

A QUALITATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY EXPLORING THE IMPACT
THAT TEACHING A EUROCENTRIC-WHITWASHED HISTORY CURRICULUM CAN
HAVE ON THE MENTAL, SOCIAL WELL-BEING, AND RACIAL IDENTITY OF A
BLACK MALE HISTORY TEACHER

by

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ABSTRACT

JUSTIN R. PHILLIPS. A Qualitative Autoethnographic Study Exploring The Impact That Teaching A Eurocentric-Whitewashed History Curriculum Can Have On The Mental, Social Well-Being And Black Identity Of A Black Male History Teacher.
(Under the direction of DR. CHANCE LEWIS)

This research represents a personal and spiritual account of a former Black Male teacher's experience learning a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum as a Black boy and how the curriculum trauma was infused into his pedagogical practices as an educator. Using myself as the researcher and participant in this study, I have chronicled my experience as a former educator by utilizing the qualitative methodology of critical race autoethnography, which will unfold a story of my interactions teaching American history at the middle and high school levels through a critical lens. At both levels, my experiences and interactions with teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history to a diverse student population will provide further insight into the mental and physical struggle Black male teachers encounter and must endure to fulfill their obligations as educators. Using the Black Historical Consciousness Framework and The Cross Racial Identity Model as theoretical frameworks, this dissertation focuses on how the BHC can be used as a counternarrative to teaching U.S history in K-12 settings. The Cross Model presents opportunities for Black male history teachers to develop their racial Black identity before and after they enter the teaching profession.

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DEDICATION

*I want to dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They say when Jesus transforms your heart, mind, habits, income, assets and then inheritance that is when the revolution is won. This is a part of my testimony and why I will forever remain obedient to him and his commandments. I dedicate this study to my dear Charlese Hall. You were my biggest inspiration when I first started this dissertation journey. When I first told you I wanted to get my PhD, you cheered me on. When I was stressed out, you told me to go take a walk. When I was frustrated, you made me laugh. You were the sweetest and funniest woman I have ever known. The love of my life is what you are and forever will be. To my *ancestors, your blood runs through my very veins. Without you, there is no me.* Although you were not afforded the opportunity to pursue your God-given talents, you did not give up. Your spirit and work-ethic dwell deep inside of me and have equipped me with the skills necessary to do Kingdom work.*

FOREWORD



“It took many years of vomiting up all the filth
I’d been taught about myself, and half-believed before I was able to walk on the Earth as though I
had a right to be here.” —James Baldwin (1960)

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

The opening chapter provides an introduction and background to the study of a former Black male history teacher. Throughout his career as an educator in the South, he found himself teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history, which was reminiscent of the same curriculum he was taught as a Black boy. This experience led to the manifestation of curriculum trauma at two pivotal points in his life.

Growing up in Concord, North Carolina, in a single-parent household within the contours of public housing during the Reagan Era, my mother placed a strong emphasis on education since she was a product of pre-post segregation in the United States. She knew that opportunities for advancement and upward social mobility flowed through education. I still recall the ethos of my mother telling me that *they can't take your good name or education away from you*. Consequently, as a young Black boy, I always took my education seriously, so much so that I cried when I got Bs on my report card.

As the product of public education, I remember being taught by predominantly White teachers with two exceptions, where I had one Black male Computer Science teacher and a Black male P.E. teacher. Nevertheless, I recall my White teachers being kind and understanding, especially for a kid who had hearing difficulties and a speech impediment. Moreover, they were generous enough to offer me accommodations to assist with my perceived learning difficulties. But my mother, in typical fashion, declined them. In her words, there was nothing wrong with me. I just needed to have surgery to repair my hearing (tubes), which would help with my stutter. It would not be long before my mother would be proven to be somewhat prescient in this matter. (The terms Black and African American will be used interchangeably throughout this study)

Throughout my K-12 experience, although I grasped information from many of my academic subjects, I had no concept of my history. All I knew was that I needed to regurgitate historical facts to do well on my tests. I remember learning about Christopher Columbus and his interactions with the Native Americans and how they treated him with such respect by giving him jewels and crops. In my education Christopher Columbus was honored as the great navigator who discovered America and opened the New World to *civilization* and commerce. I also remember being taught that slavery was an awful institution and a part of America's dark past but that the United States had come very close to being an equal society, and the fact that our classroom was composed of a melting pot was further proof. My history teachers stayed clear from talking about anything race-related in their instruction. Everything was made to fit nearly inside a race-neutral package, and although my ancestors were killed, maimed, and treated with such contempt and disgust, it would not be spoken about inside the confines of the classroom walls. Because in their eyes, who wants to talk about all that "sad stuff".

However, I recall my teachers showing great reverence for the Founding Fathers of the United States (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison). These White men were displayed as heroes who were brave for standing up for what they believed in, and "no taxation without representation" was the rallying cry that we could all learn a great lesson. Globally, I learned from my teachers that the evil empire of Great Britain was a monarch who was set on stripping inalienable God-given rights away from the men, and the only thing they could do was to fight to the bitter end for their freedom. What was hidden from me was that these same men enslaved Black men and women and denied them rights that they had cherished so dearly.

In retrospect, my formative K-12 education was filled with lies, mistruths, and miseducation, which I did not fully recover from until my mid-30s. If there was one book that

turned the tide for me, it was from famed historian and educator James Loewen (1995) in his book *Lies My Teacher Told Me. Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. In the book, he speaks about how teachers and textbooks use a sense of heroification when describing people from the past who possessed great power or importance. This heroification transforms individuals and makes “flesh-and-blood individuals into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest” (Loewen, 1995, p.29).

Therefore, I wrote this critical race autoethnography to turn the gaze on myself to fully understand the trauma of learning a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history as a young Black boy and its lingering effects on me once I became an educator. To this day, it is a miracle that I was able to teach for 10 years as a fully licensed Master’s level teacher because where I come from, Black boys are not groomed to be educators. Rather, the education system has continued to place a great emphasis on the athletic prowess of Black boys rather than invest in their intellectual genius (Underwood et al., 2009). Consequently, my journey to becoming a Black male educator sprung up out of pure curiosity along with the helpful nudge of a dear friend.

As a part of the 2% of Black male teachers in the United States teaching workforce (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021), I have always approached teaching as a noble cause where I can impart knowledge to my students and then facilitate learning in a fun and interactive way which also challenges them. Furthermore, teaching gives me an opportunity to push back against the stereotypes of laziness and other tropes that have historically been thrust on African American males (Underwood et al., 2009). I have also felt like it is my responsibility for my students to see that I was more than capable of holding my own as an educator and that they can trust me with their education. However, learning how to teach the curriculum was only half the battle because what I was not prepared for was the dishonest and inaccurate curriculum

that I was forced to teach. At the heart of this autoethnography is what Woodson (1933) says is the miseducation of our youth and the “vicious circle that results from miseducated individuals graduating, then proceeding to teach and miseducate others” (p.6).

There is no exact period that historians can point to that the Whitewashing of history education may have occurred in K-12 education within the United States, but many have written about the Eurocentric nature of the history curriculum and the dehumanizing effects it has and continues to have on teachers and students (Anderson, 1988; Cromwell, 1914; Sloan, 1966; Wiggan, 2011, 2023; Woodson, 1933). The compounding effect of students learning a biased history creates false stereotypes and perceptions of ethnic groups that do long-term damage to their education and their sense of identity. However, the teaching of a Whitewashed history from a Black Male (BM) perspective has made me question everything that I learned in my own K-12 education and forced me to reflect on why I allowed myself to teach it to my students. For 10 years, I avoided most conversations surrounding race or racism in my pedagogy.

I never wanted to upset my White students and have them go home and tell their parents that I insinuated that they were to blame for the ills of slavery. In addition, I did not want my Black students to blame their White peers for the sins of their ancestors. I was constantly stuck in a perpetual twilight zone within my pedagogy. Sadly, in our nation’s K-12 secondary education system, topics of race or racism are areas that teachers, especially those who are Black or ethnic minorities, are warned to steer clear away from. At the end of the day, no one wants an angry parent coming up to the school or contacting the school board claiming that their child is being indoctrinated to hate America. In my situation, I had no choice but to continue with teaching trauma or lose the job that I so desperately needed.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, the history curriculum and textbooks in the United States has had a Eurocentric aim, which has sought to neglect the contributions of minoritized and marginalized ethnic groups (King, 2014). Early in their education elementary and secondary public-school students are inundated with images of “great American heroes and inspirational citizens who believed they had the inalienable rights” (King, 2014, p.88) of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration of Independence, 1776, para. 2). Students are soon programmed to think that these White Americans of European ancestry were the sole architects of the American system and way of life and that no other group had a hand in shaping the United States. This focus places the contributions of people from European ancestry at the forefront and quickly summarizes or omits the contributions of other races/ethnicities, such as Blacks, Hispanics, and Indigenous Peoples. As a result, the Eurocentric-Whitewashed curriculum does a disservice to all students because, as Milner (2015) has noted, such a null curriculum robs countless students of knowledge that is void of multiple perspectives in history, and fails to “empower students to question, critique, or critically examine power structures” (p. 57). According to Ighodaro and Wiggan (2013), a “curriculum is generally understood to be the program of study and experiences that are related to a field or discipline” (p. 2). Additionally, Woodson (1933), as cited in Ighodaro and Wiggan (2013), believed that:

The process and delivery of education are shaped by power dynamics that involve policymakers and dominant group members who can influence what counts as knowledge and shape the basic curriculum on how it is to be taught and how students are assessed. However, this also means that these stakeholders can create curricula to shape their own interests, which might result in the mis-education of another group. (p.21)

Ultimately, my own K-12 experience as a Black boy was greatly impacted by a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum, where I noticed that Black history was neglected, and I was deliberately miseducated into believing that my ancestors had a limited role in shaping and building the United States. Reflecting on my own lived experience as a Black boy sitting in history class, I can recall my teachers teaching briefly about Slavery, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights era. Anything in between those eras was not deemed important for the quarterly and state exams. However, my experience did not occur in a vacuum and is more prevalent when it comes to the experiences of Black male students in K-12 education. The fact that the curriculum often does not allow Black male students to see themselves or their heroes is endemic to an education system that continues to rely on the stories of White Americans, who, through brutal force and meticulously crafted laws, omitted the history of other racialized groups whose contributions to the country make up the very fabric of the United States.

Woodson (1933) wrote extensively about the mis-education of Black male students when they are not exposed to a more inclusive multicultural history in K-12 settings, where they are not first seen as being enslaved and forced to work in labor-induced occupations. In addition, forcing Black male students to see themselves through a curriculum made from positions of Whiteness as the dominant culture can only lead to feelings of inferiority and invisibility. It also leads them to think that Black history is irrelevant and that their ancestors did not contribute anything economically, socially or politically to the country. Moreover, this internal conflict that Black boys experience is what Du Bois (1903) called the *double-consciousness* of living in America, where Black folks are always looking at themselves through the eyes of others while their oppressor looks on in contempt and amusement. A *twoness* of being “an American, A negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body

whose dogged strength alone keeps him from being torn asunder Black” (para. 3).

Sadly, these experiences for Black boys do not occur in isolation and are not exclusive to the K-12 history curriculum.

For Black boys, the continued mis-education through the standard curriculum of the state-sanctioned subjects of English, Science, Math, and Science can be traumatic. Ighodaro and Wiggan (2013) argued that the historical nature of education in the United States in the early 18th century was initially privileged to only Protestant White males from wealthy backgrounds. As the nation has attempted to move towards and resemble the ideals enshrined in its Declaration of Independence and Constitution, it has continued the practice of rewarding cultural capital and advantages to the dominant class of citizens at the expense of marginalized groups, especially those of African descent (Martinez-Cosio and Iannacone 2007, as cited in Marcucci, 2020). As a result, the nation’s K-12 education has always skewed towards a classical Eurocentrism and, in many cases, Whitewashing the contributions of the Black race altogether. This type of education is dangerous and unsafe for Black boys.

Woodson (1933) wrote eloquently about the lasting impact on Black students of the failure to include more Black heroes, poets, artists, and leaders throughout the curriculum in the early 20th century. In the subject of science, he expressed that the curriculum often lacked any reference to Africans as pioneers in the field where they were able to “concoct poisons for arrowheads, mix durable colors for paintings, to extract metals from nature and refine them for development in the industrial arts” (p. 27). Similarly, in the subjects of English and literature, Woodson argues that the traditional K-12 curriculum bypasses any deep analysis of African proverbs, which are commonly ignored and given less attention to their literary counterparts from the Mediterranean (Greece, Rome). It is no coincidence that in the 21st century, Black boys

are classified and labeled as non-proficient readers, with only 14% able to read by the 4th grade and scoring lower on literacy aptitude tests (Lowe, 2021). When Black boys do not see their African roots and Black history included in the assigned reading text then the exercise becomes futile because the experiences of who they are reading about is not relevant to them or their way of life (Levin, 2019). Regarding math and other advanced subjects, studies have shown that Black boys are not recommended to take coursework in subjects such as Calculus, AP-Statistics or Physics (Bernhardt, 2014), because they are perceived as having the inability to comprehend and master the material. Becoming proficient in Math and other subjects is a gateway to becoming interested in STEM programs. Because of not having the necessary background knowledge in these crucial subjects, Black males participate at a lower rate in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs as compared to their representation in the general population within public education (National Science Foundation, 2015).

Because the curriculum is not actively engaging or interactive to Black males, they seek other ways to entertain or busy themselves while in the confines of the school walls. Sadly, some teachers and administrators view a lack of engagement and actions of boredom as misbehavior, with their first inclination being to discipline Black boys. Additionally, this viewpoint has resulted in Black boys being disproportionately suspended from school compared to their White counterparts. The overrepresentation of disproportionate discipline actions of Black boys is not a new development, and it has been studied for over 30 years (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Thomas & Stevenson, 2009, as cited in Ransom, 2019). Gregory et al. (2010) noted that Black boys are more likely to receive anywhere from one to 10 days of suspension, which can result in a loss of a massive amount of classroom instruction. Recently, a study conducted by the U.S Department of Education: Civil Rights Division (2018) disclosed that:

Black pre-school boys received both suspensions (34.2%) and expulsions (30.4%) at rates that were more than three times their share of total pre-school enrollment (9.6%)” (p.7) and that Black boys in secondary schools “received both in-school suspensions (20.1%) and out-of-school suspensions (24.9%) suspensions at rates more than three times their share of total student enrollment (7.7%), which is the largest disparity across all race/ethnicity and sex groupings. (p.17)

What makes matters worse is that most suspensions are *subjective* (disrespect, disruption & insubordination) as opposed to more *objectively* defined offenses (fighting, drugs & weapons) (Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2002). These racialized patterns in subjective zero-tolerance school discipline policy have been shown to cause massive short-term problems such as the loss of class instruction and academic services, social and emotional harm, and increased interactions with criminal and juvenile systems (Fabelo et al., 2011). In another study, the Government Accountability Office (2018) found “that students who are suspended from school lose important instructional time, are less likely to graduate on time, and are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in the juvenile justice system” (p.1). Ultimately, there is no way to separate the lack of engagement that Black boys encounter in the classroom which is a symptom of the multiple falsehoods displayed in the curriculum and the disproportionate discipline that is levied towards them. Sadly, my own K-12 experience was filled with mistruths that did not expose me to a more factual understanding of history, and I too found myself bored in the middle of a lesson and not willing to do some work and therefore found other ways to occupy myself. In addition, I was also robbed of the opportunity to learn about the healing powers of a non-hegemonic history curriculum. Nonetheless, I became a certified history teacher, but unfortunately, my teaching pedagogy and philosophy took on the form of the

oppressor. In theory, I thought I was delivering instruction that was high quality, fruitful, and inclusive, but in reality, I was inflicting curriculum violence onto my students because of what I had learned in my education as a young Black boy. The cycle of lies which I was exposed to would continue.

Scholars such as Howard (2014), Hucks (2011), Kunjufu (2007), and Losen (2011), as cited in Milton-Williams and Bryan (2021), have written extensively about the “dearth of Black male teachers in public schools and higher education” (p. 39) who because of the negative experiences of Black male students, are forced to learn a curriculum that does not showcase their heroes and ancestral achievements. Also, they are “targets for subjective classroom discipline, which causes disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates and assignments to special education classrooms” (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2021, p.39). Now, more than ever, extensive research is needed to analyze the effects of curriculum trauma on Black male students because these students often face a curriculum that does not fully reflect their history, culture, or experiences. A curriculum that marginalizes or misrepresents their identity can lead to psychological distress, feelings of alienation, and disengagement from the educational process. Understanding the impact of this trauma is crucial to creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment which promotes academic success, emotional well-being, and a sense of belonging for Black male students. Moreover, addressing curriculum trauma can help reduce disparities in educational outcomes and create more equitable systems. The consequence of not furthering these recommendations will continue the trend of Black males not becoming teachers and for those that do, they will inflict curriculum violence onto their students.

Counternarrative to Eurocentric-Whitewashed History Curriculum

The current history curriculum which continues to be taught in most K-12 settings in the United States is wrought with various inaccuracies and Eurocentric perspectives and “is filled with convenient silences that distort history (Loewen 1995 as cited in King, 2014). Further, the Eurocentric curriculum ignores or Whitewashes the contributions of Black Americans or any individual of African descent in World or U.S History courses. For instance, in academic circles the genius Imhotep is known to have written the world’s first medical papyrus (Wiggan et al. 2023), which is known for its vivid description of 48 distinct spinal cases with accurate descriptions (van Middeldorp et al, 2010), but his contribution is hardly ever mentioned in the United States K-12 traditional history textbooks or curriculum. That’s because an early 19th century White American antiquities dealer by the name of Edwin Smith bought it from Georg Ebers and renamed it after himself, therefore Whitewashing Imhotep from the history books for his monumental medical work (Wiggan et al. 2023). In addition, a majority of students who attended public schools in the United States have no idea that “*The Teachings of PtahHotep (2300 B.C.E)* is regarded as the oldest book in the world and *The book of the Coming forth by Day 2200 B.C.E.)* as the world’s first religious book” (Wiggan et al, 2023, p.103). Within the traditional U.S history curriculum and textbooks the Eurocentric perspective continues to position Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin as the sole Founders of the United States of America (Morris, 1973 as cited in King, 2014). Yet, these same textbooks fail to mention the many *Black Founders* who contributed to the creation of representative democracy, which is the oldest in the world dating back 1787 (Oldest, n.d). According to King (2014) a *Black Founder* can be defined as “Africans and native-born Americans who lived during the mid 18th to the mid 19th century and whose ideas and actions

fulfilled several purposes in the U.S nation building” (King, 2014, p.91). Black Founders like Benjamin Banneker, Belinda, Cyrus Bustil Paul Cuff, Jacob Oson and Prince Whipple, were crucial in fighting in the American Revolution, building Black institutions for the Black community during enslavement and the fight for freedom, establishing churches, benevolent societies, insurance groups and newspapers and magazine (King, 2014). The fact is all students deserve a quality education which affords them the opportunity to learn about African heritage and knowledge (King, 2018 as cited in Wiggan et al, 2023) and provides a critical yet accurate account of history.

The Black Historical Consciousness (BHC) Framework may be one of many corrective measures which can provide a counter-narrative to the Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum; by placing the experiences and humanity of Black people at the forefront (King, 2020). The BHC is significant because as King (2020) has stated, history education in the United States has only been marginally altered to include the narrative events of Black people but largely ignores their voices and experiences. In addition, King (2020) notes that when Black History in K-12 settings is taught, there continues to be a large emphasis placed on oppression and liberation through three major topics which consist of “first, enslavement; secondly, the trials and tribulations of the post-Civil War and Reconstruction periods; and finally, the 1960’s civil rights movement (King, 2020, p.336). King (2020) argues that through these narratives students learn that Black people were passive victims who willingly accepted the oppression that was thrust on them, Black messiahs are the only people worthy enough to be included in the instruction and lastly, Black agency and liberation favored only the non-violent approach. Sadly, these themes only reinforce a monolithic Whitewashed version of the Black experience in America which seeks only to shield students of all ethnicities and races from the truth. At the

heart of the Black Historical Consciousness is a new approach to learning and teaching Black History “as its own genre of historical thought that is independent of Western knowledge (King, 2020, p.336). By incorporating the BHC into teacher pedagogical practices the educator and student can finally start viewing Black people through a lens that it explores their entire humanity

Purpose of the Study

Because of the institutional constraints around K-12 education, there was a profound impact on my mental health and the search for my racial Black identity. Therefore, this study is significant because it will allow stakeholders in education to better understand how the history curriculum does not allow many Black boys in K-12 settings the opportunity to see themselves as other than oppressed entities and the direct link between the Eurocentric-Whitewashed curriculum that Black boys are forced to learn and the lack of Black male teachers in education. Furthermore, it will also highlight the historical nature that White supremacy played in crafting the history curriculum before and after the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision and why true reform of the curriculum must begin to take place at the local, state, and federal levels.

Significance of the Study

Black male teachers are an underserved and underrepresented community in classrooms throughout the United States (Bristol, 2014; et al; Underwood., 2019), with current estimates from the NCES (2021) disclosing that Black males occupy around 2% of the teacher population in the United States. While researchers and policymakers advocate for increasing the number of Black males within K-12 education, most fail to understand that many Black male students have not been allowed to succeed in normal K-12 settings, which would groom them for a career in teaching. As such, when Black males are hired as general education teachers, they are often

thrust into the role of disciplinarians, and therefore, an “invisible tax” (King, 2016) is imposed on them. It seems reasonably unfair for any teacher, especially Black male teachers, to be sought after only to discipline Black male students who may have perceived behavioral issues.

Consequently, it is often challenging for Black males to acquire the social and cultural capital that the *market* deems necessary to become an educator in the United States. To that point, this study was of personal significance to me as a Black male because there were times when I was the only minority in the building who was misunderstood and wanted to be accepted by the majority-white faculty. It was not until I started discovering and developing my racial Black identity, which allowed me to push back against an allusion of inferiority and *otherness* placed on me by others.

