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Critical race theory in education: analyzing African American students' experience with epistemological racism and eurocentric curriculum

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Critical Race Theory in Education:
Analyzing African American Students' Experience with Epistemological Racism and
Eurocentric Curriculum

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Abstract

This literature review presents an analysis of race ideology within U.S. society and schools in order to understand how such ideologies are transmitted to African American students through Eurocentric curricula and thus can perpetuate racism. Recognizing that American curricula originates from social control elements and that schools are institutions responsible for preparing students for the world they live in (Apple, 2004; Apple & King, 1983; Giroux, 2001; Giroux & Penna, 1979); I focus on African American students' experience with a Eurocentric curriculum and how this curriculum influences their social identity and ability to successfully navigate society. Essentially, the literature review I am positing emphasizes curricular influence on student interactions with and within society. With literature from several disciplines, I review scholarship using critical race theory in education as a conceptual, methodological, and theoretical framework to answer the following questions:

- How does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum;
- how does the intersection (epistemological racism) affect the psyche of African American students and;
- how can critical race theory (CRT) in education and critical pedagogy aid African American students in comprehending their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society?

Keywords: *African American students, critical race theory, critical race theory in education, curriculum, epistemological racism, Eurocentric curriculum, white supremacy ideology*

Section 1 Introduction: The Intersection of White Supremacy Ideology and Curriculum— Epistemological Racism

Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to gain a better understanding of racial ideologies within US Eurocentric curriculum and how this curriculum perpetuates the existent status quo by influencing African American students' interactions in and understanding of US society.

Eurocentric curriculum is defined as a curricular narrative that utilizes the social history and understandings of the dominant white race to communicate and sustain white construction of society (Carruthers, 1994; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Shujaa, 1994). Eurocentric curriculum and curriculum will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. The focus is on the complex and contextual comprehension of ideology, race/ethnicity, the school, society, and curricula; as well as how these ideologies and institutions intersect to create and foster intellectual disadvantages and the lack of self-knowledge among African American students, families, and communities. This review of literature provides the foundation for future research into schools' involvement with epistemological racism, as well as analyzing how political institutions (such as schools) and educational policies and practices affect racial identities and political ideologies that I hope to address in my later doctoral studies. As an interdisciplinary analysis, this literature review includes the following academic disciplines: African & Black Diaspora Studies, Education, History, Law, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology to emphasize the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology, curriculum, and public education that sustains US society. This review also acknowledges and emphasizes the responsibility of American schools to prepare students for society (Apple, 2004; Apple & King, 1983; Au, 2012; Giroux, 2001; Giroux & Penna, 1979), connecting curriculum to students' views about the

world, their racial identity, and their racialized social interactions presenting a racial analysis of US Eurocentric curriculum and how this curriculum sustains multiple forms of racism—cultural, individual, interpersonal, institutional, structural, and systemic (defined in glossary) (Au, 2012; Brown & Brown, 2015; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1997, 2007, and 2016a; Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2008; Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011). Therefore, this literature review focuses on one aspect of racism in education through curricular narratives. Lived experiences of desegregating schools and busing comprise another component of white supremacy and racism's influence on African American students' being, thinking, and knowing that is beyond the scope of my literature review.

The underlying premise that guides this review emphasizes that US public education historically sought social control to create a united American identity, sustain a white supremacist economic social order, and distribute sociocultural capital and expectations (Apple, 2004; Au, 2012; Carruthers, 1994; Mills, 1997; Pinar, 1993; Shujaa, 1994; Watkins, 2001; Zamudio, et al. 2011); therefore, I use critical race theory (CRT) in education to investigate white supremacy ideology within US public curricula and use narrative/counter-storytelling to communicate students of color, specifically African American students', experience with Eurocentric curriculum. I define African American students as “members of the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) culture,” described by Richardson (2001) as “all African American students who have lived in America for any length of time” exposed to Eurocentric curricular narratives that determine “the collective and individual identity negotiations involved in the black experience” (p. 198). While I recognize the heterogeneousness of African American experiences and education across socioeconomic status, I focus on the social impact all African American students endure with Eurocentric curricula that encapsulates US public education to

answer: how does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum; how does this intersection (epistemological racism) affect the African American psyche; and how can CRT in education and critical pedagogy aid African American students in comprehending their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society?

Critical Race Theory (heretofore referred to as CRT) in education is a sub-division of the CRT movement that began in law as the fervent of civil rights legislation dwindled and the gains made during the Civil Rights Movement regressed. Derrick Bell (1992) 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 to provide justice to African Americans, it in turn further cements racial oppression. Bell (1992) states “[b]y constantly aiming for a status that is unobtainable in a perilously racist America, black Americans face frustration and despair” (p.363). Bell's (1992) racial analysis of the American legal system and the fluctuation of civil rights victories prompted him to employ race as an analytical tool—what he considered the Racial Realism movement—to assess the realities of race/racism institutionalized through laws that govern society and solidifies a racialized social order to maintain white privilege and African American exploitation. Racial Realism is “a challenge to the principle of racial equality” (Bell, 1992, p.364), and is the platform that sparked the present CRT movement.

CRT is guided by five principles. First, racism is inherent in US society; CRT sees racism as engrained in and a function of US society, from its structures to mundane interactions situating race as an analytical tool to address racial disparities (Bell, 1980 & 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zamudio et.al, 2011).

Second, the system of racism benefits whites mentally and psychically through interest convergence (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Interest convergence is a theory proposed by Bell (1980), positing racial progress for African Americans only occurs if/when there is a benefit to whites or if/when there is little to no disruption to the white supremacist social order. Through interest convergence, racism has material and psychological gains for whites because it “advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class (psychically)” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.7). The third principle of CRT emphasizes race is a mechanism for organizing society, not a scientific fact, but a way for the dominant white supremacist social order to maintain a hierarchy between groups of people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Smedley & Smedley, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Yosso, 2002; Zamudio et.al, 2011).

The fourth principle is intersectionality and anti-essentialism, where race is one of many social identities that influence social privilege and disparities, and race often conflicts with other “status quo categories” (Ladson-Billings, 2016 b, p.350). On one hand, intersectionality recognizes that race, gender, and class produce a layered experience of oppression and benefit. Anti-essentialism on the other hand, is the notion that homogenizing social identity experiences disregards autonomy and individuality within groups; however, group identity is necessary for organizing against social ills (Ladson-Billings, 2016 b). The last principle utilizes people of color’s perspectives to highlight the reality of race/racism in US society through voice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Through narratives and counter-storytelling, CRT scholars present their or other people of color’s experience with racism to legitimate their knowledge base of racism and acknowledge the reality of racial oppression overlooked by whites (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001;

Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zamudio et.al, 2011).

In the field of education, CRT is used as an “epistemological and methodological tool, to help analyze the experience of historically underrepresented populations across the k-20 educational pipeline” (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015, p.206). According to Zamudio et al. (2011), educators use CRT principles to address racism’s role in educational inequality, positing:

1. CRT asserts that race and racism are central structures in American society. A CRT understanding of the structures cogently explains racial inequity in education.
2. CRT emphasizes the historical trajectory of racism in education and links it to the contemporary challenges students of color face in schools.
3. CRT gives voice to the experiences of students from marginalized groups and, in doing so, challenges the master narrative and taken-for-granted ideologies about these students’ oppressive experiences in schools.
4. CRT provides a way of looking at how education policy and school/classrooms are structured to highlight, in tangible and specific ways, how education inequality is manufactured.
5. CRT offers educators a beacon of hope in considering how education policy and school practices might be constructed to effectively diminish the achievement gap and educational inequality for students of color. (p. 165)

Thus, CRT in education provides the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological lens (i.e., collecting narratives of ‘otherness’) to address the intersection of white supremacy ideology and

curriculum; and the intersection's influence on African American students' psyche and experience with and within US k-12 Eurocentric education and society.

Conceptual, Methodological, and Theoretical Framework

Focusing specifically on curriculum's influence on African American students' comprehension of their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society, CRT in education's emphasis on curriculum "as a culturally specific artifact to maintain a White supremacist master script" (Ladson-Billings 2016a, p.24) is vital to the review. Using this conception of curriculum acknowledges white supremacy ideologies within US Eurocentric curriculum and how this curriculum perpetuates the status quo by influencing African American students' interactions in and understanding of US society. In this case, the literature review presents a synthesis of documents to acknowledge and investigate "epistemological racism" (Zamudio et al. 2011, p.98) that occurs in US public education. According to Zamudio et al. (2011);

...[e]pistemology is the study of the nature, status and production of knowledge and how we know and understand the world. Specifically, it includes questions about how knowledge is constructed, whose knowledge counts, what knowledge is valued, how knowledge is shared and acquired, how we assess what someone knows, and how we know what we know. However, the concept of epistemology is more than just a way of knowing and can be more accurately defined as a 'system of knowing.' Importantly, people's epistemological orientation is related to their worldview which develops based on the places they live and learn, as well as their racial, gender, and class backgrounds. More directly, epistemologies are racial and gendered. (p.98-99)

Hence, epistemological racism entails “racially biased ways of knowing” (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p.4) that reflects “the social history of the White race” (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p.8), communicating white society’s construction/understanding of society that supports white supremacy and degrades/neglects people of color’s ways of knowing. With CRT posited in education as the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical framework to analyze epistemological racism from Eurocentric curricula, I am concerned with helping African American students cope with and overcome racial marginalization through Africanization—awakening their black conscious—as one learns that their k-12 education is a part of epistemological racism to perpetuate white superiority and African American inferiority (Carruthers, 1994). Historically, mass public education for African Americans was intent on preserving the slavery social order solidifying white supremacy ideology through schooling and a curriculum that communicated the dominant sociocultural expectations, norms, and values (Carruthers, 1994; Shujaa, 1994; Watkins 2001; Watkins 1933/2017). In fact, Carter G. Woodson (1933/2017), in his work found in the 1930s that US Eurocentric curriculum was propaganda to instill conformity and inferiority in African American students which he considers miseducation and mental slavery.

