conversation. Research in art education has demonstrated the value of media literacy and the arts in helping students critically engage with (as opposed to passively consuming) the films, television shows, news and other forms of mass media that permeate their lives (Wyrick, 1994; Duncum, 2001). The media arts classroom is an important place to explore students' ideas about the conflicts and contradictions within representation in post-racial America, not least of all because mainstream media stories about race and racism subject young people to simplified, often stereotypical narratives about themselves. For example, in the context of recent media attention to police shootings of young African American males, the stereotypical discourse of masculinity and race positions the victims of these shootings as inherently threatening and dangerous.[4]

Contrary to the post-racial media illusion of identity as a superficial attribute, in reality, young people of color do not simply "pick and choose how racial identity matters to them" (Squires, 2014, p. 14-15). As Greene highlights in the interview, in the absence of realistic, humanizing images of young Black lives in the mainstream media, young people of color are left to "piece together" a cohesive sense of themselves from images that speak to some part of their identity. Ngo (2010) explains how identity works as "a double movement" (p. 12) in which young people learn to refashion the narrative constraints that have come to define them:

> Identity involves a double action, where in one movement we are *put in* subject positions by others who draw on available, powerful discourses to identify us; and in another movement, we *take up* subject positions by drawing on available discourses ourselves. In other words, identity can be constituted in two ways. (p. 11)

Community-based approaches to media education are making space for young people of color to challenge mainstream media representations and tell their own stories, often for an audience of their peers.[5] Youth-driven narratives may not resolve in happy endings or offer simple solutions to the complex problems young people face today; however, they do speak to other young people with a sense of inclusion and authenticity that comes from shared experiences of marginalization. Hill Collins (2009), in her analysis of the educative potential of media in the lives of youth, calls attention to "the cultural domain of power, the site where ideas are created and resisted, as a vitally important place for African American youth and their allies to practice resistance" (p. 169). In the process of writing stories about the experiences and social contexts that young people are living in themselves—including the experiences they bear witness to via friends or through media—young people are creating humanizing narratives and images that work to complicate the oversimplifications and stereotypes of post-race.

Greene's reflections on the process of writing the screenplay for *Veracity* offer important insights and discussion points for art teachers and educators interested in engaging students in a post-racial conversation that takes into account the specificities of how race "pivots on questions of gender and sexuality" (Hill Collins, 2009, p. 167). In the interview, the point of view is that of a young African American woman who is grappling with shifts in her understanding of what race means when she begins to question her sexual orientation and realize that she identifies as bisexual. Using the Scenarios USA Real Deal curriculum as a resource, Greene translates her personal struggle into a fictional story about how young people navigate their sexuality at the intersections of gender, race, family, community, and religion. It is unusual to see an educational film about LGBTQ experiences and struggles that features main characters of color, especially young women. A contemporary curricular resource that brings the experiences of young people of color into focus, *Veracity* also addresses a gap in the field of representation of mainstream media images of LGBTQ lives.

Scenarios USA works to do justice to the complex ways adolescents live their identities by privileging the voices and perspectives of marginalized youth. The focus of the Real Deal curriculum on the theme of Power and Place makes space for a rich specificity in terms of the ways young people talk about their lives. In *Veracity*, the focus

4 In his recent grand jury testimony, Officer Darren Wilson describes the unarmed shooting victim Michael Brown as "demon-like," resembling "Hulk Hogan" (Cave, 2014, para. 1). Wilson's description suggests how his perceptions of 18-year-old Brown are shaped by dominant discourses of masculinity and race, which ascribe monstrous, inhuman qualities to Brown.

5 This approach to reworking dominant discourses about race is central to the work of community-based initiatives such as The Black Youth Project, a Chicago based, youth-driven website that puts a critical spin on media stories about contemporary issues in politics, culture and race. The BYP website functions as a media hub to "expand the human and social capital of young African Americans, facilitating their general empowerment through highlighting their voices and experiences" (http://blackyouthproject.com/about-us/history/)

on the personal context(s) of family, religion, and peer relationships that shape the experiences of two young African American female characters enables Greene to create a scenario that other middle and high school students can relate to. While not all students will identify directly with the experience of coming out in high school, many find that they are able to identify with the characters' worries about finding and/or losing their place within the social hierarchy of their school. As Greene points out, in post-screening discussions of *Veracity*, students are quick to comment on an aspect of the film that makes them uncomfortable; namely, how abruptly Olivia's peers turned against her. They say, "I don't think it would have happened like that in my school," or "This happened to someone at my school."