Second, this study is significant because it explores how my own negative school experience as a Black male student resulted in me learning a strictly Eurocentric-Whitewashed history and then infusing that same history into my pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher. In addition, the trauma from learning a non-inclusive history curriculum pushed me to inflict curriculum violence and trauma onto my students, which subsequently affected my mental and social well-being as an educator.

Lastly, the study adds to existing literature regarding ways to revamp the history curriculum through the Black Historical Consciousness (BHC) Framework and Racial Black Development Model (Nigrescence Theory). Taken all together with these findings, this study is vital to helping other Black male history teachers understand the power dynamics that they may encounter while teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed curriculum and the tactics they can employ to push back against what Fanon (1963) called the “language of the colonizer.”

Positionality Statement

This study is grounded in my lived experience as a Black male history teacher who has taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum in a K-12 setting. These experiences have allowed me to witness how important the school curriculum is to what information is allowed to be taught in classrooms around the United States. As a Black male, I have firsthand knowledge of the challenges of teaching a one-sided curriculum and the impact that it has had on my social, mental, and spiritual well-being. It did not take long before I realized that I was participating in perpetuating colonizer tactics, where teaching a curriculum that neglects to include Black and Indigenous perspectives does a disservice to myself and my students.

As I began to reflect on my pedagogy, I noticed that I had underestimated the extent to which curriculum violence had been inflicted on me in my very own K-12 experience and the curriculum trauma that was evident in my instruction. However, as a researcher, I approached this study with a great level of sensitivity, knowing that I was entering uncharted territory about the political and cultural implications of writing about the phenomenon of the Eurocentric aims of the history curriculum. I also acknowledged that through the act of Whitewashing, teachers are not allowed or privy to information necessary to teach to an ever more diverse population of students. Throughout this process, I remained steadfast to the nature of self-reflexivity so that a sense of authenticity will be expressed throughout the study.

Autoethnography and Subjectivity

The qualitative research design that was utilized for this research study was autoethnography. When writing an autoethnography, the researcher utilizes the tenets of both an autobiography and ethnography (Ellis et al., 2011), and within those parameters, the researcher attempts to find their voice where they ultimately reflect on a cultural and personal experience

that could add new literature to scholarly research (Adams et al., 2008). The study incorporated Anderson's (2006) analytic autoethnography, where the researcher is a "(1) full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in published texts, and (3) committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena" (p. 373).

As the only member and participant in this autoethnography, it encompasses a certain amount of subjectivity around my lived experience as a Black male former high school history teacher who taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history in multiple K-12 settings. As Mizzi (2010) stated, "There are several past and present narrative voices that interact within and reflect on the researcher's subjectivity" (p. 6), which is why I displayed how my very own Blackness started to develop while teaching a curriculum that neglected to include the contributions of my ancestors and how 10 years of teaching a null curriculum not only inflicted harm on me as the educator but my students as well. Furthermore, subjectivity was further explored by acknowledging that I went to predominantly White k-12 institutions up until I entered undergrad at a Historically Black College and University. Although this study does not fall into the realm of memoir, one must understand where I have come from to fully grasp how I became a teacher who found himself battling with how to teach a curriculum that was not created to include my race or any marginalized perspectives.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What role does curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history play in the racial development of a Black male history teacher?

RQ 2: In what ways did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limit the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness within pedagogical practices as a Black male history

teacher from the South?

RQ 3: In what ways did learning more about my ancestral Black history help me to push back against teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?

Theoretical Framework

There is not a single framework that can adequately depict the lived experience of a Black male history teacher. However, for this study, I will demonstrate various ways that a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limits the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness within pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher and how, through deliberate policy decisions, Black male teachers are not allowed to teach an inclusive history education which benefits all students. In addition, I demonstrated how curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history played a part in my racial development as a Black male history teacher.

Black Historical Consciousness

The BHC framework was created by Dr. LaGarret King out of frustration that K-12 education was not fully incorporating Black history into the curriculum. King (2020) stated that BHC “is an effort to understand, develop and teach Black histories that recognize Black people’s humanity” (p.337). Furthermore, King emphasized that the framework, through an Afrocentric pedagogical approach, can center Black knowledge and reexamine the way power was wielded through institutions and structures. Furthermore, King asserted that “Black history needs to contextualize race, racism, while white supremacy; and anti-Blackness to follow how power and oppression is created and sustained throughout society” (p. 338). Lastly, King suggested that stakeholders must incorporate the following themes of the Black Consciousness Framework into the history standards and pedagogies:

- *Power & Oppression*: This theme states that Power and Oppression should be incorporated into Black histories and highlights the vast injustice at the hands of White supremacy that Black people have fought against throughout history.
- *Black Agency, Resistance, and Perseverance*: This theme demonstrates Black histories that explain how Black people have overcome oppressive institutions and structures. This theme also shows how Black people have persevered, and although they have been victims of violent acts against them, they are not helpless victims.
- *Africa and the African Diaspora*: This theme stresses the importance of Black histories and narratives. Also, a Black history course should begin with ancient African history.
- *Black Joy and Love*: This theme focuses on the resolve of Black people during a truly violent and oppressive history. However, it should also demonstrate times of happiness, togetherness, and the fight for freedom.
- *Black Identities*: This theme stresses the importance of understanding Black identities as Black histories, which will promote a more inclusive history that seeks to uncover the multiple identities of Black people.
- *Black Historical Contention*: This theme emphasizes Black histories where Black people are presented with complex issues; that is a counter narrative of them being depicted as not a monolithic group. (King, 2020, p.339).

The BHC framework is more than a guide; it has the power to change the conversation around how Black history is taught and provide teachers and stakeholders with the tools necessary to integrate a history that is truly diverse and respectful of different perspectives. Moreover, the BHC can critique the mainstream traditional curriculum that often marginalizes and omits the contribution of Indigenous and Black people. This framework pushes for an analysis of how

racial power dynamics influence the stories that get told and the narratives that become *canonical*.

(Nigrescence) Black Racial Identity Development Model

The Black (African American) community has a distinct place within the American consciousness because of their ancestral linkage to slavery and the fact that 32% of Black Americans must use two or more methods to trace their roots (Cox & Tamir, 2022). Because of this past, African Americans have had trouble figuring out how their culture and racial identity align with America's dominant White class, whose own ancestors were the purveyors of chattel slavery and sometimes gave their enslaved *property* their last names. Nevertheless, one's racial identity has proven to be a significant factor in how African Americans feel toward one another and other ethnic groups in the United States. It is no coincidence that nearly "6 in 10 Black adults revealed that their ancestors were enslaved either in the U.S. or another country, with 52% of Black adults surveyed saying it was in the U.S. either in whole or in part" (Cox & Tamir, 2022 para, 14). These statistics demonstrate that African Americans continue to hold onto a strong relationship with their ancestral past. Because of a past that is still unfolding, when it comes to the development of one's own Black identity, I, like many African Americans, have experienced what Du Bois (1903) called a *double consciousness*. Within this state, there is a "sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others and measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 3). As Du Bois continued to assert, there is a two-ness to being othered and Black in America, a Negro, with these two warring factions pulling and pushing one another. To become complete, African Americans must transform and figure out their racial identity. Richey (2014) notes that:

Black people begin with less awareness about their Black identity and then progress to internalize positive thoughts, not only about themselves as a Black person but about other racial groups as well. In addition, not only do people become aware of the historical ramifications about what it means to be Black, but they also put thoughts and ideas into action to help educate and uplift the Black community. (p.104)

To fully understand one's Black Racial Identity, Thomas & Thomas (1970) believed that Black people once suffered from *negromancy*, which is a condition where a person is confused about his or her self-worth and essentially depends upon the White society to assist in self-definition and acknowledgement" (Thomas & Thomas, 1970 as cited in Cross, 1978, p. 14)

Thomas continued to state that

"Inherent in this concept of approval is the need to be accepted as something other than what one is. Gratification is based upon denial of self and a rejection of group goals and activities. The driving force behind this need requires Afro-American's to seek approval from Whites in all activities, to use white expectations as the yardstick for determining what is good, desirable or necessary. Any indication of rejection by or hostility from whites result in these Afro-Americans changing their pattern of actions, even when the individual hurts himself or others of his people. Such brothers and sisters become parasites who are undemanding and content with little or nothing. They prefer to have goal directed actions fit into adoptive patterns, which will not be criticized by whites" (Thomas & Thomas, 1971, p. 104)

This state of *negromancy* can be overcome by acquiring a racial identity and then discovering unity with mankind. To do this one has to go through the five stages of discovering and affirming one's blackness which can be described as:

“When you find a brother who waste all his time rapping on whitey you know he’s at the first state as he moves on to the second stage he is testify- ing to all the pain he has endured because he has contributed to the process of denying the self. Another part of the second stage is learn- ing to express his anxieties about becoming black; he gets confused as to whether this step must include burning down the city or grabbing a gun. In the third stage we get into information processing on the cultural heritage, not only the African background but the black contribution to our homeland, America. You go out of this stage into activity, working through a particular group to find linkage to the larger black experience. You now live in a large black experience. You now live in the black world. The fifth stage is transcendental: through your unique blackness you lose your hangups about race, age, sex and social class and see yourself as part of humanity in all its flavors. (p.78).

Cross (1971) created a complementary model that expanded onto Thomas’ model, where he identified the five stages of Black identity:

- *Preencounter stage*: The nature of the old identity or the frame of reference to be changed. A stage of deracination, similar to the colonized mind.
- *Encounter stage*: A personal experience that dislodges the person from his old worldview, thus making him receptive and vulnerable to a new perspective and identity.
- *Immersion-Emersion stage*: Two phases where the behavior is synonymous with someone who just discovered Blackness as a manifestation. The individual is trying to prove that they are Black. The second phase of Immersion-Emerson involves an emergence from the dead-end, racist oversimplified aspects of the immersion experience.

Ultimately, this phase allows for more affective and cognitive openness and a critical analysis of themselves.

- *Internalization and Internalization Commitment*: The distinction to be made between emergent Blackness and internalization of Black identity. (p.109)

In summary, Cross (1971) stated that when an individual starts the process of changing their identity from Negro to Black where there are periods of Weusi Anxiety, and the internal conflicts between aspiring to fit into the role of the ideal militant Black' and the exposure to the values and customs of European Western culture collide; but they soon “diminish and pro-Black attitudes become more expansive, open and less defensive” (Cross, 1971, p.24). As one begins to push back against Westernized culture, the consciousness begins to grow where they question if they are Black enough, and how they view the Blackness of their peers.

It could be argued that the aforementioned frameworks could provide tools to analyze, critique, and ultimately reshape a more inclusive and accurate U.S. history curriculum. A truly liberating history curriculum will require the teaching of a fact-based-nuanced view of history, where the contributions of Black and Indigenous people are included and honored. If there is only a singular narrative of the Founding Fathers which depicts them as oppressed colonists who fought for freedom against a tyrannical British Empire; but there is no counter-narrative explaining how they used the seeds of slavery as a way to build the country (Baptist, 2014), then we are doing a disservice to educators and students by continuing a tradition of Whitewashing how history is taught in the United States. Furthermore, decolonizing and infusing the current K-12 history curriculum with more Black consciousness themes would mean challenging the current Eurocentric narratives and reintroducing the histories and perspectives of marginalized people and those that have been erased. Ultimately, they will allow teachers to come to terms

with how they continue to perpetuate a system of curriculum trauma onto students, and it will present students with a U.S. history that is at times violent towards communities of color and antithetical to its founding documents.

Definition of Terms

Blackness: a social and political identity that reflects the experiences of systemic racism, oppression, and marginalization. It is also a source of strength, resilience, and solidarity within Black communities.

Black Historical Consciousness: a theoretical framework that is an effort to understand, develop, and teach history as its genre of historical thought that is independent of Western knowledge (King, 2020, p. 337).

Black Racial Identity Model (Nigrescence Model): a theory developed by William Cross (1971) where he concludes that Blacks who are conflicted about their Blackness go through the following stages: Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion Stage, and Internalization-Commitment.

Curriculum Trauma: an academic theory that critically examines how academic systems (i.e., curriculum) directly harm students' ability to become independent and healthy social agents (Butt et al., 2020).

Curriculum Violence: a deliberate manipulation of academic programming in a manner that ignores or compromises the intellectual and psychological well-being of learners (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2013).

Eurocentrism: simplistically, puts Europe at the “center of the universe.” It interprets the world through Western values but should more accurately be termed Western-centrism since it incorporates Europe as well as the cultures of North America and Australia. Although it has

existed in varying degrees for centuries, it was fortified by the physical and economic power of the twentieth century, which increased its presence around the world (Oxford Reference, n.d)

Unbleached: the systemic and institutional work that disrupts Eurocentrism and hegemonic master-scripting that positions and transmits a dominant group interest (White) (Wiggan et al., 2023, p.10).

Whitewashed: to make something bad seem acceptable by hiding the truth (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this autoethnographic study was to systematically study and analyze my lived experience as a Black male teacher who has taught a whitewashed history in a K-12 classroom. In this chapter, I outline the current literature on the ramifications of history being whitewashed in classrooms throughout the United States. I also trace how history was taught before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and how it temporarily changed once schools were forced to be integrated but then reverberated back to its Eurocentric themes. Furthermore, I position how the Black Racial Identity Development theory can be used to understand how my race and gender, as a Black man, began to change once I immersed myself into Black literature and ultimately more comfortable in my own skin Eurocentric-Whitewashed. Lastly, I examine how curriculum violence and trauma affect not only students who are taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history but also myself as a Black male history teacher, who was mandated through state-regulated standards to adhere to a standard course of study.

A Brief History of Public Education In the United States

The history of public education in the United States from 1776 to 1865 allowed only a wealthy few of the population who were White male Protestants the opportunity to participate in an affordable education (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2013). Noticing that this formula for education resembled the aristocracy of the Old World (a phrase used by Europeans who migrated to the Americas), Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann and other early education reformers advocated for a new way of educating the White population of America. They feared that without a proper education in civics along with the basics of the English language a fragile democracy could succumb to the promises of a tyrant or demagogue who would be able to tap into the angst and anxieties of a disgruntled minority and cease power. As early as 1778, Jefferson attempted to

create common schools, which are schools that would teach reading, writing arithmetic, along with other subjects such as history, geography, grammar and rhetoric” (Center on Education Policy, 2020), in his home state of Virginia the Commonwealth. Jefferson asked the legislature to bring his education bill titled *The Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* to the floor to be debated, appropriated and voted on. Within the bill, he called for counties to be divided into wards where he “envisioned each ward functioning as a little republic in which local citizens would provide for an elementary school to which all the free children, male and female,” would be admitted without charge (Urban and Wagoner, 2013, p.63). Within these elementary schools, Jefferson recommended that the study of ancient and modern history along with reading, writing, and arithmetic be required and that the study of history would improve the civic and moral virtues of the people (Urban and Wagoner, 2013, p.64). The legislature would reject Jefferson’s attempt to educate the White male population of Virginia in a classical education and would not enact a comprehensive education plan until after the Civil War (Urban and Wagoner, 2013), the seeds were sown and common schools started showing up across the nation throughout the 19th century. Advocates of common schools “saw universal education as a means to eliminate poverty, crime, and other social problems” (Center on Education Policy, 2020, p.3), and they felt like common schools were a great way to promote cohesion across social classes and improve economic outcomes (Center on Education Policy, 2020, p.3). Throughout the 19th century the push for public education expanded faster in cities than in rural areas, and in the Northeast than in other parts of the country. By 1850, around 55% of children aged 5 to 14 were enrolled in public schools; and by 1870 this figure had risen to about 78% (Center on Education Policy, 2020, p.4).

After 1870 and into the Progressive Era education reformers made

various efforts to improve outcomes for White students. Urban and Wagoner (2013) argue that around this period progressive education is enumerated by the following parameters:

- the extension of educational opportunity;
- a shift from an eight-four elementary high school organization to a six-three-three system that included the junior high school.
- expansion and reorganization of the curriculum;
- reorganization of classes according to student testing and school consolidation.
- pedagogical innovations;
- incorporating principles of developmental psychology into textbooks and other instructional materials;
- improving the design and quality of school buildings;
- improving the education of teachers; and
- changes in school administration (p.178).

One of the more noteworthy changes in the education system which took place during the Progressive Era, can be attributed to the departure from the common school curriculum and the moral elements that Horace Mann vouched for (Urban & Wagoner, 2013), to a differentiated curriculum that was more secular and prevalent in high school settings. During this pivotal time-curriculum writers felt it was necessary to craft a curriculum that could accommodate the various roles and jobs that students would apply to and enter later in life (Urban & Wagoner, 2013). However, conservatives who favored a more patriotic education and curriculum with the infusion of Christian principles began to push back against secular themes of the new high school differentiated curriculum. But these battles over the curriculum were just beginning. After WWII, the country would delve deep into the ideological battles of the Cold War (1950s-1980s),

where east vs west and democracy vs. communism collided. This new battlefield over the curriculum is where debates over the inclusion of *un-American* ideologies and the perspectives of other Americans in the history curriculum would take place (Loewen, 1995; Zinn, 1980).

What is History?

The construction of history is a debated field, with several opposing views shaping how we understand and interpret historical events. For centuries, historians have differed on the exact definition of history, who's history to tell and how to interpret it. For instance, Brownsword (1973), defines history as "a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his *facts*, an unending dialogue between the present and the past" (p. 252). Within this history, it is up to the historian to teach from a set of values. Brownsword (1973) continues to note that there are four broad categories from which the historian must operate to effectively instruct students in the art of history: 1) Evidence, 2) Definition, 3) Interpretation, and 4) Values (p. 252). Additionally, Historian Sam Wineburg (2011) mentions that "history holds the potential only partly realized, of humanizing us in ways offered by other areas in the school curriculum" (Loc.138). On the other hand, Lamprecht (1905) mentions that history is a socio-psychological science where "there is conflict between the old and new tendencies in historical investigation" (p. 14), where the art of the investigation arrives at a social-psychological point of view. Lastly, Mertens (2020) notes that history is about the "storehouse of information about how people and societies behave and only through the study of history can we begin to understand what elements of an institution, or a society persist despite change" (p. 291). Taken altogether the aforementioned opinions on what history is, we must really ask ourselves what history is, how the art and science of history is interpreted and who's version of history is allowed to enter into mainstream public discourse and education.

Key Perspectives in the Art of History

*“Whoever controls the past,
controls the future and whoever
controls the present controls the past”.*

-George Orwell (1984)

History isn't just about recalling facts about the past and regurgitating them. But more of a science and art which according to the person telling it, can have different interpretations. However, among those who study and write history there is consensus that it can take on various forms such as objective vs. subjective, or top-down vs. bottom-up etc.

In the realm of objective history, 19th century German historian Leopold von Ranke is known as the father of modern objective history, where he emphasized an empirical approach to history- as it actually happened by using primary sources to reconstruct events as objectively as possible. Boldt (2014) has translated multiple volumes of Ranke's work and found that in order to support his objective work, Ranke conducted his research by using archives where he “made copies, took notes or even acquired original documents” (Boldt, 2014, p.464). In addition, “within his seminar programme, Ranke set a model for training historians in systematic, critical research methods, which was copied throughout the world as history and, following his methodology, became a professional discipline” (Boldt, 2014, p.464). It seems reasonable to conclude that this meticulous approach to gathering data was crucial to Ranke's success and quest to find the objective truth. In contrast the historian Hayden White is known for his subjective accounts of history and the formalist approach to analyzing historical documents. Moula (2023) argued that White:

“sees and looks at history from a different viewpoint, as a historicist who presents controversial and new ideas on the study of history and the process of writing history. Most of his theories concentrate on his assumptions that history is like narrative, or history resembles literature and fiction when it comes to the techniques used in constituting it” (p.27).

As stated above it seems plausible that White (1973) challenged his readers and fellow historians to think through what is actually a historical method of inquiry and what does it mean to think historically? White (1973) states that his method of historiography aligns with those of a formalist where he does not evaluate one’s work based on if it is right or wrong; rather he seeks to understand the structural components of the historian’s analysis. In short, White’s “own analysis of the deep structure of the historical imagination of nineteenth century Europe is intended to provide a new perspective on the current debate over the nature and function of historical knowledge” (p.2).

Another way of viewing and doing history is the top-down and bottom-up perspectives. Those that believe in the top-down perspective to analyzing and doing history like Thomas Carlyle believed that history is driven and written by influential men. In his seminal work *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), Carlyle (1841) argued that the key to understanding key figures like Napoleon, Shakespeare, Oliver Cromwell and Jean Jacques Rousseau was essential to understanding historical developments and the art of history. On the other hand, historian Howard Zinn advocated for a bottom-up approach to viewing and doing history in his critically acclaimed work *A People’s History of the United States* (1980). Zinn’s (1980) perspective to conducting historical analysis hinged on the telling of stories through the lived experiences of those who were oppressed and taken advantage of by the elites. For

instance, Zinn (1980) goes to great lengths to paint Christopher Columbus as a genocidal maniac who almost single handedly killed off the Native American population by enslaving and forcing them into labor camps. To showcase how truly cruel Columbus was, Zinn (1980) uses excerpts from Columbus' own diary, and the record accounts of others, to demonstrate the atrocities that Columbus committed against the native Arawak Indians on the island of Bahamas. In one excerpt Zinn (1980) notes that upon arriving on the island, the natives greeted Columbus and his men with open arms and expressed to them great generosity in offering up their gold jewelry, and crops (Zinn, 1980). With Gold, Greed and Glory (3 G's) on his mind, it was not long before Columbus was thinking that his new hosts might give him more information on the whereabouts of additional gold (Zinn, 1980). Consequently, Columbus would institute one of the harshest forms of for-profit slavery the world had ever seen when he "ordered all persons fourteen years or older to collect a certain quantity of gold every three months and Indians found without a copper token had their hands cut off and bled to death" (Zinn, 1980.p.4). On the one hand, one of the leading textbooks used in secondary high-school history classrooms around the United States titled the American Vision (2008), only makes a slight mention of Columbus' crime with vague mentioning's of "he then decided to enslave the local Taino people and force them to mine gold and plant crops" (p.18). The traditional historians who wrote the American Vision and the various half-truths incorporated within that book are one of the many reasons- students have no real connection to America's history. In another excerpt Zinn (1980) wrote that on Columbus' second voyage to the Caribbean, from his base in Haiti he:

sent expedition after expedition into the interior. They found no gold fields but had to fill up the ships returning to Spain with some kind of dividend. In the year 1495 they went

on a great slave raid, rounded up fifteen hundred Arawak (Native) men, women, and children, put them in pens guarded by Spaniards and dogs, then picked the five hundred best specimens to load onto ships. Of those five hundred, two hundred died en route. The rest arrived alive in Spain and were put up for sale by the archdeacon of the town, who reported that, although the slaves were "naked as the day they were born," they showed "no more embarrassment than animals. "Columbus later wrote: *"Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold."* (p.4).