Thus, I was inspired to investigate the intersection of curriculum and African American psyches from my journey through education as a low-income, African American, single mother and my exposure to different curricula that prepares or deters one’s academic pursuits, leading me to recognize race as one factor that influences accessible knowledge. Apple (2004) considers these differences in accessible knowledge as either high-status knowledge or technical knowledge. He defines high-status knowledge as an education that emphasizes critical thinking, decision-making, and exposure to the benefits of higher education (Apple, 2004). Technical

knowledge, on the other hand, is defined as knowledge that communicates specific behaviors to produce the working-class needed for the US capitalistic unequal society to function (Apple, 2004). Consequently, high status and technical knowledge entail different curricula distributed to students that reflects the social framework and hierarchy. Throughout my educational journey, I experienced high status Afrocentric knowledge, urban high-status knowledge, suburban technical knowledge, and urban technical knowledge. My higher education journey allowed me to reflect on my k-11 educational experience, consider which of the previous forms of knowledge increased and decreased my chances of succeeding in college, as well as led me to question why knowledge is tailored and limited based on one's sociohistorical racial identity.

Accordingly, my literature review utilizes CRT in education's emphasis on educational narratives as the conceptual and methodological framework to bring experiential knowledge to theory for an analysis of race ideology within the education system through my experience of Africanization—the process of awakening my black conscious (Carruthers, 1994). Africanization is the transition from Eurocentric imposed narratives of the world to centering the culture and histories of “African values systems” (Carruthers, 1994, p.52). Thus, Africanization takes place through awakening the black conscious. I define this as the awareness of the historical influence of race/racial oppression and present social contradictions and conditions, and a mission to disrupt generational racial oppression through self-knowledge and learning African history, intellectualism, and resistance beyond Eurocentric prescribed narratives of society. I utilize my experiential knowledge with epistemological racism, Eurocentric curriculum, and Africanization to adhere to CRT in education's use of narratives to legitimate people of color's experience with racism and acknowledge the realities of racial oppression within education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma &

Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zamudio et.al, 2011). Therefore, I explore the experience of Africanization and CRT in education's recognition of white supremacist ideologies within traditional Eurocentric-American curriculum that points to the hindering of African American intellectual growth and perpetuates the status quo, using my personal experience as an example of many African American students who encounter knowledge beyond prescribed US Eurocentric curricula. As noted, I define African American students as "members of the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) culture," described by Richardson (2001) as "all African American students who have lived in America for any length of time" exposed to Eurocentric curricular narratives that determine "the collective and individual identity negotiations involved in the black experience" (p. 198). Namely, the literature review fosters an understanding of race ideology in education and society, and the psychological consequences African American students experience with epistemological racism and a Eurocentric curriculum.

Overview

In what follows I answer the first question, how does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum, arguing that education and society have a complex dialectical relationship that distributes white supremacy ideology through Eurocentric curriculum to sustain the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum maintaining slavocracy relations between African American and white people in the US through epistemological racism. In short, the intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum is epistemological racism. Then in section two, I develop the argument to answer the second question, how does epistemological racism affect the African American psyche, suggesting that

epistemological racism affects the black psyche—mental processes that provide the basis for understanding one’s self and behavior as an African American—by imposing a way of being and knowing that influences African American identity construction and social interactions, sustaining the white supremacist social order. Here, I bring my experiential knowledge to theory, employing CRT in education’s emphasis on educational narratives by exploring my journey through higher education and my experience with identity crisis and self-knowledge to communicate lived experiences of epistemological racism’s effect on the African American psyche shared by African American students in Eurocentric education.

Section three answers the third question, how can CRT in education and critical pedagogy aid African American students in comprehending their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society, by exploring educators attempts to challenge Eurocentric curricula with pedagogies that produce a critical consciousness—Africanization. I review CRT in education and two other critical pedagogies’ potential to begin Africanization, awaken the black conscious and produce change agents. I conclude the literature review summarizing the research questions and answers, proposing further research into the psychology of epistemological racism and curriculum, and acknowledge that while a Eurocentric curriculum is detrimental for African American students, white students are also affected. Thus, I conclude the literature review with the recognition that white students’ experience with a Eurocentric curriculum instills a pseudo-superiority complex and white fragility when the status quo is challenged by non-whites.

American Society, Education, and White Supremacy Ideology

To begin the analysis of ideologies transmitted through a Eurocentric curriculum and grasp how it perpetuates the status quo, I answer the first question: how white supremacy ideology intersects with Eurocentric curriculum in three levels. The first level presents an analysis of the connection between education and society as the foundation of the literature review. Then the second level addresses white supremacy ideology and racism in US society, providing the context for a racial analysis of US curriculum. Then the third and final level connects US white supremacy ideology and racial society to address their intersection with curriculum. Together, the levels support the claim that education and society have a complex dialectical relationship that sustains the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum to maintain slavocracy relations between African American and white people through epistemological racism. Thus, the tri-level explanation of the intersection between white supremacy ideology and curriculum defines the intersection as epistemological racism.

Michael W. Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum* (2004) analyzes the phenomenon of "ideological domination" (p. vii) and reproduction that occurs through education. He considers this phenomenon a study of "the politics of domination" (Apple, 2004, p. xxiii) by situating schools within the complex nexus of society as an institution to distribute the cultural, economic, political, and social norms and capital required for the maintenance and function of US society. He posits that educators and educational researchers need to view schools and what goes on in them through their connection with the cultural, economic, and political dynamics of society in order to understand educational disparities—i.e. differences in accessible knowledge and funding that reflects society's organization and hierarchy (Apple, 2004). Apple's (2004) acknowledgment

and analysis of ideological domination and reproduction is explored through his emphasis that this domination is an aspect of hegemony, “an organized assemblage of meanings and practices, the central, effective, and dominant system of meanings, values and actions which are *lived*” (p. 4 italics original). For this reason, to comprehend ideological domination and reproduction within schools and curriculum, as educators it is imperative to acknowledge that education and society are connected by the dominant cultural, economic, and political norms that influence our understanding and interaction in the larger society. Overall, ideological domination and reproduction in education represent US epistemology— “systems of knowing” (Zamudio et.al, 2011, p.99).

As a foundational text for my literature review, *Ideology and Curriculum* (Apple, 2004) provides the contextual evidence that explains how dominant ideologies are transmitted through curricula and provides a historical analysis of curriculum development to explain how the inequalities of society are reflected in curriculum to perpetuate the status quo. By viewing schools as institutional mechanisms that convey and distribute dominant ideologies to maintain the status quo in society, Apple (2004) highlights that a critical analysis of schools and their function in society entail recognizable cultural, economic, and political ideologies. His work within the study of curriculum (educational knowledge) is relevant to begin an analysis of racial ideologies in Eurocentric curriculum influencing African American students’ interactions and understanding of US society, because he partakes in,

a critically oriented form of investigation, in that it chooses to focus on how this knowledge, as distributed in schools, may contribute to a cognitive and dispositional development found within school settings, and the principles of selection, organization

and evaluation of this knowledge, are value-governed selections from a much larger universe of possible knowledge and selection principles. (Apple, 2004, p.43)

As such, I start the analysis of racial ideology within a Eurocentric curriculum and explore how this curriculum perpetuates the status quo, trains docility and obedience, and inculcates values by using Apple (2004) to address school's responsibility to prepare each generation for society, highlight curriculum's roots in social control, and emphasize education, specifically curriculum's, dialectical relationship with society to maintain US social hierarchy and organizational framework. This dialectical relationship means that schools communicate the dominant social expectations through curricula, its daily organization, and hierarchy that responds to the needs of powerful social institutions—providing insight into the complex web of power dynamics involved in curriculum, epistemological racism, and social maintenance (Apple 2004). Thus, Apple's (2004) analysis of ideological domination and reproduction as hegemony, and situating schools as institutions within the complex network of social, cultural, economic, and political institutions lays the foundation for comprehending how ideologies permeate education and society that allows US society to function and maintain the status quo—legitimizing education and society's dialectical relationship.

The next level of understanding to answer the first question, how does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum, entails a racial analysis of US society to address white supremacy ideology and racism within society. This supports CRT in education as the theoretical lens to acknowledge the pervasiveness of racism within education and society (Solórzano & Yosso, 2016). Here, I utilize *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* by Audrey Smedley and Brian Smedley (2012) and *The Racial Contract* by Charles

W. Mills (1997) to address the origins of race and racism in the US, and the embeddedness of white supremacy ideology and racism as a mechanism to organize US society.

Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview by Audrey Smedley and Brian Smedley (2012) presents a historic sociocultural analysis of race ideology in the US. They explore two of the key ideas of the review—white supremacy and race ideology—and consider the origin of race ideology as a mechanism of white supremacy to maintain a white dominated and stratified society according to English psychological acknowledgement of their superiority and non-European inferiority. The authors define race as a “sociocultural phenomenon... a synthesis of a number of identifiable elements that, bound together, constitute a particular way of viewing human differences” (Smedley & Smedley, 2012, p.11). Particularly, Smedley and Smedley (2012) examine the sociocultural context of major historical events and mindsets of English colonizers as they encountered and conquered diverse populations to explain present race relations in the US. Smedley and Smedley (2012) define ideologies as “sets of beliefs, values, and assumptions held on faith alone and generally unrelated to empirical facts, that act as guidelines or prescriptions for individual group behavior” (p.16). They identify five components of white supremacy ideology that comprise US race ideology/racism: (1) “universal classification of human groups as exclusive discreet biological entities; (2) the imposition of an inegalitarian ethos that required the ranking of these groups vis-à-vis one another; (3) the belief that the outer physical characteristics of human populations were but surface manifestations of inner realities; (4) all of these qualities were inheritable; and (5) the belief that each exclusive group (race) was created unique and distinct by nature” (Smedley & Smedley, 2012, p.25-26). Essentially, these five components demonstrate the mindsets that prompted racism between African American and white people in the US, explain

how race came to dominate the institutional and social framework, and provide the foundation of a racial analysis of US society.