The students' comments suggest that while they are able to relate to Olivia's situation in terms of what feels familiar, they are also thinking within their local contexts about how things might turn out differently. And while *Veracity* situates the characters' experiences in a specific school, neighborhood, and community, the film also engages viewers in thinking about how larger, systemic structures of racism and homophobia shape the characters' experiences; for example, Greene found inspiration for her screenplay in conversations amongst her peers at Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy about the debate on same sex marriage taking place in the media on a national level. Rather than asking students to take a position on same sex relationships, Greene's reflections on *Veracity* suggest what it can look like to think through one's conflicts and contradictions, and develop a nuanced capacity for understanding experiences that are different from our own.

As Greene listened to conversations about same sex relationships among family, friends, and classmates, she was perplexed by contradictions between the personal and the political that they were bringing into focus. In a debate about same sex marriage in her English class, Greene grapples with understanding how an African American female student can object to same sex marriage when her best friend is openly gay. Through the process of writing the screenplay for *Veracity*, Greene begins to realize her own tendency to see the issues in terms of right and wrong. This realization enabled Greene to move beyond trying to resolve contradiction and conflict in order to ask, "How do humans, gay or straight, deserve to be treated?" (scenariosusa.org/shot/bullying/veracity)

This shift in focus is an important prompt for teachers to think about how a post-racial classroom conversation can invite students to wrestle with differences within identity and community, and think deeply about their responsibilities to one another. *Veracity* is an example of how, as Gilbert (2014) points out, "new narrative forms enfranchise new relational modes" (p. xxi). By treating instances of personal contradiction and conflict as sources of data, students can use this material to draw their own post-racial connections between histories of discrimination and oppression, and current events and media representations. We see this process at work in the interview with Greene, who is able to relate the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion at work in the political slogan Black Lives Matter [6] to her personal experience of coming out as a young, bisexual woman of color. Another example of a post-racial analysis emerges through Greene's insights into how her film complicates and humanizes a story of Black women and same sex desire.

Conclusion

While the media arts classroom is a rich place for students to work through the contradictions and conflicts of a post-race conversation, the outcomes of this conversation cannot be predicted in advance. We see this unpredictability at work in *Veracity*, an educational film that raises questions about how young people experience race at the intersections of sexuality, gender, and representation. While the film focuses on the characters' efforts to redefine their place in their school and community, the ending leaves audiences wondering how, exactly, will this scenario turn out? Will Olivia and Imani remain friends? Will they be accepted at school? In *Veracity*, according to Greene, "the ambiguity gives the audience a chance to come up with their own endings" (personal communication, January 26, 2016).

A post-racial conversation about contemporary media invites students and their teachers to move beyond the passive position of consuming media stereotypes as entertainment and toward thinking about media as a place where stereotypes are both enacted and called into question. Watching and responding to youth-driven media stories such as *Veracity* is an opportunity for students to "rework discourses that have already identified them" (Ngo, 2010, p. 12). Calling media stereotypes into question is dangerous, however, because as Adichie (2009) suggests, it opens up space to consider multiple versions of the story. This space of multiplicity is produced through the encounter between "the deeply contradictory and multilayered voices and themes in popular culture" (Rose, 1994, p. xii) and the normative

6 Jelani Cobb (2016), in "The Matter of Black Lives," writes that the Black Lives Matter movement began in summer 2013 as a response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida. The words, "Black Lives Matter," function symbolically, according to Cobb, "as a distillation not only of the anger that attended Zimmerman's acquittal but also of the animating principle at the core of Black social movements dating back more than a century" (p. 35).

assumptions and biases we bring to the work of interpreting media representations. Greene addresses this multiplicity when she reflects on the potential for her film to call attention to the media stereotypes that affect young African American women and LGBTQ people "through a very specific story, set in a specific time and place" (personal communication, January 26, 2016). As an educational film and a media artwork, *Veracity* uses this specificity to navigate and rework the personal, local, and systemic issues of power and representation that operate in the lives of young people in post-racial America today.

To access *Veracity* for private viewing, visit:

Veracity
https://vimeo.com/127121431
Password = VERpri2

Veracity BTS
https://vimeo.com/127408770
Password = VERbt2

For information about Scenarios USA's Real Deal curriculum, visit http://www.scenariosusa.org

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The author wishes to thank the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and the Shapiro Center for Research and Collaboration for their support and institutional partnership with Scenarios USA.

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