The historical event that Zinn describes illuminates the experience of a people who have never had their story told in American public schools. Zinn rips at what Loewen (1995) states is the continued herofication of nation figures in United States history courses, where he tells the truth about Columbus and brings to fruition the humanity of a rich civilization of people which were reduced to slave labor at the hands of a murderer.

Overall, the history that has been infused in the K-12 history curriculum has been told from various perspectives according to the values and school of thought of the historian. Although, the consensus is that most historians strike to remain objective in their historical analysis and "profess to believe in the pursuit of truth, they are also engaged in the legitimization of knowledge, in the definition of who is a historian and who is not, and what history is and what is not (Weiner, 1989, p.399). As members of society who have been entrusted as arbiters of knowledge, they too fall prey to unintentionally or intentionally omitting time periods of great historical importance that deal directly with conflict, race, class and power, etc. Boldt (2014) notes "epistemology shows we can never really know the past; and those who claim to know what history is, have always already carried out an act of interpretation" (p.557).

History Teachers

Greene (1995) argued that “for most educators over the years, the curriculum has had to do with cultural reproduction, the transmission of knowledge, and at least to some degree, the life of the mind (p. 89). This focus reinforces the dominant White culture of the United States. As the default curricular-instructional gatekeepers, the history educator “determines both what content and experiences students have access to and the nature of that content and those experiences” (Thornton, 1989, p. 4). Whitewashing the history curriculum in K-12 education often places history teachers in an unethical conundrum where they must pick and choose whose historical experience to include and who to exclude.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an intellectual movement and framework that examines how race and racism intersect with other forms of social stratification to shape legal, political, and social structures. It emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s from the work of scholars like Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado, who sought to critique how race and racism were embedded within the legal and societal systems of the United States, often reinforcing the dominance of white people while marginalizing people of color.

“Derrick Bell (1992) who was a founding scholar of CRT found that the Civil Rights Movement’s aim for racial equality was in fact unobtainable and while the idea of the American legal system is to provide justice to African Americans, it in turn further cements racial oppression” (Bell, 2019, p.5).

In the field of education, CRT is used as an “epistemological and methodological tool, to help analyze the experiences of historically underrepresented populations across the k-20

educational pipeline” (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015, p.206). By infusing CRT into education Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995), state that stakeholders could better understand the pervasive impact of race in American schooling.

CRT in education has three principles:

1. Race as a central analytical tool where educational disparities cannot be fully understood without examining the role of race and racial hierarchies.
2. Property Rights and educational resources (like quality teachers, funding, and rigorous curriculum) are distributed inequitably. This is often a consequence of historical and ongoing segregation and other forms of institutionalized racism, which allow privileged groups to own or control high-quality education.
3. An educational model grounded in social justice, one that not only recognizes but actively addresses and seeks to dismantle structural inequities based on race.

One of the tenets of CRT is the use of one’s voice to explore a social phenomenon. Ladson-Billings (1998) states that the “use of voice or naming your reality is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship” (p.13) and that previous “CRT scholars use parables, chronicles, stories, counterstories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories to illustrate the false necessity and irony of much current civil rights doctrine” (p.13). As with this critical race autoethnography, I positioned my experience learning and teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history and juxtapose it within the storytelling theme of CRT and further elucidate how the infusion of CRT in education can be a counternarrative to the Eurocentric structures which exist in the history curriculum, which continues to marginalize and oppress Black students and teachers.

Current Historical Whitewashing in K-12 Education

According to Erdman (2021), “Whitewashed history leaves out minority and marginalized communities or hides the truth to make historical situations seem more palatable for white teachers to teach”(para, 2). As a result, because of the sheer disregard for the truth, students across the United States are often told half-truths about certain historical events on behalf of a teacher. However, the current teaching of a Whitewashed history, which is taking place in various states across the United States, in some capacity is not a new phenomenon. The genesis of this sanitized history has been spreading untruths since early colonial America when only White land-owning males had access to education (Library of Congress, n.d.). Therefore, over the last 247 years, the same U.S. history education, which was once only relegated for a few, has taken on a new role where a more diverse nation has not been allowed to learn a fully encompassing history that includes hard truths about the past.

A study by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2018), which monitors hate groups across the United States disclosed that after surveying 1,700 social studies teachers and 1,000 high-school students, the American slavery taught in schools was fraught with inaccuracies and mistruths. In addition, 92% of students did not “know that slavery was the war’s central cause” (Stewart, 2019, para 6; SPLC, 2018). The SPLC also discovered that in most teachings, “slavery is treated like a dot on a timeline” and that the best textbooks of 800 pages or more have maybe 20 pages devoted to slavery and the Civil War (Stewart, 2019). Overall, the study found that students were not properly educated on how America was founded on slavery and how the institution shaped our country from an economic and social point of view.

Similarly, Hansen et al. (2018) issued a study at the Brookings Institute which discovered that “social studies is largely absent from federal education law and policy,” (p.32), which is in

great contrast to other subjects such as English Language Arts, and Science. Because social studies is exempt from regular testing and accountability, districts and school boards around the country are given wide latitude on how to direct teachers on what and how to teach history standards. As a result, teachers themselves who may have fallen victim to a Whitewashed history that was taught to them in their own K-12 education and undergraduate studies, often go on to teach a similar historical version to their students. Consequently, these educators perpetuate a cycle of curriculum trauma that cycles throughout generations.

The Whitewashing of the history curriculum directly affects all students in K-12 public schools. By forcing Black students to learn from a stale and racist curriculum that neglects their humanity and erases their heroes, Love (2019) stated, “The idea that dark people have had no impact on history, or the progress of mankind is one of the foundational ideas of White supremacy” (p.14), and it relegates Black people to being takers and not co-creators of their lives. Ultimately, the Whitewashing of the history curriculum prevents students from learning about what Ladson-Billings (2006) called the *historical and education debt*. These debts are where students learn about the vast inequities and atrocities that have been thrust on minoritized populations in the United States. By neglecting to teach all our students about the debt owed to these populations, we risk indoctrinating our students with a false sense of American nationalism, where America has done no wrong in its history and present. It also reinforces the mindset of “institutionalized dominance of Whiteness” (Kendall, 2013, p.1), where only White people built this country out of their sheer determination and genius.

North Carolina Social Studies Standards and Curriculum

In the United States, K-12 education has historically been left up to the states and local communities. As a result, the federal government does not provide guidance or place mandates

on the K-12 curriculum and standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2024). Because of this decentralization, local districts have jurisdiction over how to create their own school-based curriculum and standards and how to deliver it to students; this is especially true for social studies and other subjects. As a result, states, through their respective State Boards of Education, are allowed to pass policies that can have an out-large impact on the direction of what type of history teachers are allowed to teach based on the standards and curriculum. Nonetheless, there is a difference between the terms, standards, and curriculum, although they are often used synonymously with one another. Standards are what a student should know and be able to do within a particular subject area (Squires & Paular, 2005) and curriculum is defined as a district's written plan to help guide the instruction and assessment functions of teaching (Squires & Paular, 2005, p.109). Specifically, “the curriculum contains a number of specific writing opportunities for students to write on self-selected topics in a variety of specific literary forms” (Squires & Paular, 2005, p.71). In general, the curriculum and standards are supposed to achieve alignment with one another so that concepts match one another.

To help alleviate the discrepancy that exists between each state and core curriculum and standards, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were created. According to the Common Core State Standard Initiative (2010), the CCSS are important because they are

high standards that are consistent across states and provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations to ensure that all students have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life upon graduation from high school, regardless of where they live (para 1)

In addition, the standards were developed by state education leaders and governors with the goal of providing a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. The

standards have been adopted by 41 states, apart from the District of Columbia, four territories, Texas, Florida, Alaska, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Indiana, and Virginia opting out (Achieve, 2013; Common Core Standards Initiative, 2010).

At the heart of the CCSS (2010) is the ability of the teacher to “help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening and language in their fields” (p.3). While this is a lofty goal for Common Core, the standards do not specifically address history content, except for suggesting teachers teach about foundational U.S. documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Common Core has specifically stated that it is up to curriculum developers in each state and locality to develop social studies and history standards for their teachers. In contrast, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) is a professional organization that has a mission of ensuring that the standards for social studies are given the same respect and treatment as for other subjects in K-12 education, and that social studies teachers in K-12 classrooms across the nation be given the appropriate tools and support needed to drive instruction in their classrooms.

According to the NCSS (1992), social studies is defined as:

the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.

Within the school program, social studies provide coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (para, 2).

In addition, the NCSS, through its C3 (College, Career, Civic Life) Framework, challenges states and school districts around the nation to “upgrade their state social studies standards and for practitioners to strengthen their social studies programs” (NCSS, para 1). Although the NCSS has no real power to require districts to implement their proposed standards, the organization does ask teachers, and other education related stakeholders to sign up for its membership services, where they learn various ways to increase the rigor and equity of social studies curriculum and standards.

Debate Around Black History

In the summer of 2020 George Floyd was killed at the hands of a police officer, which added fuel to an already fierce debate taking place in the North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBOE), surrounding the lack of diverse perspectives in the social studies/history curriculum. Black students in North Carolina schools have been frustrated with the fact that they are not allowed to learn about *the hard truths* that center around *slavery, systemic racism*, and the past treatment of African Americans and other marginalized groups in America. One North Carolina rising senior from Middle Creek mentioned that she only recently learned about the Wilmington Massacre of 1898, where “white supremacists violently overthrew the city’s multi-racial elected government and killed dozens of Black people” (Hui, 2020, para 7). In addition, the student argued that students of color deserve to see the accomplishments and contributions of their community reflected in the classes and curriculum that they must sit through every year (Hui, 2020).

To help ameliorate some of the Eurocentrism and Whitewashing included in the state’s social studies standards, the NCSBOE voted 7-5 to adopt the new K-12 social studies standards which include new language “such as having teachers discuss racism, discrimination and the

perspectives of marginalized groups” (Hui, 2021, para 3). Board member Donna Tipton-Rogers is quoted as saying that “history is the study of change, and by adopting these new social studies standards, we are embracing the essence of what makes the study of history useful and our nation great” (Hui, 2021, para 3). However, North Carolina Lt. Governor Mark Robinson, who is a conservative, said the new proposed standards were irresponsible and that the board was anti-conservative (Hui, 2021). In a similar fashion, a report by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2021), a conservative think tank, gave North Carolina a D- grade for its new civics’ standards and an F grade for its U.S. history standards, citing that they were “nebulous verbiage and an aversion to specifics make them functionally contentless in many places, and organization is poor throughout” (p. 246).

Unfortunately, there is a level of structural distrust that Schultz (2019) mentioned in education settings, that is so thick that it hampers any reform solutions from being implemented. The new social studies/history standards introduced by the NCSBOE took years of compromise to revamp. There were many factions that did not want this change to go through, but the revamped North Carolina social studies standards and curriculum needed to undergo what Wiggan et al. (2023) called *Unbleaching*. The act of unbleaching is the “systemic and institutional work that disrupts Eurocentrism and hegemonic master-scripting that positions and transmits a dominant group’s interest (White)” (Wiggan et al., 2023, p. 10). Furthermore, unbleaching is

not anti-White or anti-European, but unbleaching is a critical and reflexive process and practice that analyzes how the interest of the dominant group has been positioned as the basis of—and as referential for—human achievement, aesthetics, intelligence, and

curricular and instructional design, at the expense of non-White perspectives and contributions. (Wiggan et al., 2023, p.11)

Although the North Carolina social studies standards are moving toward being more inclusive to the experiences of African Americans, they continue to have elements of Eurocentrism and Whitewashing in the core themes. But for now, they have suppressed the force of the hegemonic curriculum and the total miseducation of students who sit in classrooms throughout North Carolina. For the standards to be truly inclusive, they will require more Black history to be included along with the potential healing powers of education.

History Curriculum Pre-Brown v. Board of Education

As James Anderson (1988) noted in *The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935*, former slaves wanted nothing more than to learn how to read and write. As the United States moved further from the Civil War, there were countless stories of the formerly enslaved, providing narratives of how slavery robbed them of their right to an education and the ability to learn in their youth. With an insatiable desire to obtain an education, ex-slaves were the “first among native Southerners to depart from the planter’s ideology of education and society and to campaign for universal state-supported education” (Anderson, 1988, p.4), which would aid in their newfound freedom. Regarding the right to learn, scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois (1949, 1970) would write that:

Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental. The freedom to learn has been bought by bitter sacrifice. And whatever we may think of the curtailment of other civil rights, we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn, the right to have examined in

our schools not only what we believe, but what we do not believe; not only what our leaders say, but what the leaders of other groups and nations, and the leaders of other centuries have said. We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of *facts* and such an attitude toward *truth* that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be. (p.230–231)

After emancipation and before the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision which integrated schools and higher education throughout the United States, the formerly enslaved and newly enfranchised Black citizens of the United States would use this newfound freedom to set up their own schools and start the process of educating the Black race (Anderson, 1988). Aware that certain White institutions wanted Black children to learn a “traditional curriculum that celebrates the accomplishments of European-Americans and perpetuates an unstated assumption that the culture of White Americans as superior to all others” (Ware & Ware, 2012, p. 1184), Black historians, educators, and activist began to pushback against this narrative and “created their own textbooks, magazines, lesson plans, children's books and other instructional materials” (Hines, 2022 p. xi). Alana Murray (2018) documented this phenomenon in her book titled *The Development of the Alternative Black Curriculum, 1890-1940*. During this time, educators and historians, such as Nannie H. Burroughs, Morgan Madeline, W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, and other influential Black activists would provide pedagogical counter-narratives to the White European history-social studies curriculum that was being taught in Black classrooms.

Nannie Burroughs and the NTSWG

Nannie H. Burroughs was an educator, labor organizer, and founder of the National Training School for Women and Girls (NTSWG) in 1909 (Phillips-Cunningham & Popp, 2022).

She would merge the *Black Alternative Curriculum* into her larger *Domestic Science Curriculum* at the NTSWG school. Noticing that Black women were the victims of racial, class, and gender discrimination (Phillips-Cunningham & Popp, 2022) and were being displaced from the domestic service industry by Irish and Italian workers (Burroughs, 1902, p.325–326), Burroughs stated that her school had a primary objective to “professionalize household employment” (Phillips-Cunningham & Popp, 2022, p.9) for young Black girls who would lead to their racial survival for generations to come. But Burroughs also knew that along with learning a skill set to provide for their families, Black women also needed to know more about their ancestral history, which would strengthen their racial identity but also counter the dominant European history that was prevalent in many classrooms throughout the nation (Murray, 2018).

Nevertheless, in the early 1910s, Burrough incorporated the following textbooks in her classrooms: *The History of Europe-Own own Times* by James Harvey and Charles Austin Beard; *Modern European Civilization* by Hilton Walker, *American People* by David Saville Muzzey, and *Leading Facts in American History* by D.H Montgomery (Burroughs, n.d., as cited in Murray, 2018). However, Burroughs found it rather uncomfortable that those textbooks continued to push the master narratives, such as the positioning of individuals such as President Lincoln and John Brown as White saviors of the Black race (Murray, 2018). With the help of her longtime friend Dr. Carter G. Woodson and the vision of W.E.B. Du Bois, Burroughs created a course on Black History, where the girls would read *The Negro in Our History* and *The Story of the American Negro*, both of which belonged to Dr. Carter G. Woodson’s literary accomplishments and contributions Black history (Murray, 2018). With these incorporations into the larger social studies curriculum, the alternative black curriculum would be born, and in the 1930s, Burroughs would develop a Negro History course which she would require all teachers at

NTSWG to implement. In the 1930s, it became common for segregated Black high schools as far South as Mississippi to allow African American students to take elective courses in Black history (Zimmerman, 2022).

Black History Month

Carter G Woodson is heralded as the Father of Black history (King & Brown, 2014), because of his tireless efforts to create a counternarrative to the racist stereotypes which displayed African Americans in a negative light throughout the 20th century. In the history textbooks during the early 18th and 19th centuries, Black Americans were described as having no history, childlike foolish and uncomplicated (Elson, 1964; Foster, 1999; Dubois, 1935; King, Davis & Brown, 2012; Reddick, 1934; Spearman, 2013 as cited in King & Brown, 2014). Woodson (1933) posited that the curriculum taught Black children that their “Black skin was a cure” (p.3). Woodson (1984) warned against this racist way of describing the history of African Americans when he stated that:

If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated. The American Indian left no continuous record. He did not appreciate the value of tradition; and where is he today? The Hebrew keenly appreciated the value of tradition, as is attested by the Bible itself. In spite of world- wide persecution, therefore, he is still a great factor in our civilization (p.10)

Although Woodson felt that God made all races equal and that one race of people did not have more accomplishments or achievements than the other, in public schools across America, he believed that millions of Black students were being taught that they were inferior to other races (Woodson, 1984). They were not being afforded the chance to learn about their ancestors or the

healing powers of knowing one's history. According to Woodson (1926), "history was the teacher of life and the messenger of antiquity" (p.10), and if Black students missed out on learning about the mysteries of their history, then they risked out on learning about their Black identity and culture and the Black race would cease to exist.

To raise awareness regarding the lack of Black history taught in schools, Woodson, along with other scholars and educators from the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, worked tirelessly with government officials and Black teachers around the country to get the month of February, declared National Negro History Week-which is the precursor to what is now called Black History Month (Scott, 2011). From its early inception in 1926, Black History Month was given a theme that consisted of sharing rich tales of African culture and civilization, emphasizing the importance of the U.S Constitution and the role Black people played in shaping it, particularly the 15th Amendment, and changing the African American image through history (Woodson, 1926). However, Woodson never wanted Black History Month to be a recurring theme year after year. He felt like his campaign to bring more awareness to the lack of Black history taught in schools would convince policymakers to make Black history a required course for all public schools. Unfortunately, Black history continues to be left out of the overall standards and curriculum in many districts across the nation and February continues to be set as a reminder that Black Americans past and present have sacrificed and contributed greatly to the United States in every facet of American life which includes industry, education, law, and medicine.

Black History Bulletin Board

The Negro History Bulletin Board which is now called the Black History Bulletin was born out of an idea by Mary McLeod Bethune and Carter G. Woodson (Scott, 2011). The

foundation of the bulletin is that it would expand on the idea of Black History Month, but instead of celebrating Black achievement and excellence one month out of the year, Woodson and Bethune created a publication that “would serve the needs of teachers and general readers” (Scott, 2011, para 1). But more importantly, because there was such a lack of African American (Black) history taught in American public schools, the bulletin provided teachers with the “historical overview necessary to create lesson plans for middle and high school students” (Scott, 2011, para. 3).

The bulletin was more than a journal; it featured content, scholarly articles, biographical sketches, and essays on historical topics. With the bulletin being a publication of Woodson’s Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), it allowed the association to continue its mission to research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history, and culture to the domestic and global community. Ultimately, Woodson (1933) would publish his groundbreaking work titled *The Mis-education of the Negro*. Today, it is what some call his magnum opus and greatest contribution to advancing the teaching of Black history in public education. In the book, Woodson indicts the education system for failing to give any or little recognition to the Black man’s presence in history books. It is important to note that Woodson (1933) considered it an American tragedy for “dooming the Negro to a brain-washed acceptance of the inferior role assigned to him by the dominant race and absorbed by him through his schooling (p. 5).

Sadly, almost 100 years since Black History Week and the Black History Bulletin were first introduced, there continues to be a lack of Black history taught in American schools. In some instances, such as in the states of Virginia and Florida, there has been a concerted effort by the governors to link CRT to Black history and the teachings of Marxism. Consequently, the

continued “failure to teach accurate accounts of human contributions through the reprehensible practice of miseducation and curricular violence is harmful to all learners” (Woodson, 1933, as cited in Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2009).

Supplemental Social Studies Units

Another educator and scholar who sought and succeeded in advancing the inclusion of Black history into public schools is Madeline Morgan. In the early 1940s, Morgan was known for tying the early Black history movement together with interculturalism and wartime solidarity that was sweeping the nation (Hines, 2022). It would not be long before she was approached by William H. Johnson who was the White superintendent of the Chicago City School System. He proposed to provide her with a platform and the resources of the city’s Bureau of Curriculum (Hines, 2022, p.xv) to ensure that all of Chicago’s Black and White students had access to a truly inclusive history education that incorporated Negro History and elements of the tolerance education movement. Some scholars debate whether this was an act of goodwill towards Morgan from Johnson or a gesture of “interest convergence” as Derrick Bell once described where the self-interest of Whites collided with the needs and wants of Blacks (Bell, 1980).

Nevertheless, with Hitler’s fascism sweeping across Europe in the early 1940s, the United States was faced with a dilemma with how to fight authoritarianism and Nazism abroad, while displaying to the world that it was a flourishing democracy across the Atlantic. Furthermore, the geopolitical ramifications steaming from the war strengthened the calls for racial reconciliation between the races and to show the world that the United States was a prospering constitutional republic, whose guiding principles were based on equality and the rule of law. This would be no easy task to showcase because the United States during the mid-20th century was anything but that. But Morgan saw this as an opportunity to finally insert a Black

history curriculum on a wide scale within the Chicago Public Schools system. Morgan was allotted funds for a research assistant, so she chose a fellow soror by the name of Bessie S. King. Together, they would begin constructing a non-threatening curriculum that met the demands of Superintendent Johnson and that would expose White Americans to the history of their Black neighbors.