By analyzing the evolution of race ideological implementation to maintain a white dominated social order as English colonies transitioned to the United States of America, the authors define racial worldview as a particular way of viewing the world using race as a lens to highlight physical and cultural differences and justify oppression (Smedley & Smedley, 2012). Over time the racial worldview of understanding the world became dominant, turning into the subconscious and conscious knowledgebase to make sense of social interactions and influence demeanor (Smedley & Smedley, 2012). Thus, the essence of Smedley and Smedley's (2012) argument is that race is a psychological and ideological social construct used to facilitate, institutionalize, and maintain a Eurocentric white supremacist social order (and this construction of race eroded much older forms of understanding human identity).

Smedley and Smedley's (2012) work addresses the actuality and pervasiveness of race as a social construction that challenges the common conception of race as a biological fact, positing that race is prevalent in society because it acts as a social construct that maintains and perpetuates difference, secures benefits for whites, and reconciles the contradiction between oppression in US society and the myth that this is the land of the free with equal opportunity. Explicitly, Smedley and Smedley (2012) provide the contextual support to focus on the pervasiveness of white supremacy and race ideologies that explain racial disparities between African Americans and whites in American society. This argument provides a relevant and crucial lens to utilize CRT in education to analyze epistemological racism, because Smedley and Smedley (2012) demonstrate how those in power first organized society then communicated their

expectations to the greater society to maintain their influence. The following excerpt support this:

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, an elaborate global edifice of social philosophy and theory was developed around the theme of white racial superiority. Theories of racial history were transformed into theories of world history. Facts that did not fit the racial worldview of white superiority and black degradation were ignored, defeated, or obfuscated...Explications for advanced social systems in Africa, discovered and rediscovered, in the late nineteenth century, were predicated on ascertaining the degree of Caucasian mixture in the aristocratic or ruling elements. (Smedley & Smedley, 2012, p. 244)

The racial worldview within American society communicates how to interact with others that aligns with social roles defined by racism, where those in power maintain the racial social order by ignoring anything that did not support their superiority and the “Other” (African American) inferiority. In other words, Smedley and Smedley (2012) highlight some of the lengths taken by the white framers of American society to legitimize and propagate white superiority and African American inferiority through epistemological racism (where such ideologies did not exist prior to the 17th century). In fact, Smedley and Smedley (2012) recognize that racial ideologies impose inferiority on non-whites, leaving them to associate with and make sense of prescribed racial identities in a society that uses race to maintain inequality. Thus, it follows that the significance of Smedley and Smedley (2012) lays in its historic sociocultural analysis of race ideologies to explain race’s influence in present social institutions and interactions. This is key for the focus

on curriculum as a racial text (Pinar 1993) and acknowledging mindsets that perpetuate racism, to be addressed in the final level of the first question.

While Smedley and Smedley (2012) present a historic sociocultural analysis of US race ideology's birth for the second level of addressing how white supremacy ideology intersects with Eurocentric curricula, *The Racial Contract* by Charles W. Mills (1997) provides a deeper understanding and analysis of race and society in the US. Here, I consider the philosophical and political theory underpinnings of the racial analysis of US society that utilizes Mills (1997) conception of white supremacy as a political system that structures American racism, denoting the global structure of white supremacy to which this country belongs. Mills (1997) acknowledges US society is a conglomeration of contracts and asserts white supremacy is a political system that outlines a hierarchical power structure presenting written and unwritten rules to determine who gets what and maintain unequal distribution of rights and resources to sustain white supremacy. This is similar to Smedley and Smedley's (2012) findings that race organizes society; however, Mills (1997) sees race as a contract between whites and the greater society, what he terms the Racial Contract.

Mills (1997) provides a racial analysis of the social contract—the dialectical agreement, relationship, and obligations between the government and constituents, that organizes and maintains society—positing the Racial Contract emphasizes race's historical roots in the formation of US government-citizen agreement and how race has been used to institutionalize and perpetuate racism, as well as acts as a platform to comprehend the global race-based domination of white supremacy. Essentially Mills (1997) uses CRT to analyze how race is embedded within the institutional and social framework to highlight race and white supremacy as

liberal/moral political structures, challenging mainstream analysis of social organization. His work is essential for the literature review because his theory of the Racial Contract acknowledge white supremacy within education as

an ideology...to be understood as aiming at the minds of nonwhites as well as whites, inculcating subjugation. If the social contract requires that all citizens and persons learn to respect themselves and each other, the Racial Contract prescribes nonwhite self-loathing and racial deference to white citizens. The ultimate triumph of this education is that it eventually becomes possible to characterize the Racial Contract as ‘consensual’ and ‘voluntaristic’ even for nonwhites. (Mills, 1997, p.89)

Mills (1997) explores how racial ideologies that organize US society influence interactions in and understanding of society in order to maintain a white supremacist social order. Thus, to address the second level of answering how does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum, it is imperative to see that white supremacy ideology is inherent within the makeup, organization, and function of US society.

White Supremacy Ideology Intersects with Curriculum: Epistemological Racism, Curriculum, and Consciousness

Thus far, I have presented white supremacist ideologies of society are reflected in curriculum and a racial analysis of US society to acknowledge that US society has been historically structured to function within a racial worldview to maintain a white supremacist social order. Now, I will review *Critical Curriculum Studies: Education, Consciousness, and the Politics of Knowing* by Au (2012), *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and*

Power in America 1865-1954 by Watkins (2001), and *Teaching for Black Lives* (Watson, Hagopian, & Au, 2018) to address the third level connecting white supremacy ideology and US racial social order to address their intersection with curriculum; answering how does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum and concluding that education and society have a complex dialectical relationship to sustain the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum to maintain slavocracy relations between African Americans and whites in the US through epistemological racism. Emphasis is on the mindsets of the class of people exerting power and authority to impose a subservient mindset upon former slaves and their descendants for generations through education (Carruthers, 1994; Gordon, 1994; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Shujaa, 1994; Watkins, 2001; Woodson, 1933/2017). Here, CRT in education's use of race to investigate racialized educational inequality through marginalized students experience in Eurocentric education, is key because I employ their view of curriculum "as a culturally specific artifact to maintain a White supremacist master script" (Ladson-Billings, 2016a, p.24). Thus, I present literature to expand upon epistemological racism—the ways in which curriculum reflects dominant racial norms and values of US society through a Eurocentric curriculum perpetuating white supremacy and racism—and curriculum as racial text (Pinar 1993) influencing identity construction and social interactions.

As a literature review to investigate the intersection of US Eurocentric curriculum and the African American psyche as a form of epistemological racism, *Critical Curriculum Studies: Education, Consciousness, and the Politics of Knowledge* by Wayne Au (2012) is essential to comprehend how curriculum influences students' interactions in and understanding of US society. According to Au (2012), the purpose of curriculum is to communicate behaviors and mindsets necessary for society to function; meaning that curriculum influences students'

consciousness—way of being, knowing, and thinking in the world—fostering a knowledge-base for students to view the world and make sense of their realities. Au (2012) begins his analysis of curriculum and consciousness by viewing education and learning as a dialectical conception of consciousness, defined “as a process where the dialectical interaction between humans and their environments continually unfolds and develops, where ‘being’ (ontology) in the world and our theory of knowledge (epistemology) of that world are dynamically connected as we simultaneously react to and act upon the world in which we live” (Au, 2012, p.17-18).

Essentially, a dialectical conception of consciousness is comprised of human involvement with materialism, praxis, tools, social consciousness, reflection, and critical consciousness, that solidifies curriculum’s influence on student’s understanding of their selves and society.

Au’s (2012) conception of dialectical conception of consciousness lays the foundation to comprehend the connection between curriculum and consciousness through two implications—curriculum “as the accessibility of knowledge structured into educational environments” and curricular standpoint to address “the social basis of epistemology and knowledge” (p.9). Au’s (2012) conception of curriculum utilizes Dwayne Huebner’s educational environments, Lev Vygotsky’s understanding of “human development and learning vis-à-vis the use of conceptual tools” (Au, 2012, p.39), and Basil Bernstein’s (1977, 1996) pedagogic discourse to define curriculum as a mechanism that organizes and distributes accessible knowledge through textbooks and school design. The second implication of his conception of a dialectical conception of consciousness, relevant for the literature review’s analysis is his argument for curricular standpoint, where he analyzes power dynamics in curriculum development and theory (Au, 2012). Namely, Au (2012) uses this definition of curriculum and curricular standpoint to emphasize knowledge is organized and made accessible according to social, cultural, political,

and economic dynamics where schools communicate and seek to fulfill the needs of society. In addition, Au (2012) argues for transformative curriculum measures via social justice efforts because even though schools come with prescribed knowledge, students and teachers express agency by challenging and influencing dominant narratives, as they are not passive recipients.

Thus, Au (2012) lays the foundation for acknowledging the sociopsychological aspects of curriculum and its influence on students' understanding of their identity, society, and interactions in US society. In fact, Au (2012) provides the link between education and society as discussed by Apple (2004) to white supremacy ideology and racism in society as they intersect with curriculum as epistemological racism. I expand upon epistemological racism through Watkins' (2001), *The White Architects of Black Education*, to consider how African American education supported a production of knowledge to maintain a white supremacist social order and slavocracy relations between African Americans and whites in a post-slavery industrial society. Watkin's work highlights the politics behind African American education and uncovers the nature of knowledge and its justification in perpetuating African American oppression (Watkins, 2001). Watkins (2001) presents a sociohistorical and cultural investigation of social and political ideologies that resulted in the perpetuation of the racial social order through an accommodationist curriculum.

White Supremacy Ideology Intersects with Curriculum: White Architects and Epistemological Racism

Watkins (2001) analyzes key ideological figures in the construction of public education after the Civil War, where the US had to redefine its social relations in a post-slavery society that wanted to maintain a white supremacist social order with former slaves. For this reason, by

looking at the timeframe from 1865-1954, Watkins (2001) finds the transition from slavocracy—slave forced free labor social/political economy—to industrial society—machine and technological dominated social/political economy—as the context for understanding disparities between African American and white student’s education, and the lingering influence of racism in society. Throughout the work, Watkins (2001) posits schools provide a political role by conditioning African American students to embrace and conform to the dominant political and socioeconomic framework. Watkins (2001) provides an example of white supremacy ideology’s intersection with curriculum adhering to CRT’s second principle of interest convergence, where powerful whites usurped African Americans’ educational control and aspirations to benefit white interests. Accordingly, the transition to an industrial society prompted the rise of accommodationist education—curriculum geared toward accepting menial and servile occupations—as an opportunity to address what to do with former slaves in the new industrial social order (Watkins 2001).

Through his analysis of key ideologues in charge of constructing African American accommodationist education, Watkins (2001) finds that this education prepared former slaves to participate in society in limited roles that mimicked slavery without physical bondage to engrain black inferiority and white superiority into the US industrial social framework, as well as condition African Americans to voluntarily accept white supremacist prescribed roles and see their oppression as natural. For example, Mills (1997) concurs stating: “Originally denied education, blacks were later, in the postbellum period given an education appropriate to postchattel status—the denial of a past, of history, of achievement—so that as far as possible they would accept their prescribed roles of servant and menial laborer, comic coons and Sambos, grateful Uncle Toms and Aunt Jemimas” (p.88). It follows that epistemological racism occurs

when Eurocentric curricular narratives distort and/or neglect the histories, achievements, and contributions of African Americans while emphasizing that African Americans history begins with slavery to perpetuate white supremacist prescribed roles. In fact, *Teaching for Black Lives* (2018) is a textbook that highlights how slavery, reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, to name a few examples are taught in ways that highlight white contribution to society, minimize African American active participation in their liberation, and communicates “roles acceptable to mainstream white society” (p.10). The authors in *Teaching for Black Lives* (2018) acknowledge how white supremacy is present in public Eurocentric curriculum, how white supremacist Eurocentric narratives influence students understanding of the US’ racialized society to perpetuate an evolved form of slavery (slavery of the mind as curriculum influences consciousness and ways of being, thinking, and knowing), as well as presents curriculum to counter epistemological racism (to be discussed in section three). While it appears that society has transitioned away from an overt slavocracy of exploited African American free labor, scholars and criminal justice activists recognize that slavery is still present within the prison-industrial complex and the school-to-prison pipeline (Alexander, 2010; Duncan, 2000; Mahmood, 2004; McGrew, 2016), thus Watkins (2001) analysis of ideology and African American education, and *Teaching for Black Lives* (2018) are instrumental in the review because they specifically addresses epistemologies that were pervasive in a hegemonic and disempowering educational institution.

In conclusion, the work of Apple (2004), Au (2012), Mills (1997), Smedley and Smedley (2012), Watkins (2001), *Teaching for Black Lives* (2018) highlights education and society’s complex dialectical relationship that perpetuates the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum to maintain the slavocracy relations between white and

African American people in the US through epistemological racism. Thus, the intersections of white supremacy ideology and curriculum is epistemological racism, tailoring accessible knowledge according to race to perpetuate white supremacy.

Section 2: Epistemological Racism and the Black Psyche

Section one provided the background analysis of US race ideology and white supremacy ideology within schools and society, as well as context to comprehend education and society's dialectical relationship. Specifically, section one addressed the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and public education; positing that education and society have a complex dialectical relationship that sustains the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum to maintain slavocracy relations between African American and white people in the US through what I have classified as epistemological racism. Section two addresses the effects of the intersection on the black psyche—mental processes that provide the basis for understanding one's self and behavior as an African American—building off the argument in section one to answer the second question, how does epistemological racism affect the black psyche, suggesting that epistemological racism affects the black psyche by imposing a way of being, thinking, and knowing that influences black identity and social interactions through three psychological experiences: mental slavery, double-consciousness, and Africanization.

Specifically, I focus on the complex and contextual comprehension of ideology, race/ethnicity, the school, society, and curricula; as well as how these ideologies and institutions comprise epistemological racism to create and foster intellectual disadvantages and the lack of self-knowledge among students, families, and communities. Here, I bring my experiential knowledge to theory, employing CRT in education's use of educational narratives by exploring

my journey through higher education and my experience with epistemological racism and pilgrimage for self-knowledge—through Africanization—to communicate lived experiences of epistemological racism’s effect on the black psyche shared by African American students in Eurocentric education. I utilize my experiential knowledge with epistemological racism, Eurocentric curriculum, and journey to Africanization to adhere to CRT in education’s use of narratives to legitimate people of color’s experience with racism and acknowledge the reality of racial oppression within education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zamudio et.al, 2011). This chapter begins with a review of *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Woodson 1933/2017), *Black Skin White Mask* (Fanon 1952/2008), *Black Rage* (Grier & Cobbs 1992), *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child* (Wilson, 1978), and *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, 2009) to address African American experiences and psyches with racism, as well as act as examples of using narratives and counter-storytelling that I model through my educational narrative. I conclude the chapter with a theoretical explanation of African American students’ experience with epistemological racism and my experience with epistemological racism on my educational journey.

Miseducation is Epistemological Racism

Carter G. Woodson’s *The Mis-education of the Negro*, is the foundation of the literature review as it inspired the urge to understand the concept of mental slavery—one of the psychological experiences of racism in curricula—and began the investigation of epistemological racism. Being that the present condition of African American education represents the lingering effects of white control over African American education post-Emancipation (Watkins, 2001),

Woodson (1933/2017) conducted a historical analysis of African American education in order to understand and improve the disparities produced by a Eurocentric curriculum. Woodson (1933/2017) confirmed in the 1930s that the US education system instilled white ideals and standards that African American students are unable to achieve because the standards do not represent the opportunities available to the majority of African Americans, what he considers miseducation. This miseducation produced what Woodson (1933/2017) termed mental slavery, where “the Negro’s mind has been all but perfectly enslaved in that he has been trained to think what is desired of him” (p.24). Throughout *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, Woodson (1933/2017) emphasized US education as a mechanism to sustain control over the African American population; after all, curriculum is a method to transfer norms, values, and social expectations to the next generation (Apple, 2004; Au, 2012; Woodson, 2001). Historically, mass public education was intent on preserving the slavery social order without the physical slavery and solidifying African American subservience into the social framework (Watkins, 2001; Woodson, 1933/2017). Above all, Woodson (1933/2017) observed that US Eurocentric curriculum is propaganda to instill conformity and inferiority in African American students which he considers miseducation, the predecessor of epistemological racism.

Woodson (1933/2017) found that conformity enforced upon African American students in schools translates to their role in sustaining white supremacy. Accordingly, miseducation entails curriculum that does not teach students about their cultural history and hinders their ability to navigate society and social mobility according to their racialized social location (Woodson, 1933/2017). He proposed an education that empowers African American students to use their talents by teaching them an un-whitewashed history and using their environment as a guide to communicate and present the curricula (Woodson, 1933/2017). His goal was to equip students

with a sociohistorical understanding of their present location in order to redress the miseducation from Eurocentric narratives in US k-12 curricula (Woodson, 1933/2017).

With his analysis and the other sources reviewed, miseducation and epistemological racism has occurred for centuries posing a threat to the psyches of African American students. According to Woodson (1933/2017), the white dominated society created mass African American education to manipulate the minds of African Americans to perpetuate their inferiority, stating, “when the oppressors start the large majority of the race in the direction of serving the purposes of their traducers, the task becomes so easy in the years following that they have little trouble with the masses” (p. 193). Thus, I find that epistemological racism and curricula as a racial text impose psychological and social demeanors in African American students that perpetuates adverse race relations, i.e., mental slavery.

The Black Psyche and Racism

While Woodson (1933/2017) addressed the African American experience with racism in education, the remaining four sources of section two focus on African American psychological experiences with racism from a general perspective, hinting to how education is used to instill racial inferiority. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Fanon (1952/2008) argues there needs to be a psychoanalysis of racism to understand the black-white relationship and the effect of colonial racism on the black psyche and identity construction—for Fanon (1952/2008) the term black defines those within the African diaspora of African descent. He presents a clinical psychology study of racism and the experiences of his own as well as black Antilleans from his home in Martinique to demonstrate how racism is imposed on blacks through language, education, and exposure to white society that influence black identity construction (Fanon, 1952/2008). On one

hand, he posits that under colonial racism blacks turn to self-contempt because they have been taught to aspire to whiteness. On the other hand, he posits that racism is imposed on blacks due to white people recognizing what they lack or possess and project these feelings onto blacks to maintain white superiority. He presents his work in a developmental manner, by beginning his study with understanding how language is used to condition blacks into the colonized role, where exposure to and adoption of white language prompts blacks to internalize self-contempt and aspirations to whiteness—recognition and access into the white world. Thus, Fanon’s (1952/2008) psychoanalysis of racism provides an example of the psychological harm engendered from racism and illustrates epistemological racism’s impact on the black psyche through “sociogeny” (p. xv)—the study of man within his society and how society is formed by as well as influences man—,clinical studies that presents qualitative analysis “to explain psychopathologically and philosophically the *being* of the black man” (p. xvii italics original), as well as relates to Au’s (2012) recognition that while knowledge is essential, agency/action is critical as students are influenced by racism but also pushback as the contradictions between Eurocentric narratives and lived experiences present their selves.