By the spring of 1942, Morgan had created the first Black history curriculum in a U.S. public school system (Dennis, 2022). Morgan and King would call it the *Supplementary Units for the Course of Instruction in Social Studies: The Negro in American Life* (Hines, 2022). According to Hines (2017), the material that Morgan and King chose was significant in various ways, in that it allowed the authors to position themselves within the larger alternative Black curriculum movement where they were able to produce historical studies, textbooks, journal articles, and encyclopedias, and it allowed them to become the first to place such material in front of both Black and White communities. Hines (2022) stated:

“the curriculum was divided into three sections covering grades 1-3, 4-6, and 7-8, respectively, and at each level, the materials were closely aligned to the normal sequence of study for primary social studies for Chicago Public Schools, and it provided additional readings detailing the involvement of African Americans.” (p.105)

After the acknowledgment page of the curriculum’s text, King and Morgan made sure to include a section titled “*Note to the Teacher*,” where they made it quite clear that the history of the United States is one of refuge for immigrants and that the American Negro has contributed in various areas ranging from “science, education, art, music, war and labor” (Bureau of Curriculum, 1942). This statement set the tone for the rest of the units and ensured that the reader knew that African American history would be at the forefront of the course of study.

First, the curriculum gave reverence to organizations and authors who would be the architects of the Alternative Black Curriculum. Texts like the *Crisis*, *The Negro History Bulletin*, *Journal of Negro History*, *Negro World Digest*, and *Journal of Negro Education* and Woodson's *The Negro in Our History*, Brawley's *Negro Builders and Heroes*, and Eppse and Foster's *An Elementary History of America* were all included in the supplemental units (Bureau of Curriculum, p. 106).

Second, King and Morgan included units that sought to enlighten students on the importance of African civilizations, and the contributions of slave labor to the infrastructure and political culture of the early United States, stories of resistance and rebellion to slavery, discussion of race and racism and the inclusion of white allies, the defense of black labor; and the linking of African American history with a larger pan-African vision which connected African Americans to other people of color around the world. (Hines, 2022, p.107)

From 1942-1945 Morgan and King would receive accolades and recognition that stretched from "South America, Africa and Europe" (Dennis, 2022, p.155) Morgan (1944) would take great pride in her accomplishment, writing in the *English Elementary Review* journal that "social illiteracy in the form of riots, brawls, and discriminatory practices have given rise to national, state, city and community agencies to combat rising racial tensions" (p.105) and that the public is turning inward to education to help ameliorate the racial tensions. Within the article, Morgan continued to state that through the units, she hoped to expose White and Black children to the many occupations that Black people have occupied throughout history. Singers such as Marian Anderson, poets like Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, farmers such as George Washington Carver, inventors such as Jan Mazeliger, and explorers like Alonzo Pietro,

who was a Black captain of one of Columbus' ships, Nina were presented (Morgan, 1944).

Ultimately, her goal was for the Negro child to learn to respect themselves through their history, and the White child would learn to appreciate the achievements of the Negro (Morgan, 1944, p.105). But Morgan's goal was not solely based on enlightening Black and White children about the occupations of African Americans of the past; she also wanted to reframe the way that people viewed the African continent. For generations, African Americans were told that they were a history-less people with their upbringing stemming from uncivilized tribes in the *dark continent* of Africa (Brown, 2010). Woodson (1933) would argue,

In history, of course, the Negro had no place in this curriculum. He was pictured as a human being of a lower order, unable to subject passion to reason, and therefore useful only when made the hewer of wood and the drawer of water for others. (p. 21)

Through the Supplementary Units, Morgan and King with the vision and aid of Woodson and Wesley's (1928) *Negro Makers of History*, were successfully able to challenge the notion that Africa was an evil, mysterious continent and that Africans were an inferior race of people who did not possess intellectual capacity on par with White Europeans. Moreover, Morgan and King created lesson plans that allowed students to learn about the current events of Africa and drew connections between West Africa and the United States (Hines, 2022; Bureau of Curriculum, 1942), but more importantly, they placed a great emphasis on the fact that Africans were not violent savages incapable of human emotion. Rather they are people, who love, work hard, and want for their children like any other mother and father would want.

In Spring of 1945 as the Allied Powers began to encircle Hitler and the Axis Powers, the war effort on the domestic front began to wind down. That meant that the Supplementary Units that Morgan and King worked so hard to create were beginning to be phased out by the Chicago

Board of Education. The Mayor's Committee on Race Relations (1944) wrote that the current program (Supplemental Units) did not address the real problem of interracial harmony in schools and would be maintained as an optional unit for teachers to use at their discretion. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Morgan and her allies made appeals to the Illinois State government to mandate that the Supplemental Units be made a part of the standard curriculum and no longer just an optional course of study. At every point, they were rebuffed with state representatives voting that teachers "shall" have the option to teach the units (House Bill No.25, (1945-1946). Ultimately, the Supplemental Units "fell out of use after the late 1940s" (Hines, 2022, p.153), and Chicago Public Schools began to embrace a more conservative learning curriculum as the Cold War approached.

Ultimately, without the aid of Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B. Du Bois, and countless other scholars and activists, the work of Nannie Burroughs and Madeline Morgan would not have made it off the ground. The collective effort amongst these Black educators allowed the Supplemental Units to be introduced to countless Black and White students which allowed them to learn a truly inclusive Black history that was not based on stereotypes and misinformation.

History Curriculum Post-Brown v. Board of Education

While the landmark Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision effectively overturned legal race-based segregation in the United States, historians have debated the pros and cons of the decision and how it continues to affect Black and White students. The Supreme Court expected that public schools in America would cease to be regulated based on race (Jarvis, 1992), but the issue of race continues to dominate the discussion around school busing, the use of scholarships, and the inclusion of minority perspectives in the curriculum (Jarvis, 1992). In pre-Brown America, Black students had a higher likelihood of being taught by a teacher of the same

race (Siddle-Walker, 2000), where the 1890 U.S Census data disclosed that Black teacher workforce labor in the South stood almost equally distributed with 49% men and 51% women (Fultz, 2020), with an overall calculation of 82,000 Black teachers (Haney, 1978). However, in post-Brown, they are more likely to be taught by a White teacher who consistently occupies around 80% of the teacher workforce (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). This phenomenon did not happen overnight.

Once the decision was made to integrate K-12 public schools and higher education in the United States, White resistance to Brown pushed highly educated Black principals and teachers out of a job (Fenwick, 2022; Tillman, 2009). As Bristol (2014) mentioned, these educators were dismissed either because of a school closing or the school boards were given the authority by legislators such as in Alabama and North Carolina (Haney, 1978), not to rehire Black teachers or pay them a fair salary on par with their White counterparts. It is important to note that a majority of Black teachers, through a confluence of circumstances, had earned master's and doctoral degrees from some of the nation's most prestigious universities, such as Columbia University, Chicago University, University of Pennsylvania, and Michigan University (Fenwick, 2022, p. xvii).

Sadly, as the nation pushed forward with integration, Black students were at a real disadvantage for they were the ones who had to leave the safe comfort zones of their all-Black neighborhoods and be bussed to White schools where they had no agency or sense of safety. It seems plausible that Black students went from being taught a history curriculum by Black teachers, who used their pedagogy to shed light on Black heroes of the past to a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history that continues to be predominantly taught by White teachers in the present. There would be some prescience to a Langston Hughes' statement at the National Negro History

Week lecture where he mentioned that “with the beginnings in public school integration, some people may presume that emphasis on Negro history should be unnecessary” (Hughes, 1958, p.1). The interest in Black history did not decline after the *Brown* decision by African Americans per se, but conservative opponents to the implementation of a more truthful history were relentless in their pursuit to ensure that America’s White heroes were not challenged. But Zimmerman (2022) noted that reactions depended on the region of the country.

For instance, in 1966, the history textbook, *Land of the Free: A History of the United States* by prominent Black historian John Hope Franklin faced a fierce rebuttal after it was submitted for adoption in California schools. White critics pointed out that the book would make a generation of White students “feel guilty” (Zimmerman, 2022, p.98) and that the textbook should add accounts of when the formerly enslaved were happy and embraced joyous moments with their White overlords. Parents wanted to know why the textbook tended to “play up our mistakes, downgrade our heroes and please our enemies” (Zimmerman, 2022, p.108). Around 1969 in Alabama, a group of White parents protested a textbook incorporating the Birmingham Church Bombing, which killed four Black girls in May of 1963. The textbook authors were forced to downplay the tragedy and place the blame on “lower-class White extremists” (Zimmerman, 2022, p.106). In the 1970s a teacher from Florida decided to include more Black heroes into her history lessons, which tended to showcase White heroes in a negative light. When the school day ended, she discovered that her tires had been slashed and derogatory statements plastered on the windows of her car (Zimmerman, 2022).

Northerners as far up as Michigan tended to frame their disagreements with Blacks and in the inclusion of a more truthful history into the classrooms around the context of class and not specifically race. Northerners tended to lay the blame for the racial strife in the country at the feet

of liberal white elites, who had pushed the misconception that blue-collar, hard-working Americans were the reason for these groups of Americans being depicted in less than favorable terms within the textbooks (Zimmerman, 2022). These types of accounts only heightened the tension between the Black militants and White conservatives of the 1960s. Upset with the lack of progress being made in the fight for Civil Rights, Black activists used three arguments in the 1960s. First, they felt that if they could make the history text in schools more sympathetic to Black suffering, then it would ensure that the next generation of White Americans did not possess the racial animus of their parents and ancestors. Lastly, if White Americans “knew facts about the Negro and his place in American history as contrasted with the caricatures he was made out to be in newspapers and pop-culture, then the American conscience would be stirred and awakened by this powerful imperative (Zimmerman, 2022).

Before his untimely death, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would opine about the lack of Black history being taught in classrooms when he wrote that he wept for Black children who “have been denied the knowledge of their heritage and for white kids who have been taught a history of misinformation that the Negro’s contributions are an irrelevant entity to American society” (King, 1967, 2010, p.44). In the same breath, King (1967) pronounced that he and his ancestors were people with a rich and noble history, and it must be told in all the schoolhouses around the country. Even Malcolm X, who had vociferous differences with Dr. King, found commonality with him when he argued for African Americans to reclaim their history from the white man. X (1964) would claim that people without a history are culturally dead. He also explained that “it is impossible to understand the present or prepare for the future unless we have some knowledge of the past” and that Afro-Americans have been crippled in society because of their complete lack of knowledge of the past (para, 2).

By the end of the 1960s, the battle for integrated textbooks and the inclusion of Black history into the curriculum had reached a boiling point. In various localities, Black students felt like their White teachers were discussing Black history from a white rather than Black perspective, with one student from Peoria, Illinois, claiming that “when you study America, they say America-land of the free, but I see Blacks asking for freedom and they don’t get it” (Zimmerman, 2022, p. 111). After being ignored, Black students became frustrated and mobilized for their voices to be heard and by practicing their 1st Amendment Rights to peacefully assemble. In Plainfield, New Jersey in an act of solidarity, 300 Black students orchestrated a walk-out and met up at a local youth center and taught themselves Black history content (New York Times, 1968). In neighboring Philadelphia, 3,500 Black students protested outside of their local Board of Education for the need to include more course offerings in Black history (Zimmerman, 2022). Furthermore, in *Holt v. Tift County Board of Education* (Georgia), the Legal Defense Fund (1972) filed a suit on behalf of Black students who held vigils for the right to be taught Black history but were suspended and expelled without due process by the principal and local school board.

However, there were some bright spots post-*Brown*, where proponents of a separate Black history were successful in their demands for more course offerings. The 1960’s saw “dozens of states pass laws or resolutions requiring the study of minoritized people in the United States such as Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and African Americans (Zimmerman, 2022). In the 1970s, Los Angeles “offered four separate electives in Black history, Black literature, African studies, and Swahili (Zimmerman, 2022, p.113). During the same time the city of Chicago, offered elective Black History courses to all its forty-seven high schools, however the lack of interest from White students forced district personnel to remove the courses in order to

make room for other courses (Zimmerman, 2022). Even George C Wallace (1963) the former Governor of Alabama, who was notorious for the slogan Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever, had a change a heart by 1973, when he “urged Alabamians to pay special attention...to the many contributions that African Americans have made to our state and nation” (Zimmerman, 2022, p.115). Additionally, by 1976 President Gerald Ford made a statement recognizing the many contributions of African Americans in American life (Library of Congress, n.d). It would not be long until Congress in 1986 would pass a law formally declaring the month of February Black History Month (U.S Congress, 1986).

As the United States continued its path towards integrating the public schools with what *deliberate speed*, there has been marginal progress made in dismantling the dominant Eurocentric history curriculum of the past. The history textbooks and curriculum today are more multicultural and inclusive than they were a century ago, but curriculum transformation “is a process that never ends because of the changes that are continuing within the United States and throughout the world” (Banks & Banks, 2005, p.242). Because of the greater culture wars in American society taking place between the 1960s and 1990s, those in charge of crafting the history textbooks and curriculum made a grand bargain. As Zimmerman (2022) notes, “whites allowed new actors into the national story so long as the story stayed the same; Blacks often abandoned this narrative altogether in a quest to create their own” (p.118). The result was a fragmented narrative of American history, where the themes of democracy were present, Black history was introduced to students every February but the overarching theme of what is the Black experience continued to be ignored then and Whitewashed in the present.

Black Male Teachers in the United States

The Black male teacher's experience allows us to realize that class struggle is not something of the past; rather it is alive in the 21st century. His experience has been subjected to the rule of America's dominant White class. According to Freire (2014), "all the actions of the dominant class manifest its need to divide to facilitate the preservation of the oppressor state (p.152). Within this oppressor state, the dominant class "impose their view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing expression" (p.152) and "influences the institutions of child rearing and education within that structure" (p.154). In the home of his forefathers, the Black male teacher has had to conform to the rules of the dominant White class, which does not see the value he brings to the education system. In too many instances, Black male teachers feel like an invisible tax is levied on them as they are relegated as the go to person to discipline other Black boys and girls (Barnum, 2018). But it seems like this is by design because the Black boy has been convinced of his intrinsic inferiority, where the act of becoming a teacher is a foregone memory. The teaching profession has always required educators to be selfless and patient and noble. But from a young age the Black boy has been taught from "preschool to college that he has deficit-based narratives, which are fueled by historically racist and sexist stereotypes" (Little & Tolbert, 2018, p.409). These stereotypes demean the Black boys' inherent value and downplay his contribution to society. In addition, young Black boys are viewed as "deviant, disengaged, disruptive, undisciplined, unintelligent, problematic, confrontation, threatening, and difficult to teach-all in a place that should be safe and affirming." (p.409).

Black Male History Teachers

Over the last 20 years, education scholars and researchers have argued for an increased effort through policy to recruit and hire more Black male educators (Bristol, 2014; Lewis, 2006). In the same breath, research also shows that because of the negative experiences of Black boys in K-12 education (Howard, 2014; Hucks, 2011; Kunufu, 2007; Losen, 2011), it is steaming from excessive discipline practices and a non-inclusive curriculum. As a result, Black boys are either unable to pursue teaching as a viable career or not interested in the profession. Due to these common trends, Black men continue to make up, on average, only three percent of all social studies/history teachers in the United States (NCES, 2020). Moreover, the history curriculum continues to only place great emphasis on ancient empires, the American Revolution, and the Holocaust which are pivotal periods in history, but do not allow Black male history teachers to teach about the painful experiences of the “transatlantic slave trade, race riots of the early 20th century or the economic impact of systemic racism on Black communities” (Fletcher, 2020). Furthermore, the history curriculum does not allow Black male history teachers to teach about Black excellence in the arts, economics, and medicine. As a result, only one-two lessons or eight to nine percent of total U.S. history time is devoted to actual Black history (King, 2017). Ultimately, all these factors contribute to the curriculum trauma that Black boys endure in their foundational years of education, which leads them to bypass teaching as a profession.

Social and Mental Health of Black Male Teachers

There is documented research on the impact that Black male teachers have on student achievement and the recruiting and retaining of Black males into the teaching profession (Bristol, 2014). But the social and mental health of Black male teachers as they adjust to the new organizational culture such as a school is a phenomenon that is not nearly mentioned enough in

the research. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) defined organizational culture as a “language and ideology that helps edit a member’s everyday experience and shared standards that are critical to the work that is accomplished” (p.1). Organizational culture continues to manifest itself through social etiquette, rituals, and the types of customs that are accepted (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Because Black male teachers experience the structural forces of racial power in schools through the curriculum and administration, they never have a chance to adapt to the organizational structure of a school. Unfortunately, it has increasingly become a burden and the responsibility of Black male teachers to be the solution of problems not of their making and to “articulate and distinguish between what can be done for them and what must be done by them to achieve success” (Edwards & Polite, 1992, p. 276), in spaces that do not take into consideration their humanity. To that extent, Black male teachers carry the burden of having to solve problems that are not a part of the normal responsibilities of an educator, subsequently finding themselves in isolation where they are the only males of color in the entire school (Underwood et al., 2019), with no one to turn to for help or guidance. As Underwood (2019) postulated, this further complicates the socialization process of Black male teachers because much of their success hinges “on the successful acclimation to a world where they are sorely underrepresented” (p.15) and at various times misunderstood.

In other situations, the social and mental deterioration of Black male teachers can take form when they are expected to operate as singular disciplinarians towards the perceived misbehavior of Black male students (Brown, 2012). This positioning of Black male teachers as disciplinarians within the school social ecosystem reinforces what Shedd (2015) and Bristol & Mentor (2018) state is the universal carceral apparatus, which can mirror that of prisons. In the study completed by Bristol & Mentor (2018), these Black male teachers are called *agents of the*

universal carceral apparatus. Because of the dual roles that Black male teachers have to take on, they are not allowed to fully immerse themselves in their pedagogy as a teacher. Within the study, a significant number of the participants “spoke to issues of race, the criminalization of the Black body, having been silenced or marginalized in education, and being positioned in schools as the teachers who were supposed to mete out discipline” (Bristol & Mentor, p. 231).

In short, the Black male teacher’s experience in K-12 education is often rife with having to balance the social and mental anguish that comes with not being accepted, teaching a null curriculum, and being forced into uncomfortable situations where they must take on being a disciplinarian to sometimes Black male students or students who are perceived as misbehaving. The following section continues the discussion on curriculum trauma and violence as they are forces that hinder one from fully teaching to their full capacity.

Curriculum Violence/Trauma

There is a need to explore the social and emotional effects of curriculum violence and trauma through the lens of a Black male history teacher through a critical race autoethnographic lens. Curriculum in its broader sense can be defined as what students have the opportunity to learn in schools (Eisner, 1994) and that includes three dimensions such as implicit, explicit and null. When the curriculum hinders a student from fully finding themselves or forming an identity, it can lead to curriculum violence which is defined as:

the deliberate manipulation of education and academic programs in a manner that marginalizes students and compromises their learning experiences, as well as the intellectual and social- psychological well-being of omitted groups; signaling to learners that these groups have no contributions or are not worthy of inclusion. (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2013, p. 24)

Once the curriculum violence is allowed to fester and permeate throughout a student's academic journey, it can lead to curriculum trauma. According to Buul et al. (2020), "curriculum trauma is by and large an academic theory that critically examines how academic systems (i.e., curriculum) directly harms students' ability to become independent and healthy social agents" (para 1). This includes but is not limited to course offerings, content selection, modalities of instruction, and the matriculation process. It also includes what is null and absent, and thus, what is not taught is a lesson to learn as well (Buul et al., 2020).

As a Black male history teacher, I have inflicted curriculum violence and trauma onto my students by teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history. It has not only hindered my growth as an educator, but it has made it impossible for me to teach critical thinking skills to my students. By opening myself up to explore how my teaching of Eurocentric-Whitewashed history contributed to curriculum violence and trauma, I could continue the tradition of showing how "teacher narratives enable the voice and experiences of teachers and students to educate the unfamiliar, assist the novice, and bring a clearer perspective on how to develop healthy learning communities" (Hancock, 2003, p.5). Overall, this study should continue the conversation with the need to ensure that educators are teaching an inclusive portrait of American history because the failure to do so hurts the teacher but also the students.

Summary

Segregation was a brutal time in our nation's history, but it did present Black scholars, activists, and educators with opportunities to advance Black history to Black children and in some cases to the children of sympathetic White Northerners. But the *Brown v Board of Education* decision ushered in a new wave of culture wars with some White conservatives feeling that Black history, with centering on race, and structural inequality in the United States

by way of housing and the education systems, was inappropriate topics for schools. Furthermore, White Americans felt like it was up to the home and greater community to figure out the *race problem*. As Jim Crow was allowed to flourish, the history curriculum continued its trend toward Eurocentrism and the Whitewashing of anything that resembled inclusivity or Black radicalism.

This critical race autoethnographic study seeks to reflect on my lived experience as a Black male teacher who is a product of the public education system Post-Brown v Board of Education and who has had to tackle learning and teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum. It also reviews the Black identity development that I have undergone so that I could grab a better insight into who I am and the curriculum violence and trauma that has been inflicted on me, which I have then inflicted on my students. These are the stories that have gone untold in the literature and could offer further insight into how society could remedy them.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology for this qualitative critical race autoethnographic study. The chapter includes an overview of research design, participants, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, and strategies for trustworthiness.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this autoethnographic study is to examine and reflect on my lived experience as a Black male, growing up and being taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum in my K-12 schooling. The study will also explore how curriculum violence because of being taught various mistruths resulted in me teaching the same Eurocentric-Whitewashed history as a former Black male history teacher. Emphasis will also be placed on the institutional constraints around K-12 education and its profound impact on my mental health and the search for my racial Black identity.