The next source to comprehend how racism affects the black psyche is *Black Rage* by William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs (1992). *Black Rage* presents a psychological account of racism that affects African Americans in the US, positing that African American identity and racism have historical roots in slavery that determines African American life and encounters with racism post-slavery. Essentially, Grier and Cobbs (1992) argue that mental disorders, identity concerns, and strong negative emotions African American people experience in US society can be explained and must be examined along the overarching social, political, and economic framework that maintains white supremacy. By analyzing and comparing clients’ childhood and

their present experiences with being African American in the US using qualitative analysis of psychiatrists statements, medical records, and counseling sessions, the authors find that the emotions and mental disorders they experience acknowledge the oppressive nature of a racialized society that continues to exploit and dehumanize African American people (Grier & Cobbs, 1992). Like Fanon (1952/2008), Grier and Cobbs (1992) provide analysis of case studies to uncover the psychological damage of racism on the black psyche. For example, Grier and Cobbs (1992) state, “[t]he black man of today is at one end a psychological continuum which reaches back in time to his enslaved ancestors” (p.25), comparing present experiences with racism as various mechanism of slavery evolved to produce similar feelings and experiences of degradation.

Essentially, Grier and Cobbs (1992) assert that the methods of slavery that instilled subservience within the minds of slaves is present when African Americans attempt to provide for their selves and families in a white dominated society while competing against prescribed stereotypes that have been in place for centuries to thwart their efforts, thus the frustrations of present day experiences lead African Americans to internalize feeling inadequate and succumb to psychological damage from racism. With the end of legally sanctioned overt slavery and the rise of mass education, overt forms of racism that instilled physical and psychological slavocracy social dynamic transitioned to using education and curriculum to sustain black inferiority. Therefore, reading Woodson (1933/2017), Fanon (1952/2008), and Grier and Cobbs (1992) acknowledges that there are psychological consequences that African Americans experience with racism that have origins in slavery and persist within the larger social framework of white supremacy ideology and racism.

Amos Wilson's (1978) *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child* strengthens the connection between Woodson (1933/2017), Fanon (1952/2008), and Grier and Cobbs (1992) by presenting an in-depth investigation of racism's effects on African Americans prenatal through childhood and how the period from prenatal to childhood provides insight into racism's lingering effects into adulthood. As the literature review has demonstrated, racism's effect on the black psyche is linked to the history and evolution of slavery that maintains the white supremacist social framework. Wilson (1978) provides further support connecting slavery, racism, and their influence on the black psyche stating,

Enslavement of black people was not just physical but more importantly it was mental. Blacks suffer from a "slave mentality" which is the result of the most massive and successful behavioral modification and brainwashing program in history. The socialization of black people in slavery and since has very definite and measurable influences on black behavioral and cognitive behavior. (p.9)

It follows that Wilson (1978) provides support for racism, especially epistemological racism, affecting the mental processes that comprise the basis for understanding one's self and behavior as an African American, by uncovering the socialization aspects of racism upon the black psyche. Socialization entails "accommodation to and the assimilation of group expectations, values, and norms," that are influenced by cultural, social, political, and economic factors in order for "the individual to fit a socially engraved perceptive, cognitive and behavioral mold, there by determining how the individual perceives, thinks and behaves in the world" (Wilson, 1978, p.160). Wilson (1978) situates how white supremacy ideology and racism from American culture and society found in Eurocentric curricula influences the black psyche by conditioning

students into a way of being, thinking, and knowing that perpetuates white supremacist prescribed roles.

Regarding the historic nature (and justification through falsehoods) of racism and the effect on the black psyche, *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois (2009) provides a first-hand account of the African American experience in America post-slavery. Through case studies and personal narratives Du Bois (2009) addresses three of the keywords of the study—white supremacy ideology, race ideology, and public education—and succinctly argues that the issue that consumes American society is “the problem of the color line” (p.3). As a racial analysis of African American life, Du Bois (2009) details how society dealt with former slaves and how racism lingering from slavery thwarts African American progress and involvement in society as freedmen. While many of the essays in *The Souls of Black Folk* are not relevant to the literature review, the work in its entirety adds the economic, political, and social context needed to comprehend the depth of white supremacy ideology, race ideology, and white society’s track record to maintain social control over African Americans. In fact, Du Bois (2009) is a primary source to support Watkins (*The White Architects of Black Education*, 2001), Grier and Cobbs (*Black Rage*, 1992), and Wilson (*The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child*, 1978) notion that the oppression of contemporary black America is a consequence of the ideologies and mindsets from America’s slavocracy.

Du Bois (2009) details how white supremacy ideology and race ideology are present through economic, educational, and political disenfranchisement. For example, through his tours of the Black Belt (Georgia and areas of the South where cotton was the primary cash crop), he shares how African Americans experience economic slavery. Economic slavery is the enormous

debt former slaves accrue to replace their former forced free labor, where former slaves continue to labor under a system that benefits their former masters. In other words, economic slavery is the transition from forced free labor to incessant debt. Tied to economic slavery is educational disenfranchisement, which has multiple layers.

The first is the lack of education amongst African Americans that fuels their vulnerability. However, the lack of education is not completely the fault of the freedmen because during slavery it was illegal to educate slaves and with poor to moderate education, a lack of education was most often the cause of white fears and backlash towards educated African Americans (Anderson, 1988). For example, Du Bois (2009) and Anderson (*The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 1988) provide examples of white community members either burning down schoolhouses or denying African Americans land to build schools. Many whites in the south believed that an educated African American contradicted the southern norms of black inferiority and white superiority, where whites saw schools as providing power to African Americans to change their circumstances from serving white interests (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 2009). As Du Bois (2009) notes, many of the African American farmers he came across were either illiterate or unaware of proper pricing for goods.

A poor education often meant that the education available to children came second to helping the adults with farming and supporting the family, and/or lack of educational opportunities (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 2009). A moderate education, if available, was either dismantled by whites who opposed educating black Americans or the academically inclined African Americans left their communities with no return. On the last point regarding epistemological racism, Du Bois (2009) urged that the African American community needed

intellectuals as leaders of the black masses because only they would work in the best interest of the community. However, to reiterate, due to pressures from white society these intellectuals would not be able to fulfill this mission because schools were closed if there was a hint of liberatory education or the intellectuals were no longer able to relate to the masses. While at the time, Du Bois (2009) considered intellectuals those who attended higher education and utilized their knowledge to guide the masses towards liberation, in contemporary times intellectuals include those who possess knowledge, whether formally or informally, of African American histories, intellectualism, and resistance that are well-equipped to lead the masses towards liberation. The key point from Du Bois' (2009) emphasis on intellectuals, is that African American liberation needs intellect of the dynamics of society as well as rapport with the struggles of African Americans to organize the masses and challenge the white supremacist social framework towards a more equitable society.

Regarding political disenfranchisement, Du Bois' (2009) essay "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," critiques Washington's platform of withdrawing from political demands to focus on becoming adept in industry and supporting the national economy. Du Bois (2009) disagreed with Washington's assertion and questioned how one could be successful in industry and economically without the protection of rights through voting. Thus, Du Bois (2009) stressed the importance of political participation to secure representation against legislation that left African Americans in economic, educational, and political duress.

By acknowledging white supremacy ideology and race ideology produces psychological effects that leaves African American labor and existence to the whims of the white race, Du Bois (2009) posits his theory of double-consciousness and explores how the post-slavery economic,

educational, and political disenfranchisement repeats the treatment of slavery that reinforces subservience. On page eight, Du Bois (2009) states,

the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amuse contempt and pity. (p.8)

In fact, double-consciousness reinforced the query into epistemological racism—the intersection of white supremacy ideology and race ideology with curriculum—and the intersections effect on the black psyche. Mental slavery (Woodson 1933/2017) and double-consciousness (Du Bois, 2009) represent the first psychological experiences with epistemological racism. The third psychological experience African Americans encounter with epistemological racism and Eurocentric curricula is Africanization—the adoption of an African centered worldview and awakening one's black conscious (Carruthers, 1994). This final experience occurs as African American students acknowledges their mental slavery through double-consciousness and encounters African epistemologies beyond Eurocentric prescribed narratives (Carruthers, 1994). Woodson (1933/2017), Fanon (1952/2008), Grier and Cobbs (1992), Du Bois (2009), Carruthers (1994), and Wilson (1978) provide the contextual evidence to acknowledge epistemological racism affects the black psyche, by imposing a way of being, thinking, and knowing that influences African American identity construction and social interactions. Therefore, epistemological racism affects the black psyche through three psychological experiences: mental slavery—perpetuating white supremacist prescribed roles, double-consciousness—awareness of

epistemological racism and racialized social location, and Africanization—awakening the black conscious and producing a critical conscious to challenge and redress epistemological racism.

African American Students' Experience with Epistemological Racism and Eurocentric Curriculum

As shown above, the intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum is epistemological racism, affecting the black psyche by imposing ways of being, thinking, and knowing that influences African American students' interactions in and understanding of US society to perpetuate racism through white supremacist prescribed roles. This review has emphasized US public Eurocentric education historically sought social control to sustain a white supremacist social order by distributing sociocultural expectations through a Eurocentric curricula (Apple, 2004; Au, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Watkins, 2001; Woodson, 1933/2017; Yosso, 2002; Zamudio et.al, 2011). Here, I employ CRT in education's method of education experiential narrative to communicate African American students' experience with epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum. To reiterate, I define African American students as the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) culture—"all African American students who have lived in America for any length of time" exposed to Eurocentric curricular narratives that determine "the collective and individual identity negotiations involved in the black experience" (Richardson, 2001, p.198).

Adhering to CRT's principle of intersectionality and anti-essentialism, I recognize the heterogeneousness of African American education and experiences across socioeconomic status and utilize African American students as a social group to focus on the social impact of epistemological racism that encapsulates US Eurocentric curriculum. Thus, I present an analysis

of African American students experience with Eurocentric curricula and epistemological racism, as well as provide an example of the experience by bringing my experiential knowledge to theory for an analysis of epistemological racism's effect on the black psyche through my experience of Africanization—the process of awakening my black conscious; becoming aware of the historical influence of race/racial oppression and present social contradictions and conditions, and mission to disrupt generational racial oppression through self-knowledge and learning African history, intellectualism, and resistance beyond prescribed Eurocentric narratives of society.

For those who do not have the opportunity to form an understanding with Eurocentric curricula alongside African epistemologies of history, intellectualism, and resistance most often begin Africanization—the awakening of the black consciousness—with an identity crisis as one enters double-consciousness—breaking free of mental slavery, seeing the present as a racialized social construct, and viewing the world as oppressed yet exposed to narratives that contradict social realities (Carruthers, 1994; Du Bois, 2009; Shujaa, 1994). Awareness of epistemological racism from Eurocentric curricula leads to a journey of self-discovery and critical consciousness development through knowledge of self in relation to oppressive structures and being autodidactic—self-learning by seeking liberatory forms of education that humanizes the individual from the dehumanized product of Eurocentric education (Carruthers, 1994; Freire, 2001; Mills, 1997; Shujaa, 1994). Comprehending African American students' experiences with Eurocentric curricula entails Freire's (2001) argument for a pedagogy of the oppressed—a humanizing liberatory education through conscientização—the investigation of thematic universe, and his analysis of the banking concept of education, as well as Shujaa's (1994) analysis of the difference between education and schooling for African American students.

Comprehending African American students' experiences with epistemological racism and Eurocentric curricula begins with Freire's (2001) analysis and critique of traditional education, emphasizing that traditional curriculum perpetuates oppression and hegemony. While Freire's (2001) analysis comes from his work in Brazil to counter economic oppression and center how class oppression and preparation is mediated by a curriculum that instills behaviors of complacency, his analysis and critique of traditional education is transferable to racial oppression being taught through traditional education. To counter traditional education and liberate the oppressed he details the ideology of the oppressor and oppressed, and a liberatory education to produce critical consciousness through dialogue with the oppressed and situating the oppressed's conditions within the larger social framework. He terms this liberatory education pedagogy of the oppressed, a "dialogical and problem-posing education" (Freire, 2001, p.40) to produce conscientização that helps the oppressed "perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2001, p.35). Freire (2001) recognizes that the oppressed must see their oppression as a result of dominant social, economic, and political factors that maintains their subservience and dehumanizes them. Once the oppressed acknowledge their plight is a result of the dominant framework, then they can take the necessary steps to liberate their selves as well as their oppressors from various forms of domination and engender humanization for all.

Then, the next use of Freire (2001), is his explanation behind the logic of ideological domination and reproduction found in US Eurocentric curricula through his critique of the banking concept of education, emphasizing a liberatory education instead. The banking concept of education entails teachers presenting information for students to absorb and remember without diverging from prescribed knowledge or personalizing the information for context to inculcate

students to the dominant norms, values, and expectations they are to assume in society (Freire, 2001). For example, Freire (2001) sees the banking concept of education as the facilitator to maintain the status quo stating:

...The more students work at storing deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept passive roles imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.

The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the student's creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor see it transformed. (p.73)

Even though Freire speaks of class/economic oppression, his work is transferrable to explain epistemological racism and its infringement upon the black psyche to maintain racial oppression. The concept and logic behind the banking concept of education provides the theoretical underpinnings as to why k-12 Eurocentric education leaves students to focus on transitioning from grade to grade blind to social influences, then for higher education to disrupt one's sense of self when exposed to diverse narratives.

Finally, Freire's (2001) concept of thematic universe—the “complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values, and challenges in dialectical interaction...found...[within] the human-world relationship” (p.101)—entails the final theory from Freire to comprehend African American students' experience. Thematic universe consists of human epistemology, our system of knowing and interacting with and within society. In terms of epistemological racism and the

banking concept of education, Freire (2001) addresses the disconnect between the oppressed recognizing their oppression as a social construct and the oppressor's construction of reality and the thematic universe in fragments to maintain oppression. When one is experiencing mental slavery from epistemological racism, the banking concept presents knowledge in a fragmented and socially constructed way that fosters a depressed "critical understanding of their [oppressed] reality, apprehending it in fragments which they do not perceive as interacting constituent elements of the whole" (Freire, 2001, p.104). As a result, mental slavery consumes individuals until they are exposed to non-Eurocentric curricula that challenges their current perception of reality, leading to double-consciousness where they see the dialectical interactions and contradictions between their lived experiences and prescribed Eurocentric realities. For this reason, Freire (2001) provides the theoretical context to analyze African American students' experience with Eurocentric curricula and two of the psychological experiences—mental slavery and double-consciousness—of epistemological racism.

IN addition to the theories proposed by Freire (2001), Shujaa's (1994) analysis of the difference between education and schooling for African American students, addresses the purpose and uses of knowledge acquisition formally and informally; highlighting African American students' experience within Eurocentric curriculum to overcome epistemological racism. In "Education and Schooling: You Can Have One Without the Other," Shujaa (1994) contrast schooling and education within the US context, positing the distinction as "fundamental to the transmission, maintenance, and development of an African-centered cultural orientation and identity" (p.14). Shujaa (1994) has found and supports the literature review's recognition that schooling is a mechanism by the dominant society to transmit norms, values, and expectations to sustain the social framework. Whereas, education necessitates generational

knowledge that represents one's cultural "values, aesthetics, and spiritual beliefs" (Shujaa, 1994, p.15). With the difference between schooling and education for African American students, education that presents African centered narratives of history, intellectualism, and resistance to white supremacy produces double-consciousness to recognize the influence of race/racial oppression in US society, and Africanization to challenge epistemological racism and race/racial oppression.

However, as noted earlier, Eurocentric curricula is intent on preserving the white supremacist social order leaving the study of African epistemologies to autodidacticism or self-education. This autodidacticism is sparked to rectify identity crises as one brings together the Eurocentric fragmented reality into a reality that allows one to comprehend their racialized social location (Freire, 2001; Shujaa, 1994). Mills (1997) describes this experience of identity crises and pilgrimage for self-knowledge through autodidacticism as "cognitive resistance to the racially mystificatory aspects of white theory, the painstaking reconstruction of past and present necessary to fill in the crucial gaps and erase the slanders of the globally dominant European worldview" (p.119). Thus, through the arguments and analysis presented by Freire (2001) and Shujaa (1994) it is possible to comprehend how epistemological racism affects the psyche through three psychological experiences: mental slavery, double-consciousness, and Africanization (self-knowledge and self-determination). Next, I present my journey through epistemological racism and the three psychological experiences, and autodidacticism to legitimate the realities of epistemological racism providing experiential knowledge as an example of African American students' experience with and overcoming epistemological racism.

Personal Experience with Epistemological Racism and Eurocentric Curricula: An Example

As has been noted, epistemological racism affects the black psyche through three psychological experiences: mental slavery—perpetuating white supremacist prescribed roles, double-consciousness—awareness of epistemological racism and one’s racialized social location, and Africanization—awakening the black conscious, producing a critical conscious to challenge and redress epistemological racism. In line with CRT in education as my conceptual, methodological, and theoretical framework, I utilize my experiential knowledge with epistemological racism, Eurocentric curriculum, and journey to Africanization to adhere to CRT in education’s use of narratives to legitimate people of color’s experience with racism and acknowledge the reality of racial oppression within education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zamudio et.al, 2011). My journey through Eurocentric education as a low-income, African American single mother exposed me to different curricula throughout my kindergarten through undergraduate journey, where I recognized race as one factor that determines knowledge and encountered the three psychological experiences listed above. Apple (2004) considers these differences in accessible knowledge as either high-status knowledge or technical knowledge, defining high-status knowledge as education that emphasizes critical thinking, decision-making, and exposure to the benefits of higher education. Its opposite, technical knowledge, entails a curriculum that communicates specific behaviors to produce the working-class needed for the US capitalistic unequal society to function (Apple, 2004). Throughout my educational journey, I experienced high-status Afrocentric knowledge, urban high-status knowledge, suburban technical knowledge, and urban technical knowledge.

I have a uniquely intimate relationship with the US k-12 school system, where I utilized my schooling experience to make sense of myself, my childhood/adolescent home life, and transform my circumstances beyond prescribed stereotypes and expectations. My higher education journey provided me with the language, opportunities, and reflective capacities to see the influence of my childhood/adolescence on my present experiences, as well as analyze my journey through education and the wealth of emotions and reactions upon recognizing and later investigating epistemological racism. In fact, hooks (1994) poignantly describes my connection with school and educational journey, when she reflected on her youth stating,

School was the place of ecstasy—pleasure and danger. To be changed by ideas was pure pleasure. But to learn ideas that ran counter to values and beliefs learned at home was to place oneself at risk, to enter the danger zone. Home was a place where I was forced to conform to someone else's image of who and what I should be. School was the place where I could forget that self and, through ideas, reinvent myself. (p.3)

My journey begins with a passion for education, feelings of acceptance at school, feelings of neglect at home, and being shuffled from courtroom to courtroom to determine which parent I should live with. During the turmoil of my formative years, I was exposed to the joy and power of literacy in school, I used these skills to express myself finding solace in reading and writing.