Research Questions

The research questions that will drive this study are as follows:

RQ 1: What role does curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history play in the development of a Black male history teacher?

RQ 2: In what ways did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limit the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness within pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher from the South?

RQ 3: In what ways did learning more about my ancestral Black history help me to push back against teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?

Methodology

The qualitative research design selected for this study is a critical race autoethnography, which combines the tenets of Autoethnography, Critical Autoethnography and Critical Race Theory.

Autoethnography

According to Butz and Besio (2009), autoethnography is a form of “self-narrative that places the self within a social context” (p. 1). In addition, Ellis et al. (2011) described autoethnography as “an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (p.1). For autoethnography to be effective, the autoethnographer must draw upon several qualitative traditions, which include those of narrative research, ethnography, and arts-based research, to assemble stories of their own lived experiences (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022) and draw comparisons between that experience and a social issue. Although autoethnography shares a storytelling feature as Chang (2008) asserted, it transcends just a mere autobiographical science by allowing one to “engage in cultural analysis and interpretation” (p.43). Autoethnography also shares features that mirror those of ethnographers where it:

“Follows a similar ethnographic research process by systematically collecting data... analyzing and interpreting them, and producing scholarly reports, also called autoethnography. In this sense, the term *autoethnography* refers to the process and the product, just as *ethnography* does. Second, like ethnographers, autoethnographers attempt to achieve cultural understanding through analysis and interpretation. In other words, autoethnography is not about focusing on the self alone, but about searching for an understanding of others (culture/society) through the self... The last aspect of

autoethnography that sets it apart from other ethnographic inquiries is that autoethnography uses personal experiences as primary data” (Chang, 2008, pp. 48–49).

Ellis and Bochner (2006) explain:

“Autoethnography shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and other collaborative creation of sense-making in situations in which people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning. Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to empathize, and to do something, to act. It needs the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate”. (p. 433)

Once a researcher has decided to further explore the use of autoethnography, it can be used as a tool to combat the phenomenon of otherness that marginalized researchers and scholars feel when presenting non-traditional work (Hancock, 2015). This is why autoethnography must be allowed the opportunity to expand its reaches and horizon beyond just theory but, more importantly towards practice.

Critical Autoethnography

A critical autoethnography is a qualitative and “intimate method which provides a nuanced complex and specific insights into particular human lives, experiences and relationships” (Jones & Purn, 2018, p.5). But as Potter (2015) reminds us that “In the spirit of critical theory, a critical autoethnography attempts to do more than just reveal how one fits into the power structure—it attempts to deconstruct the very power structure that gets exposed” (p.1436). Additionally, critical autoethnography peels back the layers of those human lives and informs the masses about “the why and how and so what of those lives” (Jones & Purn, 2018, p.5). Expanding onto Jones and Purn, Adams (2017) contends that those whose experiences are “feminist, critical race, queer, postcolonial, and Indigenous crip sensibilities that focus

intentionally and fiercely on identifying and remedying social harms and injustices” (p.63), can fall into the category of a autoethnography. Lastly, Boylorn and Orbe (2021) argued that critical autoethnography:

“accounts for the difference between an autoethno-graphic account (an autoethnography written to critically engage or critique culture), and an autoethnographic account (a story that can be used to critically engage or critique culture but was not written as or labeled an auto-ethnography by its author). Moreover, critical autoethnography is a strategic approach that critiques and challenges cultural and hegemonic standards and should therefore not be applied retrospectively to authors who do not identify as autoethnographers. Critical autoethnography centers its core tenets around the critique of culture and power with the constructions and theorizations of cultural identities, intersectionality, and social inequalities” (p.6).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

The term Critical Race Theory, sometimes referred to as CRT, is a legal theory that was first coined by its founder, Derrick Bell (1992), who is sometimes referred to as the *Father of Critical Race Theory*. In a now-famous Harvard Law Review essay, Bell (1980) critiqued the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision by arguing that through interest convergence, any economic or social gain by Blacks also coincided with the economic gains for whites. For instance, he hypothesized that “the decision helped to provide immediate credibility to America's struggle with Communist countries to win the hearts and minds of emerging *third world* people” (p.534), and it reassured Blacks that the fight for freedom abroad against Hitler’s Nazi Germany might finally be afforded to Black veterans (Bell, 1980).

It was not long after this critique that Bell concluded that equality was out of reach,

therefore, unattainable for African Americans through the legal system. The justice system, which was supposed to be colorblind, was just as guilty of perpetuating the racial caste system in the United States. Bell (1992) soon realized that “by constantly aiming for a status that is unattainable in a perilously racist America, Black Americans face frustration and despair” (p.363) and waste precious time and resources challenging the entire jurisprudence system. Therefore, they needed to shift their focus on the principle of racial equality (Bell, 1992, p.364). As a result, Bell argued that a new movement of young leaders would emerge to challenge the social inequalities that were prevalent in American society.

Thus, it would be Kimberle Crenshaw, Cheryl Harris, Ladson Billings & Tate, who would continue to push CRT into other areas of society, such as education, and question the concept of meritocracy, and place “race back into critical pedagogy” (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p.153).

CRT contains five tenets

- 1) Racism is an everyday thing and not some fleeting construct relegated to isolated events (Stefancic & Delgado, 2001)
- 2), interest convergence holds that the advancement of Blacks comes at the benefit White elites.
- 3), races are byproducts of social creation and not through any biological manifestations.
- 4), the dominant White group takes advantage of minority groups at the whims of the labor market and
- 5) the use of counternarratives and storytelling grants minoritized people the latitude to tell their experiences and perspectives on racism and “being racially minoritized” (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011, p. 2).

Critical Race Autoethnography

A Critical Race Autoethnography (CRA) combines the elements of autoethnography and Critical Race Theory (CRT). In combining CRT and autoethnography, a critical race autoethnography uses the researcher's personal stories as a tool for examining the effects of racism and systemic oppression in specific contexts (i.e classroom and curriculum). Furthermore, critical race autoethnography is not merely the reflection and documenting of events that have taken over the course of one's life but is a process by which the researcher places him/herself within the social system in question. By utilizing a critical race autoethnographic approach to this study, I hope the reader will be introduced to my personal lived experience in what Munoz (2009) called a *utopian performative*, where the reader is immersed into my world, allowed to take a glimpse into the future and take on identities and positions that remind us that the present is not enough and that something is missing. Furthermore, the utilization of a critical race autoethnographic approach to this study allows my story as a former Black male history to be told through a critical lens using the storytelling feature of Critical Race theory. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) emphasized that the storytelling feature of CRT because it allows everyday experiences to be told with perspective, and viewpoint, so the richness and power of stories can allows the art of persuasion to take place so Americans can come to a better understanding of how Americans see race. Potter (2015) states that "autoethnographic projects related to identity and power offer an excellent opportunity for critical theorists to move beyond discussing the forces of power in the sociopolitical landscape and they give us the tools to dismantle the very system that has created the power structure (p.1436). It is my hope that through the lens of a critical race autoethnography my experience in the education system offers insights into how racism through the public school system and curriculum creates barriers and empower

individuals based on race; but it also presented me with a newfound understanding into how I processed the various stages of my identity as I began to peel back layers of self-hate, that ultimately brought about a new of sense Black love for myself which I began to unapologetically embrace. By allowing readers to see how these larger personal and societal forces manifested in my lived experience, it may be possible to bring to light how stakeholders can reform the public school system.

Research Design

Participant

The research method of autoethnography involves the participation of one individual, the researcher. I was born in Concord, North Carolina, and completed my entire K-12 education in the Cabarrus County School system. In this district, I was taught by two African American male teachers, where one served as my Physical Education (PE) teacher during my 5th grade year and the other was my Computer Science instructor during my junior year in high school. Although these men did not teach any core classes, their life lessons as Black men growing up in America played an important role in the shaping of my Black identity. The history courses that I was required to take to obtain my high school diploma were taught by White males and during this time, there was never a time during my K-12 experience where I was allowed or given the opportunity to enroll in a Black History course.

In the summer of 2008, I graduated from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with a bachelor's degree in business marketing, and in 2015, I obtained my Masters in the Art of Teaching with a concentration in History Education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and started teaching at the age of 28, and taught students of diverse populations that involved Black, White, Latinx, and Asian communities. With 10 years of

teaching experience, the first five years were spent working in a middle school setting as a 7th and 8th grade teacher. In those settings, I taught World and U.S. History. The last five years of my teaching career were spent working at various early colleges throughout North Carolina where I taught a mixture of subjects that ranged from Advanced Placement, Honors U.S. history, and Economics and Personal Finance.

Data Collection

In autoethnography, Adams et al. (2008) stated that the goal is to “use our experience to engage ourselves, others, culture, politics, and social research” (p.1). For me to fully understand the 10 years I taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history to my students, I engaged in a self-reflective data-collection process that enlisted the help of a peer reviewer, who provided a level of authenticity and integrity to the process. Furthermore, the process incorporated the following phases:

- *Phase 1: Subjectivity Statement:* Subjectivity is not just present in our research lives, but it's also present in our daily lives (Perskin, 1988); therefore, as a Black male who grew up in a lower-income American household under the care of a single mother, my worldview and teaching pedagogy have been shaped by that experience. My K-12 experience as a young Black boy was filled with peaks and valleys at the instruction of well-meaning teachers who wanted to ensure that I became a productive member of society. However, the history curriculum that I was taught as an adolescent did not allow me to experience the richness of my ancestral history. As a graduate student in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, my interests are aligned with my life story and lived experiences. Furthermore, my personal identity as a Black man is a significant aspect of who I am, which has invariably been shaped by

worldview, perceptions, and interpretations of historical events related to race, ethnicity, and social justice that may not be present in the perspectives of others. My cultural background has played an intricate part in how I view historical events and themes throughout time and space, therefore providing me with a unique perspective and lens through which to analyze mainstream historical interpretations of history. Despite these influences in my teaching, I strive for objectivity in presenting objective truths to my students, which enables them to critically analyze information and form their own conclusions. It is important to acknowledge that my personal identity and cultural background have been shaped by the way I perceive and teach history, leading to subjectivity in my approach to certain topics or discussions. It is a fact that I may be more likely to focus on the experiences of Black males- dating back from their K-12 experience to present-day and explore why less than 2 % choose to become teachers. This phenomenon is not a mere coincidence and continues to add to the lack of diversity in the teaching workforce, which is further endemic to an education system that continues to lack premier investment in diverse communities.

- Phase 2: Reflection Journals: During this phase, I collected a vast array of journal entries from my time teaching and will use them to document my experience teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum.
- *Phase 2: Reflection Essay:* During this phase, I used a reflection essay which was composed of an in-depth reflection on my experience as a young Black boy who was taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history during my K-12 education. Because memory can open doors to the past (Chang, 2008), I used this reflection essay/narrative to discover more about the curriculum trauma that was inflicted upon me as a young Black

boy and how it contributed to my teaching the same curriculum as a Black teacher

(Appendix A)

- *Phase 3: Peer-Interview:* This phase consisted of an interview conducted by a colleague in the Curriculum and Instruction doctoral program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. During this interview, I answered questions that centered around my own K-12 experience as a young Black male learning a Eurocentric curriculum. In addition, the questions ventured into my experience teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history (Appendix B). In addition, I utilized a reflection journal where I analyzed lesson plans, standards, pacing guides, and principal observations from my 10 years of teaching. The goal of this exercise was to get at the heart of my thinking while writing the lesson plans and how the standards at the time of my teaching reflected Eurocentrism and Whitewashing.
- *Phase 4: Cultural Artifacts:* A collection of cultural artifacts such as hip-hop albums, principal evaluations, yearbooks, and newspaper clippings were utilized to describe my experience as an educator. Furthermore, journal entries were used to describe the development of my racial Black identity and how my teaching pedagogy was impacted by teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum. (Appendix D)

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is the data analysis method used for this autoethnographic study.

According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis “is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and themes within data” (p. 79). One of the core benefits of thematic coding is that Braun and Clark (2006) placed great emphasis on its flexibility, meaning that thematic analysis “provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a

rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (p.78). Thematic analysis consisted of the Peer-Interview, Reflection Journal’s, Reflexive Essay and narrative accounts of the Cultural artifacts where each was coded to identify patterns in the data. Data analysis adhered to Braun and

Clark’s phases of thematic analysis, took place over a 2-month span and consisted of 5 steps:

- 1.) First, I familiarized myself with the data through transcribing and rereading the data. The topics used for finding raw words focused on Black racial identity, Eurocentrism, Whitewashed, Black male teachers, and anything else that would correlate to curriculum violence or trauma.
- 2.) Each raw word was then collated and the generating of succinct labels which assisted in identifying important features of the data relevant to answering the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006).
- 3). The codes were then categorized accordingly so the search for themes could take place and their relevance to the research questions.
- 4). The process of refining the themes and subthemes took place multiple times and were checked against the data set to determine accuracy and validity.
- 5). Themes were then named with purpose to help illustrate my lived experience as a former Black male history teacher who taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history.

Risks, Benefits, and Ethical Considerations

A Critical Race Autoethnography is a research method that puts race and self at the center of a cultural analysis. Such an endeavor can open the researcher up to unfair criticism from those who have not experienced the phenomenon in question.

My identification as a former Black male history teacher who is studying the impact of teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed on my mental, social well-being, and Black identity required that I disclose uncomfortable truths about myself as the researcher. By disclosing these

personal narratives through my own lived experience, my contribution to the field of education may allow other Black male educators to open up about their challenges while pushing back against an education system and curriculum that is averse to change.

To maintain high ethical standards throughout the study, I avoided self-indulgence, blaming or shaming others, heroics, framing myself or others as victims, self-righteous behavior, and disengagement (Adams et al., 2015). Furthermore, I “avoid[ed] excessive focus on myself, the over-emphasis on narration rather than the analysis of the cultural event, primary reliance on personal memory and the inappropriate application of autoethnography” (Chang, 2008, p.54). Although I told my very own story, I was aware of the impact that the greater phenomenon has on the larger cultural issues within the United States and our world.

Strategies for Quality and Trustworthiness

As the sole participant in this study, I understood how subjective an autoethnographic study is, which is why I went to great lengths to explain the instruments utilized in gathering the data in preparation for analyzing it. To ensure that quality and trustworthiness were maintained throughout this autoethnographic study, I implemented a system of triangulation from multiple sources by collecting data from a Peer Interview, Reflection journals, Reflection Essay and various cultural artifacts (principal evaluations, teacher of the year awards, pacing guides, and musical inspirations). Moreover, I incorporated Guba’s constructs, which Shenton (2004) cited as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (p.64). By implementing these constructs into the study, credibility was enabled with a system of triangulation that Mertens (2009) described as “checking information that has been collected from different sources or methods for consistency of evidence across sources of data” (p.282).

Transferability was ushered in by following what Geertz (1973) as cited in Mertens (2009) stated as *a thick description*, where sufficient details along with the complexity of the study are disclosed to the readers. Dependability involved providing detailed and rich descriptions of my lived experience from teaching a Eurocentric-White-washed history and the entire research process. Lastly, confirmability refers to what Mertens (2009) said “the data and their interpretation are not figments of the researchers’ imagination and that the data can be tracked to a source” (p.284).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this critical race autoethnographic study was to investigate my own experience as a Black boy who was taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history during my K-12 education, the curriculum trauma that it inflicted on me in my younger years, and how I carried that same trauma with me and infused it into my pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher. This study explored various ways that curriculum trauma had on my mental, social-wellbeing and Black identity as a Black male history teacher. The research questions used to guide this study are as follows:

RQ 1: What role does curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history play in the development of a Black male history teacher?

RQ 2: In what ways did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limit the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness within pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher from the South?

RQ 3: As an adolescent, how did being taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum impact my racial Black identity once I became a teacher?

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the key findings that emerged from the collection of data from over 10 years of teaching at the middle and high school levels. As a Black boy who was taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum during his K-12 education, I was forced to learn about individuals who owned my ancestors yet were credited with founding an entire nation out of 13 British-owned colonies. In addition, as a former Black male history teacher, I infused the same Eurocentric history into my pedagogical practice, which has culminated in this endeavor of searching for answers to questions that have plagued me throughout my teaching career. This journey has awakened me to the fact that I was

indoctrinated with a history curriculum that did not allow me to ask questions as a young Black boy and later grow as an educator. The history curriculum in K-12 education does not have mechanisms in place that allow teachers to maintain a sense of autonomy or to challenge the status quo. The themes of *Negative Indoctrination*, *Lacking of an Identity*, *Fear of Unemployment and Black Pride* were revealed in the data and will be further explained in the next section. These themes manifested themselves throughout the data and revealed ways in which I went from periods of fear and isolation as a teacher to one who embarked on a journey of self-discovery and found himself and the meaning of Black Pride.

Theme # 1: Negative Indoctrination

I can recall being in 4th grade and reading about how Christopher Columbus discovered America and how, although some of the Native Americans died from interactions with him and his crew, overall, he had done the world a great deed. I can also recall peeking in the back of the textbook and viewing all the Presidents of the United States, which at the time ranged from the 1st President of the United States (Washington) to the time of me being in 4th grade, President Clinton. I used to think about how cool it would be to be President of the United States being that I would be able to take cool trips around the world, and just be the first Black President of the United States. But there was one president who I had great admiration for and that was President Abraham Lincoln. Throughout my education, I was hammered with history lessons that centered around “Honest Abe” being the greatest President of them all and that he freed the enslaved with his signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. We then briefly learned about the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States, and finally, the 14th and 15th Amendments. In addition, we touched on the brief lives of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, but that was it for my ancestral history. However, Jefferson, Washington, Monroe,

and Adams were held in great reverence, especially Jefferson and his mansion at Monticello. It is no coincidence that I learned to hold Jefferson in high regard throughout my K-12 experience” (Excerpt from Individual Reflective Essay).

The theme of *Negative Indoctrination* is highlighted in the data at various points, specifically through the fact that it made me a rule follower in school and at home. The concept of a rule follower is evident in that I would do what my teachers and mother told me to do, when to do it and not to challenge authority. At home, following the rules also metastasized in how my mother raised me to be a rule follower and that if I followed the rules and listened to my teachers, I would get good grades. As the middle child who was precocious in nature but afflicted with certain physical ailments, there were great responsibilities thrust on me. Although I was the middle child and my older brother was 10 years my senior, I was tasked with being the man of the house and to do that I needed to take heed to my mother’s instructions, not get in trouble, and adhere to strict instructions so that our home was kept in order.

Subtheme # 1-Rule Follower

Under the banner of negative indoctrination was a sense of being a rule follower, which was imposed on me growing up as my mother’s middle child. The data revealed that although negative indoctrination forced me to conform to White America’s standard of success, it forced me to be a rule follower in hopes that I could gain that success. As a young Black boy, I was afflicted with multiple ailments and had to undergo various operations, which meant I missed a lot of school. As a result, I had to work hard and use any downtime to study to maintain good grades. It was a challenging childhood that would have broken the spirit of most young Black boys, but I pushed on. Being a rule-follower allowed me to immerse myself in my education, so that I would focus less on the physical pain. One reflection from the data reveals this dichotomy:

I remember when I was in elementary school, and I was having a stomach episode from something I had eaten that morning. The physical pain was unbearable, and I was sent to the office and called home. My mother told me she was on the way. As I sat in the lobby, I could feel my body trembling and before I knew it, I vomited everything from the night before and that morning. Yet the pain remained. All I could think about at that moment was that I was getting my assignments in on time, so that my grades would not take a hit. Especially if I was out of school for a prolonged period.

This way of thinking goes to show that even in my worst moments where I was experiencing excruciating pain, the only thing on my mind was to follow the rules, get my assignment done on time and never make excuses. Rule following also came by way of my mother's demands when she was at work. I reflect on that moment:

My momma worked long hours and was not always home when my sister and I got off the school bus, but she demanded that we complete our house chores and homework before she got home. If they were not done, she would wake us up in the middle of the night and require that they be done. The bathrooms had to be scrubbed, and our rooms cleaned. Dishes had to be put up and the carpet had to be vacuumed. Our older siblings who were 7-10 years our senior was supposed to keep an eye on us, but most of the time they were not home. I think they were out in the neighborhood, doing what teenagers do. While at home, I was obsessed with studying and making sure that my grades were exemplary. Because one of the main rules in my mother's house growing up in the projects was that getting good grades was strictly enforced. Another rule was that we better not disrespect our mother, or the elders in the community. Do not go to jail because she (mom) was not coming to bail us out. Following the rules became second nature to

me.

Other ways that reveal how negative indoctrination was internalized as rule following was that it took away my sense of personal choice in lots of ways. In school, I was never told that I could be a scientist, engineer, teacher, inventor, or lawyer. But I was told if I get good grades, I could be a police officer or fire-fighter. The data also revealed that indoctrination by way of rule following meant that I was so scared to get in any trouble for fear of disappointing my teachers and mother. The fear of being reprimanded meant that if I got in any trouble, there would be no second chances for me. I would be sent away to the bad school, never to be seen again. Rule following meant that I did not want to end up as a statistic by way of being sent to a juvenile detention center or even worse dead.

Theme # 2: Lack of an Identity

Erickson (1968) referred to identity as a sense of self that is constantly developing throughout a person's life. However, I can't recall when my identity began to develop. My lack of identity has its roots in the fact that from a young age, I was not introduced to my ancestor's history or any Afrocentric/Black views. My teachers never introduced lessons that allowed for the exploration of one's identity. They mainly hinged on learning about how we needed to work hard in school and get good jobs when we graduated. At home, my mom worked 2-3 jobs, so she did not have time to expose me or my siblings to our rich Black heritage. It was not until my late 30s that I began searching out other people in my family who knew where we came from.