At this stage of my educational journey I was enrolled in what can be described as high-status Afrocentric knowledge. From pre-kindergarten to sixth grade my fellow classmates and I were surrounded by a sea of blackness, from pupil to administrator. Here I was introduced to African American leadership, specifically Eurocentric narratives of Civil Rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. I was taught knowledge is power and to stay in school because my ancestors sacrificed so much for me to encounter that school and its curricula.

These schooling years provided the foundation of my mental slavery through the banking concept, as I was exposed to the benefits of education, Eurocentric narratives of African American history, and being conditioned to the norms, values, and expectations of white society. I assumed white histories were my own as I saw no difference between whiteness and blackness, because my world at this time was majority African American with one to two encounters with white teachers and the late 1990s to early 2000s was a time where American nationalism peaked.

As I progressed in school, my passion for learning grew engendering recognition from my teachers to take part in the city-wide seventh/eight grade accelerated program exams for a joint middle-high school educational experience. Once accepted, I began my journey through urban high-status knowledge, similar to “the New England classical liberal curriculum” (Anderson, 1988, p.28) of post-Civil war African American education. While historically former slaves sought this curriculum for their children to “provid[e] access to the best intellectual traditions of their era and the best means to understanding their [Afro-American post-slavery] own historical development and sociological uniqueness” (Anderson, 1988, p.29), my exposure to this curriculum focused on pursuing higher education to increase my finances beyond minimum wage, not be a change agent for the African American community. For this reason, my experience with urban high-status knowledge from seventh grade through freshman year of high school translates to the second induction of mental slavery and miseducation. A benefit regarding educational attainment but a hinderance as it separated me from my cultural roots and racialized social location. This curriculum was overwhelmingly Eurocentric excluding the month of February where narratives of African American history reflected Eurocentric conceptions and understandings. At this three-year juncture I consumed and assimilated to prescribed social roles,

because this part of my journey was my introduction to high school with societal preparation as its major function.

During my sophomore year of high school, I experienced my third curricular narrative, suburban technical knowledge. As described previously, technical knowledge consists of curriculum that prepares one to fulfill working-class roles and emphasizes behaviors necessary for US unequal capitalistic society to function. No longer exposed to high-status knowledge that highlights creativity, individuality, and critical thinking, I was enrolled in classes that focused on broad explanations and specific directions to follow. However, upon recognizing the differences in rigor and that I completed similar work freshman year, I petitioned fervently to change courses to junior level courses. The shift from urban to suburban and high-status to technical was jarring for one who found much comfort in school. Not only did I find comfort in my schooling experience, but during my teenage years, specifically sophomore year, I experienced a transition within myself where I realized schooling was a part of my identity. This recognition as well as the turmoil of my home life led me on a journey towards parenthood, prompting the next change of curricula.

My stint in suburban technical knowledge was short as I was determined to keep my child and continue my education. Unaware of what to come from my decision, my parents emancipated me and transferred me to an alternative school for pregnant and parenting teens. Here, I was exposed to urban technical knowledge and prescribed expectations and stereotypes of unwed teenage African American mothers. While at this school, as part of its first graduating class, I became engrossed in curriculum that stressed orderliness, attendance, and preparation for the workforce instead of college preparation courses I was accustomed to. In other words, the curriculum prepared us for specific workforce jobs mainly in the medical field and clerical

support, following the assumption at the time that all mothers are to be nurses or office support. While healthcare and clerical positions are necessary for society and beneficial to motherhood, I knew this was not the career path for me.

This school lacked the academic rigor of my previous schooling experiences but provided the much-needed flexibility and adaptability to complete high school as a young mother. My exposure to Eurocentric curricula and transition from grade to grade without exposure to African American narratives of African history, intellectualism, and resistance defines my experience with mental slavery. Hence, while I was in urban technical knowledge being prepared to accept a life of poverty, my passion for learning and previous high-status knowledge prompted me to pursue higher education and defy prescribed stereotypes and expectations of unwed teenage mothers' ability to further their education.

From graduating as valedictorian and leaving the sea of blackness of my public k-11 education for a predominantly white institution of higher education, my psychological experiences of mental slavery was being challenged, shifting towards double-consciousness. Higher education turned the tables, I became one of a handful of African American students and my race and feelings of otherness became visible. The first semester of freshman year was a seemingly smooth transition ending with a 3.23 GPA; despite commuting twenty-four miles to and from school and adjusting to the demands of motherhood. Nonetheless, my perception of my academic abilities changed second semester where I was the only African American student in my Introduction to Ethics course, exposed to tokenism, being the "native informant" (hooks, 1994, p.43), and wondering what was wrong with my brown skin after hearing white students' outrage at the thought of everyone originating from Africa and having blackness in them. That semester I ended my first year of undergrad with a 2.75 GPA, uncertainty about being welcomed

in my classes, and doubting whether I made the right decision to pursue higher education. In a sense, this experience brought mental slavery and miseducation to the forefront. Woodson (1933/2017) describes my experience as the following:

The same educational processes which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other people.

(p.xiii)

Following this encounter, I experienced my first identity crisis as the veil of racism was made visible sparking double-consciousness as I questioned what it meant to be of African descent in the US and tried to comprehend the complexities of racism.

With these daunting questions looming over me, I progressed through my academics constantly switching majors to find answers and a purpose for staying in college. By my third year, Fall 2013, I took my first African American Studies and Constitutional Law courses to begin my journey of self-discovery and supplementing my formal education with autodidacticism. Within this time, I connected with the university's African American community eager to learn my history and prepare to combat the ideal that "Blacks must prove that they can take their place in this world on an equal basis with Whites" (Carruthers, 1994, p.51). The two courses exposed me to curricula and resources that presented African American perspectives of American society, from then on, I purchased books and gathered materials building a library of sources that documented African American history, intellectualism, and resistance to the dominant white society. Hence, my earliest experience with double consciousness began with reflecting on my education prior to undergrad and questioning why I

was taught from Eurocentric perspectives. Feelings of betrayal towards my academic journey at the recognition of information being withheld and feeling lost for I no longer felt connected to America nor my African American brothers and sisters who were engrossed in mental slavery—seeing their oppression as natural instead of a socially constructed consequence of racism—consumed me.

Spring 2014, I continued to develop my double-consciousness, enrolling in African Americans and Education; Women, Gender, and the Law; and African Americans and the Law. Through these courses I dug deeper into the meaning of being African descent in America and the complexities that constricted my k-11 education to Eurocentric narratives. At this point, James Baldwin's quote regarding rage and consciousness eloquently expresses my state of mind; he states: "...to be Negro in this country and be relatively conscious, is to be in a rage almost all the time. So that the first problem is how to control that rage so that it won't destroy you" (Baldwin, Capouya, Hansberry, Hentoff, Hughes, & Kazin, 1961, p.205). My rage at being conscious of racial oppression and epistemological racism without the language yet to analyze how my education was influenced by social factors led me to various outlets for support.

From the Summer of 2014 to Summer 2016 I was full fledged Afrocentric, aware of my double-consciousness and solidifying what I consider my first phase of Africanization. This phase of Africanization entailed my black conscious on the extreme of fanaticism as I sought and struggled to make my path and contribution to African liberation in America. I joined a grassroots organization that focused on political and economic development for self-determination, joining efforts to make a difference that engendered my second identity crisis. Here, I questioned and reflected upon the methods of the organization, my participation, and how I wanted to contribute to society, similar to Malcolm X and his journey through the Nation of

Islam until his departure and platform for human liberation (X & Haley, 1984). By this time, I was nearing the end of my first year of graduate studies trying to make sense of my academic journey. In other words, the rage Baldwin spoke of and reassessing my double-consciousness/Africanization transition, I transformed active participation on the ground level into utilizing my talents for academics to make a difference by studying African American education from my recognition that accessible knowledge is racialized.

In fact, Summer 2016 leading up to my second year of graduate school I began investigating racialized accessible knowledge and Afrocentric curricula. I produced the following projects: “Black Feminism and Black Liberation: Intersectionality to Freedom.” “Chicago School of Liberation,” and “African Centered Education as a Defense Against the Prison Industrial Complex;” each focused on using African centered education to help the masses of African Americans—“members of the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) culture,” described by Richardson (2001) as “all African American[s]...who have lived in America for any length of time” exposed to Eurocentric curricular narratives that determine “the collective and individual identity negotiations involved in the black experience” (p. 198)—transition away from mental slavery towards Africanization. Through the projects of Summer 2016, I was able to transition from double-consciousness to the purpose of Africanization—a mission to disrupt generational racial oppression through self-knowledge and learning African history, intellectualism, and resistance beyond Eurocentric prescribed narratives of society. Within this second phase of Africanization, I found an outlet for my rage and my place in the fight for liberation. From Autumn 2016 to Summer 2018 I strengthened my knowledgebase of African history, intellectualism, and resistance; education, society, curriculum theory, and

identity construction that led me on my thesis journey investigating white supremacy ideology within US Eurocentric public curricula.

While the five years of unlearning, relearning, shifting paradigms, and finding my voice—supplementing my formal education with autodidacticism and knowledge of self—laid the foundation for this literature review, this present phase of Africanization unearths a lot of pain that comes from critical reflection of myself, my racialized social location, the dominant framework of white supremacy, and the liberatory as well as oppressive power of education (Carruthers, 1994; Gordon, 1994; hooks, 1994; Shujaa, 1994). The outcome of this pain is analyzing and synthesizing sources for contextual evidence of epistemological racism while acknowledging and processing the emotions associated with experiencing epistemological racism. My journey is an example of the countless others who, whether formally or informally educated, have awakened to the phenomenon of epistemological racism this literature review has analyzed.