Throughout my K-12 education, I continued making the AB Honor Roll and received academic accolades from my teachers and community, but I would be pestered with the act of *talking white* when I would engage in conversations with my peers and being a teacher's pet. Talking White came about because of having a speech impediment, where my mother hired a

speech therapist in hopes of correcting the stutter I had developed. As an impressionable young Black boy, I began to think that something was wrong with me because I used what society deemed *proper* English. A part of me just wanted to fit in with my White peers because they seemed like the ones who took their learning seriously and listened to the teacher's every instruction. In the end, I was a rule follower and getting good grades was my north star.

Once I became a Black male educator, my colleagues would sometimes comment that I was articulate and that they had never met another Black guy like me who spoke *proper* English. Because of this, they were more likely to invite me to the occasional pool party that they were having for their child or confided in me about some of the other conversations they had with their White counterparts. I do not know if my *squeaky*-clean persona or ability to blend in played a role in this but for a while, I adopted these White standards because I wanted to succeed. Their approval meant a lot to me. The sub themes of isolation and anxiety stemmed from the overarching theme of Lacking of an Identity.

Sub-Theme: Isolation

Growing up in a house full of women, I have been privy to some fierce debates around a plethora of issues. But being an introvert meant that I did not want to voice my opinion on those issues. My reasoning was that I needed to do my homework, and I had no time for petty discussions, but I also hoped to carve some time to play my video games later on once my homework was done. But it also meant that I spent a great deal of time by myself, especially with my older brother not being home a lot. As a result, my self-imposed isolation took on the form of isolating myself from my siblings, and extended family. I did not know what it meant to be Black, and the data revealed that I lacked a strong sense of identity, connection to any values, beliefs, or social roles. Without a clear sense of self, it became challenging to find or maintain

these connections, leading to a feeling of not fully belonging anywhere. Not fully Black because my actions were not typical of Black boys but not White because of my melanated skin.

As I entered the teaching profession, lacking of an identity resulted in prolonged periods of disconnection and alienation with my White colleagues. During my 3rd year of teaching, I reflected on this sense of isolation:

Once I park my car and enter the building, I walk down the dusty hallways and unlock the door to my classroom. I'll sit there and watch all the teachers go down the hallway. Some would peep their heads in the door to say hello, some would bother. Suddenly, a moment of sadness comes over me. Besides me, the only other Black male in the building on staff is a part of the custodial department. That is in no way to disparage him. He bestowed upon me some great wisdom about life and what to keep an eye out for. But once I'm in my classroom or Professional Learning Community, I'm alone. There is no one there to bounce ideas off, or make eye contact with, or get the occasional laugh that is common with people who share the same race or ethnicity. There's no one here to help me make sense of these history standards or why I am losing myself in teaching these falsehoods.

My goodness, where are all my brothers and sisters?

This excerpt highlights the isolation and loneliness I felt as a Black male teacher in my 3rd year of teaching. Since the teaching profession was overwhelmingly White and female, for years as a Black male educator, I yearned to be in the presence of another Black educator, who I could communicate with. During the weekly meetings with my PLC, which consisted of other history teachers and on occasion an administrator, I was always the lone Black face in the meeting.

When we would go through the standards together and create the pacing guide for the semester, it was standard for us to maintain the status quo of making sure the lessons reflected Black pain

during Slavery, which consisted of the hangings, whippings, murder, rape and pillage of enslaved Black people. When we discussed the Reconstruction period, the conversations leaned towards mentioning the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, but we missed out on so many opportunities to go much deeper. Teaching the Civil Rights movement was no different. Lessons consisted of sanitized feel-good stories about Martin Luther King Jr. and his famous “I Have A Dream” speech. We never made a concerted effort to include any mention of Black love, resistance, music, joy, and triumph in our lessons. I say “we” because I was complicit in this endeavor. Years of isolating myself from the outside world besides time at an HBCU, meant that I just went along to get along. Moreover, I was only in my 3rd year and the last thing I wanted to do was put anyone on notice or go against the grain of what had always been taught. I just wanted to get along with my colleagues; but I felt so alone. It would not be long before I started isolating myself in my classroom, not wanting to be seen or heard from. By the middle of the year of my 3rd year teaching as a middle school teacher, it had become clear that isolating myself in my room was the best way to maintain my sanity. Teachers would come up to me and ask if I wanted to eat lunch with them and there would be times where I could take them up on their offer just to show my face but most of the time, I just wanted to be left alone. Because one of the English teachers had to go on maternity leave, I was encouraged that the school decided to fill the temporary vacancy with a Black male. Although he taught English, his presence did wonders to help alleviate the isolation I had placed myself in. I wrote about this experience in a journal entry:

Finally, I have another brotha that I can talk to while at work. Although he teaches English and I don’t know much about him, I’m sure he’s experienced some of the same microaggressions that I’ve experienced. I’m just glad I have someone to talk to and can

bounce ideas off.

The excerpt reflects my feelings about having another Black male teacher to confide in. Over the next year, I would begin to meet with him during our respective planning periods to discuss all that plagued education from the poor salary, curriculum and how we felt being the only Black males in the education environments. In addition, we would collaborate on ways to ensure that the school was receptive to the cultures of our diverse student population.

Working with another Black male in the public-school setting did wonders for me forming an identity. Because he was more outgoing than I was and a fellow HBCU grad. His way of looking at the world was totally different from mine. As an individual who pledged a Kappa Alpha Psi, his Black identity allowed him to walk through White spaces as an unapologetically Black man. His Blackness was on full display. He wore his HBCU pullover at least once a week because he was proud of it. He knew who he was, and he was teaching me to be the same way.

Sub-theme: Anxiety

At the beginning of my 4th year of teaching, I still felt isolated being the only Black male teacher in my PLC and the bouts of extreme anxiety with teaching history began to arise. At the time my PLC consisted of myself and four other history teachers, and we met once a week and planned out the lessons for the upcoming weeks. With the aid of the standards, we would craft the lessons and the End of Quarter exams for our students. There were countless times when I felt anxiety and frustration about the Eurocentric nature of the history curriculum and the fact that histories from People of Color were not included in our lessons. However, my colleagues only wanted to include the histories where White men received all the credit, starting with the Settlers in NC, French and Indian War, Taxation etc. These historical eras would form

the foundation for the U.S. history curriculum. In a journal entry reflecting on the anxiety I felt, I wrote:

It is extremely difficult teaching a curriculum that refuses to include more Black perspectives. The students await my instruction, and I'm supposed to craft lessons around the Renaissance period, knowing good well that White Europeans were not the only ones blessed with *enlightenment* and the genius to create inventions that would benefit society. Maybe my colleagues do not know about the contributions of the African Moors and Arabs who contributed greatly to the Renaissance period. Maybe they do not know about the treasure troves of information that Black sailors and the enslaved shared with Europeans which made exploration even possible. The intellectual exchange of knowledge between African Blacks and Europeans during the 14th and 17th centuries was only possible because Blacks had explored those trade routes before, but mainstream historians who have written books and textbooks on these matters failed to include their contributions. Also, 99 percent of Europeans did not realize the Renaissance was even happening!! They were too busy struggling to make a life in the countryside which was far away from the rich elite. But bringing this information to my colleagues gives me so much anxiety especially when they are veteran teachers. Sucks!

This excerpt highlights the frustration I felt at this time in my teaching career. The mere thought of bringing new knowledge to my PLC was frightening, and it brought on bouts of anxiety that I had no control over. As a teacher who follows a strict code of ethics, I felt like it was my duty to expose my students to the truth. They needed a thorough understanding of the myriads of perspectives of events from the past, combined with a deep understanding of what can be done to make a difference in the future. In addition, they needed to understand how the “other” thinks

and perceives events and how to quietly and thoughtfully look at all sides before acting. History class is the place where all this happens.

Sadly, the isolation and anxiety would continue. I reflect on the state of my social wellbeing at the time:

I am so unhappy at this school. Of course, I love the students and staff, but I cannot continue to isolate myself because it only adds to my anxiety and sadness. Everyone thinks I am a great teacher, but I know that's not true. I don't even know who I am, and here I am trying to motivate students to find themselves. It's a heavy load to lift.

By the end of my 4th year as a middle school teacher, it had become clear that I was not satisfied with the direction of the history curriculum, but I felt defenseless on anything I could do to change it. I will never forget how much anxiety I felt when I was tasked by my PLC to meet with the district superintendent to discuss our quarterly history data. Data meetings were the one thing that every teacher dreaded doing. Every quarter the superintendent required one teacher from each subject at every school to meet with him to discuss the results from the End of Quarter exams. I knew my data was less than stellar compared to the other history teachers who had taught the curriculum longer than me and were more enthusiastic about teaching it. As I prepared the data from the End of Quarter exams, I was not surprised that my students were in last place. I wrote about the sense of anxiety and loneliness I felt that day:

I opened my presentation and displayed the results for everyone to see. The superintendent wrote notes while I was presenting the data and once, I had completed it, he asked me why my students were last compared to the other grade level students? He also asked how I could be better supported by my colleagues to ensure that my students

were getting quality instruction. All I remember was feeling nervous, palms were sweaty. It was like I had an outer body experience. The nerve of the superintendent to come at me like that was pretty fucked up. I was the only Black teacher in the data meeting and to have everyone's eyes gaze upon me made my anxiety go through the roof. I wasn't embarrassed by my data. I knew I was a damn good teacher. I had built lasting relationships with my students. I just wished I had the guts to tell everyone how terrible the history curriculum was and that I had lost confidence in it. None of them know what it feels like to teach a curriculum where one's on Black history has been all but shut out. None of them know what it feels like to struggle to try to motivate my Black students to learn about a history where their ancestors are not mentioned. I don't know how much longer I can do this.

This excerpt displays my feelings towards the data sessions while a middle school teacher and the anxiety I felt having to undergo them. For a whole year, I was forced to endure these awkward meetings, where my data was plastered on the screen for all to critique and snicker at. In my heart I knew I was a great teacher. No one knew about the times I had bought snacks with my own money because some students could not afford breakfast or lunch or the late nights, I stayed up grading papers. They didn't know about the phone calls I made to check on a student's well-being at home. No, they only saw that my data was not up to par with my colleagues. Sadly, the standardized testing of education is a huge problem, especially when the standards have been Whitewashed. It puts students and teachers in an impossible position.

Theme # 3: Fear of Unemployment

The fear of being unemployed as an adult arises as a theme because before I started teaching, I had a hard time remaining gainfully employed with a bachelor's degree. Throughout

my semester-long student teaching internship, I remember barely having enough money to put gas in my car to get to the high school where I was assigned. Having to work odd jobs had been a constant struggle for me, so when I started my teaching career in January 2012 at the age of 27, the country was just coming out of the Great Recession. When I started my first week of teaching, I had a total of \$50 in my checking account, with no insurance and very bad credit. At the time, I told myself I would do whatever it took to pull myself up by my bootstraps and earn some real money so that I could take care of myself. Therefore, I took a job as a 7th-grade history teacher, making \$35,000 annually, with a monthly salary of \$3,500. Although the salary was insufficient, especially with the extra duties that I took on, such as coaching a sport, chaperoning, parent-teacher conferences, and late-night grading, the mere fact of having my first salary as a grown adult man brought me much security. My thoughts were reflected in the following journal entry:

Just got my first paycheck of \$3, 500, well minus the almost \$1,300 in taxes and retirement, I brought home exactly \$2,158. It feels so good to make more than \$12.00 an hour. But these bills are extensive. Gotta pay my portion of the rent which is a thousand dollars. Gotta pay insurance, utilities, cell phone, and car payment. There ain't much left but if I can keep this up over the next couple of years, I can make some strides and maybe even buy a house. Stay focused Justin!!

At this moment in my teaching career, my main goal was to maintain a safe environment for my students and stay employed so that I could pay my bills and gain some type of economic freedom. Moreover, in my early years as a Beginning Teacher, I began to learn more about the process of teaching the state-mandated history curriculum and what was required of me to fulfill my contractual responsibilities. As I began to map out the pacing guide with my Professional

Learning Community (PLC) using the state social studies standards as a guide, it dawned on me at the time that the history curriculum and standards were Eurocentric in nature. The standards did not address the rich history of African, Hispanic, or Asian Americans and their vast contributions to America. Sadly, all I remember is that I would teach what I was told to teach and not disrupt the status quo.

Over the next 3-4 years, my annual salary as a teacher increased by \$10,000, and coupled with the extra \$7,000 a year I was making from my part-time job, I was finally beginning to save some money as I entered my early 30s. I also recall, over that time, that the history curriculum became a little more Eurocentric in nature, and certain people who were in power began to whitewash the contributions of minorities. I do not know if this effort was in reaction to the nation electing our first Black president, but it was no coincidence. Because I was the only Black male teacher at my school, I did not feel like I possessed enough allies or the courage to speak up about changing it. Moreover, I was not about to risk my job and financial future over the lack of Black history and multicultural perspectives that were not included in a state curriculum that I had no hand in making or knew how to change. I was hired to teach and that is what I intended to do. In the meantime, I had needed to support myself and the fear of unemployment outweighed anything else.

Sub-Theme: Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is a sub-theme that the data disclosed and comes out of the fear of being unemployed. Oftentimes, when teachers have taught a particular subject for an extended period, they are very much resistant to change because that means more work to create lesson plans. But it also means that if they change the curriculum, it may be in the best interest for the students, however, the content will not be authorized by the state and not on the End of Grade

Test. Which also means that if students fail the End of Grade test, the consequences are coming back on the teacher. In a journal entry reflecting on how afraid I was to infuse any other historical perspectives in my instruction, I wrote:

My data already sucks trying to teach this terrible White man's history, so I can't imagine trying to include any other perspectives into my lessons. Although I would love to try, I just don't have the time, content knowledge but more importantly I cannot risk my job especially with how far I have come in paying my bills on time, which has increased my credit score.

The journal entry reflects the resistance to change that I felt as an educator and the fact that if I even tried to infuse more Black historical knowledge into my instruction, it would take up way too much time and it wouldn't be tested by the state. I could lose my job and livelihood if I spent too much time teaching content that was not going to be tested. The fear of losing a job in my case meant that I would resist any change to my pedagogy. I had come too far in my financial status to jeopardize. In essence, I maintained the rule-following mentality from when I was younger.

Theme # 4: Black Pride

Towards the end of my 6th year as a teacher, I decided to relocate to an early college. Which is a type of hybrid between a college and high school. In these settings, students could earn a 2-year Associate degree by the time they graduate. Hoping that a change of pace would give me the motivation I needed to stay in the profession. I needed a challenge. What I did not know is that the laid-back environment of an early college setting was exactly the flexibility that I needed to try out some new things. Although the student population at the early college was predominantly White, it is here where I began to implement more Black history into my lessons.

James Brown's (1968) song titled "Say it Loud, I'm Black and Proud," culminates my feelings at this time in my teaching career. It touched me like no other song had and inspired me to start teaching my way. The lyrics are below:

Looky here

Some people say we got a lot of malice

Some say it's a lotta nerve

But I say we won't quit moving

Until we get what we deserve

We've been 'buked and we've been scorned

We've been treated bad, talked about

As sure as you're born

But just as sure as it take two eyes to make a pair, huh

Brother, we can't quit until we get our share

Say it loud (I'm Black and I'm proud)

Say it loud (I'm Black and I'm proud)

One more time, say it loud (I'm Black and I'm proud)

I've worked on jobs with my feet and my hands

But all the work I did was for the other man

And now we demands a chance

To do things for ourselves

We're tired of beating our heads against the wall

And working for someone else (verse 3-4)

This theme is reinforced by the fact I began to feel a genuine pride in being unabashedly BLACK. Being proud to be Black meant that I would pull back the layers of Anti-Blackness that had plagued me in the past. I began to research the concepts of Black consciousness, which are centered on the ideas of Black unity, empowerment, identity, and the creation of a Black political movement that can break down the oppressive systems throughout the United States and the African Diaspora. I educated myself on the contributions of Black intellectuals, artists, and pioneers who were pivotal to advancing civil rights for Black Americans and what it means to be Black in America. I found myself marveling at the perseverance and genius of Frederick Douglass, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Fannie Lou Hamer, Shirley Chisholm, Thurgood Marshall, etc. I immersed myself in African American intellectual history, where I learned about famed historian John Hope Franklin, who is credited with ushering in a new age of Negro history, which was “characterized by real analysis of what has happened in the history of the American Negro rather than racist predilections” (Byrd, 2020, p.834).

In addition, the theme of Black Pride sparked a curiosity that would lead me to learn more about great Black inventors such as Granville T. Woods, who invented the multiplex telegraph, which allowed train dispatchers to communicate with one another via the telegraph, and Madame C.J. Walker who is credited with becoming the first Black woman to become a millionaire by improving upon the hair straightening comb and offering hair care products for Black people. This newfound curiosity allowed me to learn more about Black musicians such as Miles Davis, Nina Simone, James Brown, and B.B. King, who mastered their respective crafts and were able to crossover into White audiences because their music was universally accepted across genres.

But nothing has enlightened me more about my history and ancestry and instilled a sense of Black Pride in me than when I first watched the miniseries called “Africa’s Great Civilizations” (Cultural Artifact Appendix F). The six-part documentary miniseries was created by the famed Harvard-educated historian Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr in 2017. The series explores the history of Africa from the dawn of mankind to the modern era. Each episode meticulously covers a period of African history from the birth of civilization, which takes place on the African continent with Mitochondria Eve to the role that the three major religions (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) influenced African cultures and how they spread to other parts of the world. Other episodes are devoted to the rise and fall of empires in Ghana, Songhai, and how Mansa Musa the ruler of the Mali empire is credited with being the richest man in human history (Mohamud, 2019). In addition, the series displays the rich culture and commerce of African cities and how Europeans were eager to trade with Africans because their products could not be found anywhere else in the world. By the end of the series, I was introduced to the origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade, colonial rule on the African continent, and African warlords aided the Europeans by selling their people into slavery.

The series allowed me to witness that my history did not originate with American chattel slavery but that I was the descendant of a proud people who were skilled in various industries, ranging from commerce, art, shipbuilding, and education. Moreover, the series gave me the strength to challenge Eurocentrism and Whitewashing that was taking place in the current K-12 history curriculum. Although the current pacing guide did not provide the space and time for me to show such a lengthy series in my classroom, I could not in good conscience bypass it and not show my students African history showed how much we have in common as a species. They needed to know that Africa is the birthplace of humanity and that “science has proven that all

humans share 99.9% of the same DNA (National Human Genome Institute, 2006/2011, as cited in Wiggan et al., 2023, p.11). By this time, I reclaimed my autonomy as a teacher and removed the veil from my eyes that had stifled my growth for so long. I did not care if the principal walked into my classroom and observed me teaching hard truths about history or the joys of Black history which were not a part of the curriculum. I would no longer wait until Black History Month to teach Black history. This is referenced in two of my annual observations conducted by my principal:

1st Observation

Mr. Phillips is teaching a lesson on WWII, specifically about the Tuskegee Airmen and their significance during the war effort. Mr. Phillips uses a variety of visual methods to engage his students i.e., YouTube clips, and Socratic methods and debate. He also demonstrates how racism played a huge role in the Airmen not being treated with equality upon their return home, especially after fighting against Hitler's fascism abroad. Enjoyed the lesson.

2nd Observation

Mr. Phillips is teaching a lesson where students will understand the significance, key figures, and cultural impact of the 1920s movement called the Harlem Renaissance. Students are learning about the reasons why African Americans migrated to the North to escape racial oppression in the South. Mr. Phillips uses a variety of literature and music from various musicians and poets such as Duke Ellington, Zora Neal Hurston, and Langston Hughes to help students explore the Harlem Renaissance and why it continues to be celebrated today. Mr. Phillips has built great relationships with his students, which

is evident in the class discussion. He challenges and questions the students about social change about the Harlem Renaissance and how it changed America.

This change in my teaching was liberating. By this time, I told myself that after years of teaching a Eurocentric curriculum, I would no longer be complicit in it. My students deserved to know the truth that Black people were and continue to be much more than entertainers which mainstream White America depicts us as. In contrast, we have a rich history that is complex, multifaceted, and needs to be heard. This also gave me the motivation to introduce my students to the Nikole-Hannah-Jones (2021) critically acclaimed Pulitzer Prize-winning work, *The 1619 Project*. After reading the essay I came away impressed with how much thought and research had gone into bringing the project to fruition, but I was still a little hesitant on how it would be received by my students and if anyone would go home and bash me to their parents. After much deliberation in my head, I assigned the article titled *The Idea of America* to my students, and I wrote about the experience of teaching the lesson in one of the journals.

It's amazing the questions students ask when they read something that goes against everything they've always been taught about America. I could tell by the look on their faces that they were puzzled with some of the content, but I could also see some aha moments, which brought me great joy. I just wanted my students to read a different version of American history that they were not accustomed to. Mission Accomplished!

By this point in my one-man show to include more Black history into my lessons, I was no longer afraid of the repercussions that came with telling the truth. In my teaching career I always prided myself in providing a safe space for my students where I set the stage for fruitful discussions, but this moment was different, now I was more confident that these high-school

early college students were capable of handling more complex debates that were taking place in around the country in real time.

Sub-Theme Theme: Activism

When I started working at the early college, I began to turn my passiveness into activism and became an advocate for change in the curriculum, the working conditions of teachers, and the hiring of more Black male teachers. At this moment, I found myself rummaging through some of my old diaries and by happenstance came across one of my journals. In one of the entries, I reflected on the sense of Black Pride and activism I felt when President Barack Obama visited my district during my 3rd year of teaching history as a middle school history teacher. At the time I was too starstruck to understand the magnitude of the moment. The reflection from that journal is below:

I've never been so up close to a POTUS in my life. I remember when he was first elected and the joy and pride, I felt to be Black in America, little did I know that I would be sharing a stage with the nation's first Black President in the future. I remember when I was in 4th grade and all my history books had pictures of the nation's Presidents in the back of them. Now, we can add a Black man to that list. What an exciting time to be alive!

The president came to the district to marvel at our ability to equip every child with a laptop by the time they reached 3rd grade, and that his administration would do everything in its power to ensure that every child in America was afforded the same opportunity. But the part of his speech that touched me was where he mentioned that *WE are the change that we've been waiting for, and to go out and be a force for change if you see something that needs to be changed.*

I took up the President's challenge and call to action and joined my local teacher union. It is here that I inquired about ways I could get involved. At the time I was told to attend workshops at the local, and state levels and bring that knowledge back to my district to share with my colleagues. I hoped they would take note of the harmful effects that the curriculum was having on all students and teachers and finally do something about it or at least join me in my effort to bring more awareness to the null one-side Eurocentric history curriculum.

I also began to speak out more at my PLC meetings and ask tough questions to my colleagues regarding why we had failed to include more minority perspectives in our lesson plans. I spoke to other Black teachers across the district who taught various subjects and inquired about how they approached teaching a curriculum that neglected to include more Black, Asian, and Hispanic histories. Most teachers were sympathetic to my cause but felt inadequate to do anything about it. I could not blame them. But one conversation with another Black male teacher that I met over Twitter gave me the push I needed to start teaching a more honest and truthful history that had escaped me the previous eight years of my teaching career. I wrote about our interaction in a journal entry:

I could not believe how brave this brotha was. Not only was he forced to teach a Eurocentric traditional history as well, but he found the courage to break away from it and regain his Blackness. He told me that he was tired of trying to make his white students feel comfortable and that the textbooks were filled with lies. At the end of the day, Black and POC kids deserved to know that their ancestry was worth learning about. So, he started using a little book called *A Little History of the United States*, which allows the students to discuss, research, and most importantly ask questions. I also found it interesting that he told me that America was not destined to be racist and that the country

had ample opportunities to do things differently and better with humanity in mind. But it didn't.

The above excerpt was so liberating. For once, I was not alone. Other Black male educators struggled with teaching a Eurocentric history curriculum as well. It had become pretty evident at this time that I needed to continue advocating for change in K-12 education, particularly in the development of the curriculum. I knew that if any change was ever going to happen, it would first have to start with me, maintain my Black Pride and find solidarity in other Black teachers.

Sub Theme: Enlightenment

The Black Pride I felt entering my 10th year as a teacher was on full display. It is at this moment that I began to feel a sense of enlightenment and cultural affirmation. No longer would I accept the dominant themes that were present in the history curriculum. In my quest for enlightenment, I put pictures of Black inventors, philosophers and politicians all around the classroom. As much as I needed my students to see these distinguished people once they walked in the classroom, internally I needed to be reminded of how great my people are and continue to be.

Nothing was more enlightening than when I decided to apply to a PhD program with a concentration in Urban Education. The decision turned out to be probably one of the most important decisions of my professional life. I had no idea what I was getting into or what I wanted. My professor, Dr. Lewis, would say, "*We do not know who is waiting for us to graduate*" and that we have the opportunity to *become our ancestors' wildest dreams* (paraphrased). As a history teacher, I knew the Eurocentric history curriculum that I had taught did not speak to me or my students, but I had no idea how truly bad it was until I started taking classes like Social Theory, Critical Issues, Globalization, and Power and Privilege. These high-

level graduate courses along with the plethora of required reading provided me with the enlightenment I needed to understand the history of curriculum development and the culture wars that took place around the standards. In a journal entry reflecting on entering a PhD program, I wrote:

All these years teaching I had no idea that the K-12 curriculum was this way by design from the start. The power dynamics and indoctrination that go into creating the standards and curriculum have shocked me. Because of the disparities in the curriculum, it has now become very clear that those in power do not want a true telling of this country's history which would require an unfiltered view of the treatment of Black Americans. All our lives we've been told that our success relies on getting good grades, which will lead to a decent middle-class job, but no one tells us at what cost. No one tells us that when we graduate from high school our livelihood is based on capitalist principles, where the goal is constantly built around acquiring and spending. After a while, the researching of one's history becomes secondary because life takes over. This PhD program is much more than some random courses. They are meticulously crafted to transform you if you allow it.

By this point in my career, I was beginning to understand that something was structurally wrong with our education system. I realized at this moment that I could spend the next 20 years teaching and probably have a decent retirement or do something else that would change the trajectory of my family forever. Moreover, I thought about all the lies I had been told in my K-12 schooling and the long journey of self-discovery it took before I finally found myself in my late 30's. I also knew that obtaining a PhD would give me access to the rooms where the decisions around education policy are being crafted.

Summary

The four themes presented in this chapter were *Negative Indoctrination*, *Lacking of an Identity*, *Fear of Unemployment*, and *Black Pride*. Taken all together they showcase how the healing principles of the Black Historical Consciousness Framework presents opportunities for a Black male teacher to heal from the curriculum violence by way of a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum. Within the trauma that was inflicted on me by way of the curriculum the Black Racial Identity model allowed me the opportunity to trace the development of my identity from one of indoctrination and forming to White standards of success and civility to later on experiencing Black Pride in who I was and actively taking steps to enlightenment myself on the history of Black people and feel joyful about it.

The theme of negative indoctrination coincided with a Eurocentric history curriculum that neglected to teach me anything about my ancestral roots or what it means to be Black in America growing up. It also forced me into being a rule-follower and seeking out the attention of my teachers and mother because their guidance reassured me, I would be successful. The theme of *Lacking of an Identity* was further demonstrated with the values of my mother and the White dominant class which did not allow a process of self-discovery. As a result, I did not know who I was as a young Black boy living in America and as an educator. Because of a lack of an identity, I experienced severe bouts of isolation and anxiety as Black male educator. The theme Fear of Unemployment manifested because from the time I graduated from college at the age of 23 and spent years underemployed. Once I became a teacher, the lure of a consistent monthly income meant I needed to do everything necessary to stay gainfully employed. As I further embarked on my teaching career the theme Black Pride arrived by way of me taking more active measures to immerse myself into Black history, literature, activism and consciousness. Journeying into the

essence of Black Pride forced me to come to terms with my Blackness and set the stage for me entering a PhD program with a concentration in Urban Education. The following chapter will provide a synthesis of these findings and an overview of implications for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The final chapter of this dissertation encompasses a discussion of the findings, which will connect to existing literature, answer the research questions, and provide an analysis of future implications and recommendations for education stakeholders. Moreover, I will provide additional insight into the themes presented in Chapter 4 and how they relate to the theoretical frameworks of Black Historical Consciousness and Black Racial Identity Development Theory.

Review of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this critical race autoethnographic study was to examine and reflect on my lived experience as a Black boy, growing up and being taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed History curriculum in my K-12 schooling. In addition, the study also explored how curriculum violence because of being taught and teaching a Eurocentric- Whitewashed history curriculum impacted my pedagogy and mental and social well-being as a former Black male history teacher. The research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

RQ 1: What role does curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history play in the development of a Black male history teacher?

RQ 2: In what ways did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limit the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness within pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher from the South?

RQ 3: In what ways did learning more about my ancestral Black history and racial identity help me to push back against teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?

Discussion of Findings

This critical race autoethnographic study highlights the trauma that a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum had on my experience learning it as a Black boy in various K-12 classrooms and teaching it as a Black male history teacher. The storytelling and narrative tenet of Critical Race Theory is important to this study because it allowed me as the participant to recount my lived experience being indoctrinated by a history curriculum to be brought to light. This history curriculum neglected to reveal the truth about history but also is a symptom of how the entire education system, does not aid Black students in the quest of self-discovery. In theory the United States education system preaches meritocracy but is anything but that, and within the storytelling feature of Critical Race Theory, I was able to center myself into the social context (K-12 education system) from two distinct positions.

1. Black boy growing up learning a Eurocentric-Whitewashed History.
2. Black male educator teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed History.

By utilizing the story-telling feature of Critical Race Theory, I was able to trace the overarching themes of *Negative Indoctrination*, *Lacking an Identity*, *Fear of Unemployment*, and *Black Pride* in this study. What they revealed will be illuminated using the theoretical frameworks from the Black Historical Consciousness Framework and the Black Racial Identity Development theory.

Research Question #1

Research question # 1 asked: What role does curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history play in the development of a Black male history teacher?

The purpose of this research question was to seek new or confirm previous literature IF past curriculum violence within the Eurocentric History curriculum affected my development as a young Black student and later as an educator and Black male

educators in general.

At this moment in the study, it is important to reiterate what curriculum violence is and what role it has in the shaping of a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum and the development of a Black male history teacher. Ighodaro and Wiggan (2013) defined curriculum violence as:

the deliberate manipulation of education and academic programs in a manner that marginalizes students and compromises their learning experiences, as well as the intellectual and social- psychological well-being of omitted groups; signaling to learners that these groups have no contributions or are not worthy of inclusion. (p.24)

Negative Indoctrination emerged as one of the overarching themes which answers RQ #1. My analysis highlights that negative indoctrination was evidenced by forcing me to learn the history of those who oppressed my ancestors, which ultimately resulted in limited opportunities to learn about my African roots or much Black history beyond slavery and the Civil Rights era. As a result, my development as a young Black student and later as an educator was stifled. Early in my education, I was told that being a rule follower would be of a benefit to my future success, especially as a Black boy growing up in America. Analysis concluded that this form of teaching left me with feelings of low self-worth and inadequacy and ultimately that my ancestral history would not be a benefit. Thus, by learning and teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum, the literature affirms that as a Black boy, I was subjected to psychological violence (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2013) via negative indoctrination, which failed to demonstrate to me why my culture was important for my continued development as a Black boy but more importantly as a human being. The psychological impact of curriculum violence programmed me into only wanting to get good grades so that I could appease my parents and teachers. Analysis also revealed that curriculum violence hindered my growth as a Black male teacher by forcing me to

adhere to state-mandated classroom practices and pacing guides, out of fear that if I deviated from the standard curriculum, I would face backlash or accusations of politicizing the history curriculum. This way of teaching ultimately led to me teaching to the test through rote-memorization skills (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2013). As a Black male history teacher who suffered the psychological effects of negative indoctrination because of my K-12 experience, curriculum violence was a result of me teaching a Eurocentric-White-washed history. For three-fourths of my teaching career, I inflicted curriculum violence onto my students because I lacked the adequate historical knowledge or resources necessary to plan high-quality inclusive lessons, which would have helped combat the Eurocentric themes in the curriculum. Through the lens of Cross' (1971) Black Racial Identity Development Model, the theme of negative indoctrination coincides with the *Pre-Encounter* stage, where the individual may devalue their blackness in favor of the dominant culture's values and standards. This is apparent in my own experience growing up, where I was not exposed to or taught a history curriculum that would have allowed me to embrace my ancestral history and culture. The *Pre-Encounter* stage can also help to explain how I embraced negative stereotypes of Black people and allowed myself to be molded to believe that I could not teach Black history in the earliest years of my teaching career. By positioning the theme of negative indoctrination into Cross' Black Racial Identity Model, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that negative indoctrination is harmful to any individual and that it does not allow individuals to form an identity in their adolescence.

Research Question #2

Research Question # 2 asked: In what ways did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limit the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness (BHC) within pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher from the South?

The purpose of this research question was to seek new information if teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limits one from teaching the Black Historical Consciousness framework and if any barriers exist.

The theme that answers this research question is the *Fear of Unemployment* which I experienced at the beginning of my teaching career. The fear of losing my job if I did not teach the Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum was very real, especially with my background growing up poor, and having to lean on family and friends for support as I worked my way through college. Before I started my career as a teacher, I never earned a yearly annual salary in my adult life, so the lure of earning \$30,000 dollars, along with healthcare insurance and the opportunity to build relationships with the youth, was a top priority for me at this time in my life. I would do anything necessary to ensure that I did not jeopardize my employment, which allowed me to build and increase credit score, pay my rent, and buy my first car. Losing a job would have caused me great financial stress and distress. The moral dilemma that I was up against was to either teach the Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum which was causing me a great deal of anxiety, self-doubt, and isolation, or do my own thing and implement a more inclusive history along with the Black Historical Consciousness framework and be fired or reprimanded for not teaching the state standards. This dilemma which I faced is what Milner (2016) states is deeply unfair to Black male teachers, to have to “take on the responsibility of “saving” an educational system that is deeply fractured, flawed and dysfunctional (p.417). Furthermore, the overuse of high-stake testing in K-12 education meant that even if I wanted to infuse more Black history into my lessons plans it would take away instructional time meant for the state mandated curriculum and standards.

The Black Historical Consciousness framework and a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history

curriculum are antithetical to one another. They cannot exist within the same sphere of influence. The literature on the Black Historical Consciousness framework is the teaching of Black history by featuring the historical experiences and voices of Black people, “through six principles that attempt to center the humanity of Black folks” (King, 2020), which are Power and Oppression, Black Agency, Resistance, and Perseverance, Africa and the African Diaspora, Black Joy, Black Identities, and Black Historical Contention.

To teach these principles, a teacher must be equipped with the knowledge to drive instruction so that students know that Black history is much more than pain and suffering. Moreover, by learning and teaching the BHC teachers themselves become enlightened to the many facets of Black history and start to critically push back on Eurocentric themes. (King, 2020) asserts that history education in K-12 settings continues to largely be Eurocentric “where diversifying the subject has been cosmetic and based on quantitative measurement” (p.336). For instance, a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum requires the teaching of July 4th as Independence Day for the nation, but that story is one-sided. Only White people were free, while the millions of enslaved Africans were bonded to plantation labor. In contrast, a Black Historical Consciousness curriculum would allow educators to teach about “Juneteenth, National Freedom Day, and the many Emancipation days celebrated throughout the Americas” (King, 2020, p.335). Although this is just one example of Black voices being drowned out by a Eurocentric history curriculum, the overall history curriculum in K-12 education is riddled with narratives that place Black voices as a 2nd tier option. As a former Black male history teacher whose K-12 lived experience and pedagogical practices were rooted in Eurocentric standards and values, even if I wanted to implement the Black Historical consciousness framework into instruction, I would not have possessed the necessary knowledge of skillset to make it an exemplary lesson.

A sub-theme that the data revealed was *resistance to change*. When teachers create their lessons, it is common for them to teach the same lesson plan with a few minor revisions the following school year. Because of the strain and lack of time that teachers encounter during the year, most teachers do not want to reinvent the wheel per se if they do not have to. When I taught history the attempt to infuse anything that mirrored more Black history within the Eurocentric curriculum was subject to resistance from my co-workers. In the early part of my career, I lacked the necessary knowledge required to implement more Black history into my lessons, so I relied heavily on my co-workers for lessons on how to align the standards to the objectives. In contrast, my co-workers had been teaching for 10-plus years, so they came with cabinets filled with lessons they had accumulated over their careers. If I did run across an opportunity to include more Black history within a specific standard, I did not yet possess the confidence to try it out in my classroom. In a way, I was my own worst enemy who had become a part of the system. It would take years of me finding myself before I could find the courage to do what I thought needed to be taught. But this resistance to change in the teaching profession is not a new phenomenon. Zimmerman (2006) notes that unless teachers understand and appreciate the need for change in their schools, their interest in maintaining the status quo will undoubtedly take precedence over their willingness to accept change (p.239). Furthermore, Greenberg and Braun (2002); as cited in Zimmerman (2006), mention that like many other professionals, teachers form habits which hinders them from learning new skills or strategies.

Research Question #3

Research Question #3 asked: In what ways did learning more about my ancestral Black history and racial identity help me to push back against teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?

The purpose of this research question was to Seek new information regarding if learning more about my ancestral Black history had any effect on my pedagogical practices as a Black male teacher.

The theme of Lacking of an Identity and Black Pride answer RQ#3 because they speak to the complex nature of me having difficult conversations with myself as I stripped away at the old remnants that were holding me back from transitioning into my truest self.

The literature on identity is vast but for this study, I discovered that the lack of an identity can be linked to Erikson's (1968) Stages of Psychosocial Development. In my case, the theme *Lacking of an Identity* points to the stages of Industry vs. Inferiority, which is typically between the ages of 6-12 years, and Identity vs. Role Confusion which takes place between ages 12-18. These two stages are crucial to developing a personal identity because if adolescents feel supported, they will become industrious and adventurous and be allowed to explore different roles, beliefs, and ideas to form a coherent sense of self. Successful resolution leads to a strong identity, while failure can result in role confusion and a weak sense of self. In my experience, this is where the lack of learning more about my Black history at home and in school resulted in others forming one for me. The goal at this time in my life was to get good grades, be a rule follower and be a police officer or firefighter when I grew up, because that was all I consistently heard I could be as a professional. My formative years of education were consumed with teaching me to idolize White men and the professions that they dominated. Along the way, a little bit of Black history was sprinkled in the curriculum every February. The theme of Lacking of an Identity in my adolescence can again be linked to the *Pre-Encounter* stage in the Cross (1971) Model, where individuals may devalue their blackness and value the dominant culture's standards.

As I began to learn more about my Black history, the more I became aware of the Eurocentric history curriculum I was taught as an adolescent and was teaching as an educator. Within the Cross Model is the 3rd Stage called *Immersion-Emersion*, which means that the individual becomes immersed in African American culture, therefore rejecting white culture and embracing one's black identity. Moreover, this stage is characterized by a deep exploration of what it means to be Black (Cross, 1971). Within my journey of exploration to find out more about my ancestral roots I began to immerse myself in Black literature which consisted of books by various Black authors such as Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., Ivan Van Sertima, John Hope Franklin, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, and Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. I studied the resistance techniques of Ida B. Wells, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman, so I could gain a better understanding of what it meant to be in service of others and for a cause. I needed to discover what the Black experience in America consisted of. All my life, I had been taught that my ancestors were stolen from their native African lands and placed in dilapidated European ships. Then from there, they tolled these lands for 400 years as enslaved individuals, without rights and dignity. However, learning about the intellectuals and trailblazers equipped me with the necessary knowledge and skills that I needed so I could find the truth and what it means to be Black not only in America but throughout the Diaspora. I began listening to and deciphering the lyrics of conscious rappers like Nas (2008), especially in one of his songs, "America," where he raps:

The hypocrisy is all I could see

White cop acquitted for murder

Black cop cop a plea

That type of shit make stop you and think

We in chronic need of a second look of the law books

And the whole race dichotomy
 Too many rappers, athletes and act
 But not enough niggas at NASA
 Who gave you the latest dances, trends and fashions?
 But when it come to residuals, they look past us
 Woven into the fabric, they can't stand us
 Even the White tees, blue jeans and red bandanas (verse 2)

Digging deeper into the lyrics, Nas places the whole system on notice and indicts it on the hypocrisy of a two-tiered justice that Blacks in America face. I also took a liking to other rappers like Common, Talib Kweli, Kendrick Lamar, and J. Cole because they speak to a Black culture that is constantly under threat, yet the American system would crumble without their and others' contributions. The fourth stage of Cross's Black Racial Identity Model is called *Internalization* and at this stage, the person begins to internalize their new identity, finding a balance between an appreciation of their blackness and an acceptance of other cultures. There is less conflict between their racial identity and other parts of their identity. Again, this is apparent where I begin the journey to enlighten and accept my Blackness. At this stage, I stopped fighting who I was and had accepted who I had become. For so long, I always wanted to portray the clean haircut image because I felt like that was going to keep me employed and in favor with White job recruiters and audiences, in defiance of White standards grew my hair out into dreadlocks and stopped worrying about what employers or co-workers may say about my new look. My teaching pedagogy began to take on a new look as well. I begin to include more Black consciousness and material into my lessons. By this time, I was beginning to include more Black history in my lesson plans because after what I had learned about my heritage, I could not go back to the way

things were in the past, where the curriculum consisted of many telling stories that fit the single narrative of White Europeans as captains of industry that built the entire *civilized* world. I reclaimed my autonomy as an educator and refused to inflict any more curriculum violence that had been embedded in the Eurocentric-Whitewashed standards and curriculum. The 5th stage is called *Internalization-Commitment* and within this stage, the individual takes active measures to seek social justice and the well-being of the black community and uses their identity as a foundation for activism or other forms of engagement (Cross, 1971). This is demonstrated by my engaging in activist-like tactics throughout the last 2-3 years of my teaching career. I found myself trying to bargain with my colleagues and convince them that we needed to open our lesson plan to more thought-provoking discussions around race along with the inclusion of more Black heroes, artists, and inventors. There was a lot of resistance to doing this because they felt like any deviation from the traditional curriculum would harm their chances of preparing for the state-mandated test at the end of the year. In other areas, I joined my local teacher union and became a representative for my school where I actively tried to get more teachers involved in the political process and more comfortable with voicing our concerns with the curriculum. In addition, I joined my district's long-term discipline committee and mentored young at-risk Black boys who had endured the wrath of exclusionary discipline tactics and showed them a different way to express themselves, which did not revolve around being perceived as threats to the teacher or learning community. I've always felt like the education system was not meeting the needs of Black boys. Most expect Black boys to learn from Eurocentric standards by sitting in their seats as mute unengaged takers of knowledge, and not active participants in their learning. Because of these expectations, young adolescent Black boys are rebelling out of boredom and are not allowed to find themselves in the curriculum.

Once I became more aware of my racial Black identity and the plight of Black people in the United States, I also began to get more candid about the racial wealth disparities that exist between Black and White Americans in my lesson plans. The Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum did not allow for the discussion of race or racial disparities in American life. The latest analysis by Perry et al. (2024) from the Brookings Institute concluded that “median Black wealth increased from \$27,970 to \$44,890 but continued to lag other racial groups in 2022, and the median wealth was approximately \$62,000 for non-white Latino or Hispanic households, and \$285,000 for white households.” (para, 5). The fact that Black Americans have such a low amount of wealth in the wealthiest country in the world has its roots in slavery and Jim Crow. It was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that discrimination was banned throughout America. This meant that employers could no longer discriminate against potential African American applicants in employment or banks when applying for a loan to buy a home. But for 250 years, African Americans were denied the right to work in White establishments. In the United States if one can does not obtain a job or buy a home, then that limits their ability to build wealth, and for 250 years, African Americans were denied these rights. Some think that the last 60-plus years has been more than enough time to make up for the lost wages and opportunities that were denied to African Americans. Sadly, my students did not possess the historical knowledge or skills necessary to see through the nuances. So, it was up to me to decipher the historical information that they could easily understand but also challenge them to be active about turning these disparities around. I needed them to be agents of change but only a truthful historical analysis of America’s past could bring it fruition.

Implications

Although the findings from this study cannot be generalized to a broader community, it

can inform stakeholders in education to a newfound understanding of why teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history is so harmful to teachers and students. My utilizing the storytelling narrative feature of Critical Race theory my lived experience and interactions with a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history impacted my pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher. In addition, the narrative of my experience culminated in me navigating a range of emotions from anxiety, isolation, and fear of being fired if I did not go along with teaching the traditional curriculum. The study also puts into question the broader questions surrounding the field of traditional curriculum theory. DeMarrais and LeCompte (1995) argue that the “body of knowledge to be taught is a given, objective and *free from biases*” (p. 224) and that knowledge is to be deciphered and managed by “state departments of education, school boards, administrators, and teachers and to be given to students usually in the form of prepackaged designs, kits, formulas, approaches, materials (p. 224). But what has been lost in the theory is that everyone comes with biases and the history curriculum of past and present generations has never been objective, especially when a single story is told. The story of White saviors as heroes, who built a nation out of sheer genius and strength. The single narrative of America being developed by one race of people is false, and the lack of inclusion of diverse perspectives does the teacher and students a great disservice.

The theoretical frameworks for this study have various implications in education settings. First, the Cross Racial Black Identity Development Model has a place in education settings because it could provide educators with a framework to identify any signs of low self-esteem or internalized racism in Black students and can guide students through each developmental stage, providing culturally responsive support and helping to cultivate positive racial identities that contribute to students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Second, the Black Historical

Conscious Framework, encourages a focus on Black historical figures, contributions, and achievements that are often minimized or excluded from Eurocentric narratives. Teachers can emphasize how Black individuals and communities have shaped national and global history, not only in response to oppression but as active agents of change and innovation. This can include lessons on African empires, Black inventors, and the pivotal roles Black people played in movements for justice, equality and advancing democracy for all groups of Americans.

Recommendations for Key Stakeholders

Black male history teachers continue to suffer the harmful effects of having to teach a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum, but it also effects all students who are taught it. Most of the change that has taken place around advancing the perspectives of other groups of Americans in the history curriculum has been symbolic. Going forward the conversation around the curriculum must include a more transformative touch, but it will require a pragmatic strategic approach that should empower Black male educators to be at the forefront of implementing the change that is required. This study offers recommendations that could help heal the wounds of the past and move K-12 education settings into a more equitable future.

Recommendations for Black Male History Teachers

1. Black male history teachers must critically reflect on how they were taught history growing up and actively take steps to learn their ancestral history before they enter the classroom. These educators must undergo a full understanding of what it means to be Black in America and throughout the Diaspora and they can only do that by reprogramming themselves away from the negative indoctrination of Eurocentrism which they were taught in their own K-12 experience.

2. Black male history educators must be allowed to use the tenets of Critical Race Theory in their pedagogy. Using CRT will instill a sense of empowerment and agency in their students, therefore challenging them to question the dominant narratives they were taught and to seek out the contributions of Black individuals who have helped shape historical movements, science, culture and beyond.
3. Black male history teachers must re-evaluate their pedagogy by replacing or supplementing Eurocentric texts with materials that reflect diverse perspectives, such as books by W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, and John Henrik Clarke who offer counter-narratives to the traditional Eurocentric history curriculum.

Recommendations for Policymakers

1. To combat the Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum, policymakers must provide Professional Development on the proper usage of the Black Historical Consciousness Framework. Because the student population is becoming more diverse, teachers need to embrace more holistic pedagogical practices for teaching history and social studies. The Black Historical Consciousness Framework can bring more awareness to the history of Black people in America and the centering of Black knowledge. King (2020) suggest that stakeholders and policymakers must incorporate the following themes of the Black Historical Consciousness Framework into the history standards and pedagogies., “systemic power, oppression, racism; agency, resistance, and perseverance; Africa and the African Diaspora; Black joy and love; Black identities; and Black historical contention” (p. 337). By allowing all students to witness Black excellence in all its multifaceted ways, students are then provided with a culturally relevant anti-racist

history education that can assist them in finding their cultural identity in the curriculum.

2. Policymakers at the state and federal levels need to work with the nation's premier Black historians to enact legislation which will increase Black History vertical alignment throughout the PreK-12 curriculum.
3. Policymakers at the state and federal levels should enact legislation for curriculum reform, which mandates that African American/Black History become a required *standalone* course in K-12 education, and a necessary component for graduation from high school. According to Gadson (2022) at the Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education there are currently only 12 states (Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington) that have enacted legislation which requires that Black history be taught in public schools. However, in five of the states (Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and South Carolina). However, the requirement is only symbolic because it prevents the teaching of systemic racism by making White students "feel discomfort, guilt, anguish or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin" (King, 2024 as cited in Lyons, 2024, para 5). New York City has a new Black Studies curriculum that it is mandating throughout its schools and is a great model to follow.
4. The United States Federal Government through the Department of Education must take a more active role in creating and mandating that states implement history/social studies standards that incorporate diverse perspectives. The

government can do this by collaborating with historians and educators from diverse backgrounds and issue grants which may incentivize the states into compliance.

5. School Board and District Leaders need to stop the banning of Black history themed writers and books in public schools. The continued assault on freedom of speech and expression, only further indoctrinates students into believing in a single narrative of how the United States was built and that Black and other minoritized people have no history or contributed very little to the country's origin.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include only the perspective of a single Black male history educator and therefore cannot be generalized to a greater population. However, my lived experience and narrative cannot be easily verified or replicated by others because it is a unique phenomenon that explores how my life history has taken me on a journey of exploration, where I have come out on the other end a better educator but more importantly, a fully developed conscious human being who can speak truth to power. Autoethnographies come with a certain level of subjectivity because of the researcher's personal experience but it must not overshadow the broader social or cultural analyses and contributions that the study offers to society.

Conclusion

This autoethnography forced me to uncover some deep personal truths about my own K-12 experience. I never thought how profound an impact indoctrination through the learning of a Eurocentric history played on my young mind as a Black boy. What's more revealing is how my lack of knowing Black history contributed to me developing a racial identity in my adolescent

and adult years. What's more startling is that I carried this void into my pedagogical practices as a Black male educator and continued the cycle of curriculum trauma until I found myself in the latter years of my teaching career. This study allowed me to dig deep into my consciousness and revisit my old lesson plans, principal observations, journal notes, and cultural artifacts which allowed me to write this autoethnography. I am proud that my journey of self-discovery allowed me to learn more about my ancestral Black history than I could have ever fathomed. It has brought me to this very moment in time whereas a scholar I can go into the world and get into good trouble, fight for future students and teachers and continue to push our country forward.

Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.

-Carter G. Woodson

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APPENDIX A: REFLECTIVE ESSAY

This reflective essay is a culmination of my thoughts and experience as a Black boy who was taught a Eurocentric-White-washed history during my K-12 education. Although I was an AB honor roll student all throughout my secondary education, I also remembered that history was my favorite subject. I can recall being in 4th grade and reading about how Christopher Columbus discovered America and how although some of the Native Americans died from interactions with him and his crew, overall, he had done the world a great deed. I can also recall peaking in the back of the textbook and viewing all the Presidents of the United States, which at the time ranged from the 1st President of the United States (Washington) to the time of me being in 4th grade President Clinton. I used to think about how cool it would be to be President of the United States, take cool trips around the world and boss people around. But there was one president who I had great admiration for and that was President Abraham Lincoln.

Throughout my education, I was hammered with history lessons that centered around “Honest Abe” being the greatest president of them all and that he “freed” the slaves with his signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. We then briefly learned about the 13 Amendment which abolished slavery in the United States and finally the 14th and 15th amendments. In addition, we *touched* on the brief lives of Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass but that was it for my ancestral history. However, Jefferson, Washington, Monroe, and Adams were held in great reverence, especially Jefferson and his mansion at Monticello. It is no coincidence that I learned to hold Jefferson in high regard throughout my K-12 experience. My teachers did not reveal to us that he raped the women who he kept in bondage and even fathered multiple kids by them. There was limited talk about their discretions.

Once we got around to talking about racism, the teacher would show us pictures of drinking fountains relegated for Whites and Blacks. Martin Luther King Jr and his “I Have a Dream Speech” and the teachers would sprinkle in a little bit about Rosa Parks and her refusal to give up her seat on a bus during segregation. Sadly, this is what my history education consisted of from 4th grade to senior year in high school. There were no nuances or periods where we talked about real racism, discriminatory housing, banking and tax policy, the federal government giving away land to White citizens through the Homestead Act, or anything that would demonstrate that White Americans got preferential treatment.

APPENDIX B: PEER-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Time: 45 Minutes

Audio: Recorded

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this autoethnographic study is to systematically examine and reflect on my lived experience as a Black male history teacher who taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum. In short, the findings will provide a better understanding of the impact that teaching a non-inclusive curriculum can have on the mental and social well-being of Black male history teachers in K-12 education.

Research Questions

1) RQ 1: What role does curriculum violence embodied in a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history play in the racial development of a Black male history teacher?

2). RQ 2: In what ways did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history limit the infusion of Black Historical Consciousness within pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher from the South?

3). RQ 3: In what ways did learning more about my ancestral Black history help me to push back against teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?

Interview Guide

The following questions were used to gather data for this autoethnographic study and gain a better understanding of my K-12 schooling as a Black boy and subsequent lived experience as a Black male history teacher.

1. As a Black Male History teacher from the South, what role did teaching a Whitewashed history have on your sense of racial Black identity and self?

2. What experiences growing up shaped your historical and ancestral knowledge?
3. How did you talk about race in your instruction?
4. How did you allow yourself to teach a Eurocentric whitewashed history to your students?
5. How did the curriculum trauma you endured as a Black boy impact your teaching pedagogy as a Black male history teacher?
6. What does it mean to identify as Black?
 - a. What does it mean to identify as a Black Male History Teacher?
7. How did teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum impact your racial Black identity?
8. Were there moments when you were aware of your Black identity during your K-12 experience as a Black male student?
 - a. What were some moments during your school experience as a Black male did you realize that what you were being taught was contradictory to your Black ancestry?
9. When did you exactly begin to feel emotional and social anguish while teaching a Whitewashed-Eurocentric history curriculum?
10. What were some professional or personal experiences where you began to push back against the standard curriculum?
11. Did any artist or media personalities change your way of thinking with how you teach?
12. How did the artist Nas through his lyrics influence your teaching pedagogy?
 - a. Were there any other artists who influenced your teaching style or made you push back against the Eurocentric history curriculum?
13. With the knowledge that you have acquired over your years teaching, what would you change regarding your teaching pedagogy?

14. What was the biggest difference between your first-year teaching and the last year you taught with regards to your pedagogy and lived experience as Black man?

APPENDIX C: REFLECTION JOURNAL

Time: To be Determined

Audio Recorded

This reflection journal will consist of me analyzing previous lesson plans from my 10 years of teaching and to reflect on my lived experience teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?

1. What do you remember being taught in your history classes?
2. What were the moments of discomfort during my K-12 experience as a young Black student? And as a teacher?
3. As the only Black teacher in the building, were there moments when you felt isolated?
 - a. Lonely?
4. Whose voice is missing?
5. Why did I fail to include diverse perspectives in my lesson plans?
6. Why do European voices dominate the lesson plans?
 - a. What fear did I experience if I deviated from the European centric curriculum?
7. Why do I include the ideas of freedom and liberty into my lessons regarding the founding of America, but neglect to place more emphasis on the bondage of Africans and their lack of freedom?
8. At what moments while creating the lesson plans did, I realize that I was teaching a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history curriculum?
9. Why are Black heroes not included while writing these lesson plans?
 - a. Where are the Black heroes?
 - b. Why is Black pain so prevalent in these lessons?

10. Throughout my lessons, how many times do I reference Black triumph?
 - a. Or Black pain?
11. Did I ever consider that I was inflicting trauma onto my students while creating these lesson plans?
12. How do I see myself?
13. How did teaching a Eurocentric history curriculum impact my identity?

APPENDIX D: CULTURAL ARTIFACT

This cultural artifact is the cover of a Nas album from 2008. At its initial release Nas was going to call the album “Nigger” but relented after the strong media backlash from conservative media, so he left it untitled. This album, amongst many of his albums, was crucial in helping me to form my Black identity. Nas is more than an artist but he’s also a historian, and as a young Black male teacher, I learned more from listening to his lyrics than I did from any of my history teachers in middle or high school.



The hypocrisy is all I could see
 White cop acquitted for murder
 Black cop cop a plea
 That type of shit make stop you and think
 We in chronic need of a second look of the law books
 And the whole race dichotomy
 Too many rappers, athletes and actors
 But not enough niggas at NASA
 Who gave you the latest dances, trends and fashions?
 But when it come to residuals, they look past us
 Woven into the fabric, they can't stand us
 Even the White tees, blue jeans and red bandanas (Nas, 2008).

Song: Last Words

Album: Nastradamus

Summary: This song was pivotal in my discovery of what it means to be Black and how to many

Black men fall victim to the prison system.

Ima prison cell six by nine

Living Hell stone wall metal bars for gods in jail

My nickname the can, the slammer, the big house

I'm the place many fear cause there's no way out

I take the sun away put misery instead

When you with me most folks consider you dead

I saw too many inmates falling apart

Call for the gods and let them out when it's dark

Convicts think they along but if they listen close

They can hear me grown touch the wall feel my pulse

All the pictures you put up is stuck in my skin

I can hear ya prayers (even when ya whispering)

I make it hotter in the summer colder in the winter

If the court parol ya then **ANOTHER CON ENTERS**

No remorse for your tears I seen em too often

When you cry, I make you feel alive inside a coffin

Watch you when you eat play with your mind when you sleep

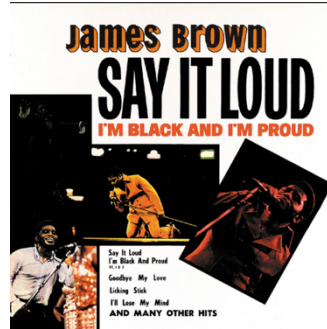
Make you dream that you free then make you wake up to me

Maybe one day I'll open my arms to release you

You'll always be my property nigga stay legal

(Nas, 1999, verse 2-3)

APPENDIX E: CULTURAL ARTIFACT

**SAY IT LOUD, I'M BLACK AND I'M PROUD**

Narrative Description of Cultural Artifact: This song allowed me to really embrace who I am as a Black man living in America and to be proud of who I am. The song constantly reminded me that being proud of being Black meant that I no longer would shy away from who I am. I would love myself more. I would stop being so hard on myself and start the process of feeling more comfortable in my Black skin. Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud, is much more than a song, it's a call to action.

Looky here

Some people say we got a lot of malice

Some say it's a lotta nerve

But I say we won't quit moving

Until we get what we deserve

We've been 'buked and we've been scorned

We've been treated bad, talked about

As sure as you're born

But just as sure as it take two eyes to make a pair, huh

Brother, we can't quit until we get our share

Say it loud (I'm Black and I'm proud)

Say it loud (I'm Black and I'm proud)

One more time, say it loud (I'm Black and I'm proud)

I've worked on jobs with my feet and my hands

But all the work I did was for the other man

And now we demands a chance

To do things for ourselves

We're tired of beating our heads against the wall

And working for someone else (verse 3-4)

APPENDIX F: CULTURAL ARTIFACT

AFRICA'S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS



Narrative Description of Cultural Artifact: This 6-part mini-series is probably one of the best documentaries ever produced. I remember watching it for the first time and coming away emotional regarding how Africa is widely considered the birthplace of humanity yet is pillaged for her resources by Western powers. I learned that my heritage does not start with American chattel slavery, but it began with Kings and Queens, merchants, traders and teachers, scientist and explorers. This miniseries sparked my curiosity and forced me investigate what other omissions the Eurocentric curriculum taught in K-12 public schools is failing to include. Ultimately, this series woke me up from my slumber of conscientious ignorance.

APPENDIX G: CULTURAL ARTIFACT

2018 8th GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES PACING GUIDE

Unit	Topic	Essential Standards	Days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Activities What is Social Studies? 	H.1, H.2, H.3, C.1	4 days
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NC Geography 	H.1, H.3, G.1, E.1, C.1	2 days
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colonial Regions 	H.1, H.2, H.3, G.1, E.1, C.1	2 days
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Settlers of North Carolina 		4 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit Test (Include vocab or you can separate and have a quiz and a test grade) (we didn't do a test grade for this--not enough material) 		1 day
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> French and Indian War 	H.2, G.1, E.1,	1 day
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxation 	E.1, C&G.1,	3 days
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulator Movement & Battle of Alamance 	H.2, H.3, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	1 day

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boston Massacre 	H.2	1 day
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boston Tea Party / Edenton Tea Party 	H.2, H.3, G.1, E.1, C&G.2,	2 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 2 Quiz 		1 day
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Continental Congress 	H.1, H.2, C&G.1, C&G.2,	1 day
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battle of Lexington and Concord 	H.2	2 days
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mecklenburg Resolves and Halifax Resolves 	H.1, C&G.1,	2 days
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Continental Congress & Declaration of Independence 	H.1, H.2, C&G.1,	4 days
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revolutionary War Battles 	H.2, C.1,	2 days
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End Revolutionary War 		1 day
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did a CFA for entire Q1 		

	End of Q1	<p>**We will have 10 days remaining in the quarter. Remember we will have early release days that we will lose time. We also have not allocated time for a project.</p> <p>You are always welcome to slow down, speed up, or enrich based on the needs of your students.</p>	10 days remaining
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles of Confederation 	H.1, C&G.1,	3 days
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitutional Convention 	H.2, C&G.1,	6 days
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution 	H.1, H.3, C&G.1	5 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 4 Test 		1 day
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Louisiana Purchase & Lewis and Clark 	H.3, G.1,	1 day
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NC Gold Rush 	H.3, G.1, E.1,	1 day

	** A good day to flip class to save a day.		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> War of 1812 	H.2	2 days
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archibald Murphy “Rip Van Winkle” State 	H.3, G.1, C.1,	2 days
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform in NC / 1835 Constitution 	H.1, H.2, H.3, G.1, E.1, C.1	2-3 days
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail of Tears 	H.1, H.2, H.3, G.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	2 days
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mexican-American War & California Gold Rush 	H.2, H.3, C&G.1, C&G.2,	2 days
	End of Q2	5 days remaining when we get back from Christmas Break You are always welcome to slow down, speed up, or enrich based on the needs of your students.	5 days remaining
Quarter 3	Quarter 3 will include Unit 6, 7, 8. (Antebellum America, Civil War and Reconstruction)	Not including EOQ days we have 37 Instructional Days--this accounts for a few days of review prior to EOQ’s.	

Unit 6	Antebellum America	This unit encompasses everything that leads up to the Civil War.	
6	History of Slavery		1 day
6	Slave Life and Culture		2 days
6	Factory Life in the North		2 days
6	Division (This would include all the big events that challenged slavery and States Rights-- include abolitionists in this)		10 days
6	Project for Antebellum America		5 days
6	Quiz for Antebellum America		1 day
Unit 7	Civil War		
7 / 3	Fort Sumter	H.2, G1.1, C&G.2	1 day
7 / 3	Northern and Southern advantages	H.1, H.2, G.1, C.1	1 day
7 / 3	Overview of Battles	H.2, G.2	2 days
7 / 3	Emancipation Proclamation & Gettysburg Address	H.1, H.2, H.3, C&G.1	3 days

	Midterm Exam		2 days
8 / 3	Lincoln's & Johnson's Plan for Reconstruction	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2	3 days
8 / 3	13th, 14th, 15th Amendment	H.1, H.2, H.3, C&G.1, C&G.2	1 day
8 / 3	Reconstruction in NC /1868 Constitution	H.1, H.2, H.3, C&G.1, C&G.2	3 days
	3Q EOQ		
9 / 4	Progressive Era	H.1, H.2, H.3, G.1, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	4 days
10 / 4	World War I	H.1, H.2, C&G.1, C&G.2,	4 days
11 / 4	Roaring 20's	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	2 days
11 / 4	Great Depression	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	3 days
11 / 4	Personal Finance & Economics	E.1	3 days
11 / 4	FDR & New Deal	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2,	3 days
	Test or Quiz on Unit 11		

12 / 4	Causes of WWII	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1	2 days
12 / 4	Pearl Harbor	H.1, H.2, H.3	1 day
12 / 4	WW II at home	H.3, C.1	2 days
	Quiz?		
13 / 4	Cold War	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	10 days
14 / 4	Civil Rights	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	5 days
15 / 4	Current Era	H.1, H.2, H.3, E.1, C&G.1, C&G.2, C.1	4 days
	End of Q4		3 days remaining in this quarter for project ideas and test



To: Justin Phillips
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

From: Office of Research Protections and Integrity

Date: 16-Aug-2024

RE: Determination that Activity is not Research and does not require IRB Approval

Study #: IRB-25-0109

Study Title: A QUALITATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY EXPLORING THE IMPACT THAT TEACHING A EUROCENTRIC-WHITEWASHED HISTORY CURRICULUM CAN HAVE ON THE MENTAL, SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND BLACK IDENTITY OF A BLACK MALE HISTORY TEACHER.

This submission was reviewed by the Office of Research Protections and Integrity, which has determined that this submission does not constitute research as defined under federal regulations 45 CFR 46.102(i) and 21 CFR 56.102(c) and/or (l) and does not require IRB approval.

Study Description:
The purpose of this study is to highlight my own experience as a Black boy who was taught a Eurocentric-Whitewashed history during my K-12 education and the curriculum trauma that it inflicted on me in my younger years, and how I carried that same trauma with me and infused it into my pedagogical practices as a Black male history teacher.

You must inform the IRB office of any changes to the project so that it can be determined whether the changes impact this determination.

Please be aware that approval may still be required from other relevant authorities or "gatekeepers" (e.g., school principals, facility directors, custodians of records).