In conclusion, employing CRT in education to acknowledge US public education's sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curricula as epistemological racism laid the foundation for a better understanding of ideologies transmitted through a Eurocentric curriculum and how epistemological racism affects African American students' psyche perpetuating and challenging the status quo. In sum, section two analyzed three psychological experiences: mental slavery, double-consciousness, and Africanization to investigate how Eurocentric curricula and epistemological racism maintains a slavocracy social order. I presented the theoretical underpinnings of epistemological racism's effect on the black psyche as well as provided an example of African American students' experience with epistemological racism and the journey to rectify the lingering consequences of epistemological racism through my

narrative. While the work so far has demonstrated US public education as instilling white supremacist expectations, there have been efforts to challenge Eurocentric curricula, create a critical consciousness within students, and redress the negative consequences of epistemological racism which will be discussed in the following section.

Section 3: Critical Race Theory in Education and Critical Pedagogy

Section three answers the third question, how can CRT in education and critical pedagogy aid African American students in comprehending their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society. Thus far, this literature review has outlined the intersection between white supremacy ideology and curricula as a dialectical relationship between education and society through epistemological racism to maintain the status quo between whites and nonwhites. I have also addressed the effects of epistemological racism on the African American students' psyches suggesting epistemological racism imposes a way of being, thinking, and knowing that influences African American identity construction and social interactions perpetuating and challenging the status quo through three psychological experiences: mental slavery, double-consciousness, and Africanization. Section three explores educators' attempts to challenge Eurocentric curricula and prepare African American students to understand and navigate society through their racialized sociohistorical identities and locations. In what follows, I focus on how a critical education can prevent/alleviate the negative psychological experiences produced by epistemological racism by exploring CRT in education and two other critical pedagogies to awaken the black conscious and produce change agents.

African American Education Post-Slavery

James D. Anderson's (1988) *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, presents a riveting analysis of African American education that acknowledges former slaves' determination

to educate their selves and use literacy to transform their lives from racial oppression to newly freedmen, as well as addresses the ideologies of white supremacist who sought to thwart former slaves educational pursuits and utilize African American education to maintain African American labor/existence towards white interests. Anderson (1988) is a vital source for comprehending epistemological racism because he provides a historical investigation of African American education that explains the origins of white supremacist Eurocentric curricula that perpetuates African American inferiority and white superiority.

He documents African American education under African American control utilizing “New England classical liberal curriculum” (Anderson, 1988, p.28) to prepare black students to use a robust liberal arts education to assume the role of liberators of African Americans from racial oppression and become change agents. He also thoroughly documents the demise of African American control of education by the dominant white society’s political, economic, and social power to adopt the Hampton Industrial Education Model relegating African American education as preparation to accept racial oppression and voluntarily partake in prescribed roles of inferiority. Altogether, Anderson (1988) provides contextual evidence to analyze three aspects of epistemological racism within US Eurocentric curricula: (1) defining and determining the type of education that prepares students for a post-slavery white supremacist society, (2) acknowledge that the dominant Eurocentric curricula is working according to the white architects of African American education’s intent on maintaining slavocracy social relations as an example of education and interest convergence theory, and (3) provide evidence that African American education under African American control is necessary to produce a critical consciousness within the African American community to challenge epistemological racism and aid African Americans in comprehending their racialized social location. Thus, Anderson (1988) situates the

following critical pedagogies and their ability to aid African American students within the larger sociohistorical tradition of critical education that transforms experiences of epistemological racism and racial oppression.

Epistemological Racism and Critical Pedagogy

Recognizing the power of education in her biography, Assata Shamir (2001) poignantly states: “No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free” (p.181). As this literature review demonstrated, US Eurocentric curriculum is infused with white supremacy ideologies prompting epistemological racism that influences African American students’ ways of being, thinking, and knowing to perpetuate white supremacist prescribed roles. For this reason, in a diverse society with unequal power the only way for the dominant white culture to maintain its power is to provide curricular narratives that reinforce white superiority and non-white inferiority (Scheurich & Young, 1997). Thus, the curricular narratives taught to marginalized communities have lingering effects on individuals and society. Many scholars such as Paulo Freire, Carter G. Woodson, Molefi Asante, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Daniel Solórzano, and Tara J. Yosso, to name a few, have critiqued the dominant Eurocentric narrative and studied/created pedagogies to challenge and redress the harmful effects of Eurocentric curricula producing a critical consciousness. This section provides an analysis of critical pedagogies—African centered, CRT in education’s critical race curriculum, and culturally relevant—and their intersection with epistemological racism to answer the third and final question of the review: how can CRT in education and critical pedagogy aid African American students in comprehending their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society? The first two critical pedagogies—African centered and critical race curriculum—focus on

curricular narratives and epistemologies; and the last critical pedagogy—culturally relevant—focuses on teachers and how they communicate curricular narratives and epistemologies.

Critical pedagogy investigates power relations within education and society to address educational disparities, whose interests are being served, and presents ways to counter hegemony and oppression found within education (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). It is comprised of three theories: social reproduction—schools prepare students for the dominant social framework, cultural reproduction—schools distribute dominant cultural norms and values, and resistance—students and teachers have a dialectical relationship with dominant narratives; where they are influenced by dominant narratives while also challenging those narratives (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). In short, critical pedagogy analyzes education and society’s dialectical power dynamics to sustain and transform educational inequities. The first pedagogy, African centered curriculum, has a long tradition within the African American community predating critical pedagogy as a research field (Anderson, 1988; Carruthers, 1994; Jennings & Lynn, 2005). As a critical pedagogy, African centered curriculum is “an approach to educating Black children that requires educators to ideologically ‘center’ themselves on the cultural past, present, and future of African people” (Shockley & Frederick, 2010, p.1215) instead of Eurocentric constructions of knowledge that promotes African American inferiority.

Generally, African centered curriculum entails African American control of curricular narratives, and specifically comprises African cultural values, views, histories, and epistemologies that legitimate African (beginning with Egyptian/Kemetic, and Nubian) knowledge production and social contributions (Abdi, 2006; Asante, 1991; Carruthers, 1994; Gordon, 1994; Marks & Tonso, 2006; Shockley & Frederick, 2010). African centered curriculum intersects with epistemological racism as a counter to hegemonic narratives of African American

inferiority and white superiority, as well as debunking the myth that Africa's and African American culture and existence begins with slavery (Abdi, 2006; Asante, 1991). As students become connected/reconnected to their African cultural values, views, and histories students gain empowerment, self-knowledge, and a critical conscious necessary to challenge and disrupt racial oppression. In fact, African centered pedagogy prevents/alleviates mental slavery, providing the heuristic tools to transition from double-consciousness to Africanization as well as diminishes the pain of paradigm shifts between Eurocentric epistemologies and Afrocentric epistemologies within the process.

While African centered curriculum utilizes African epistemologies to challenge and redress educational inequities from epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum, the next critical pedagogy, critical race pedagogy, uses race as an analytical tool to address racial oppression within US racialized education and society. Yosso (2002), "Towards a Critical Race Curriculum," provides an CRT analysis of racism within US curricular structures, processes, and discourses finding that the traditional curriculum is influenced by racism to determine what knowledge is legitimate and made accessible perpetuating white standards. According to Yosso (2002), "[a] critical race curriculum exposes the white privilege supported by traditional curriculum structures and challenges schools to dismantle them" (p.93). It follows that critical race curriculum has four characteristics in line with CRT found in the introduction. The first characteristic recognizes the pervasiveness of racism within education and society as institutional racism, identifying the system of education reflects the racialized framework and hierarchy that maintains educational disparities between black and white students (Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Yosso, 2002).

Next, critical race curriculum emphasizes racialized power dynamics within schools that influence curricular structures, processes, and discourses reinforcing white superiority and black inferiority regarding knowledge production and social contributions (Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Yosso, 2002). The third characteristic, reflexivity, includes “exploration of one’s ‘place’ within a stratified society...to illuminate oppressive structures in society” (Jennings & Lynn, 2005, p.27). To put it another way, reflexivity corresponds to CRT and CRT in education’s use of narratives and counter storytelling to legitimate students and teachers of color perspectives of racial oppression within US education and larger social framework (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016 a & b; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Lynn, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zamudio et.al, 2011). Lastly, critical race curriculum requires “an explicitly liberatory form of both teaching and learning” (Jennings & Lynn, 2005, p.28). Essentially critical race curriculum utilizes race to deconstruct racial oppression within education and society to produce change agents that transforms schooling as a mechanism of oppression and social hegemonic reproduction into liberating and anti-oppressive education (Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Yosso, 2002). Therefore, critical race curriculum intersects with epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum by unmasking and challenging white supremacy ideologies that would produce mental slavery in order to produce double-consciousness—acknowledging one’s racialized social location—and Africanization—an awakened black conscious to the influence of race/racial oppression and a critical conscious to disrupt race/racial oppression.

Exposure to African centered and critical race curriculum are beneficial curricular narratives and epistemologies to aid African American students’ comprehension of their racialized social location, their interactions in and understanding of US society, as well as

redress/prevent mental slavery from epistemological racism. However, a change in curricular narrative also depends on how it is communicated and taught to students. Thus, the final critical pedagogy to aid African American students under review is culturally relevant pedagogy. Unlike the previous critical pedagogies' focus on curricular narratives and epistemologies, culturally relevant pedagogies focus on teachers' interactions with students, how they communicate cultural knowledge, and their dispositions regarding student academic ability and classroom management expectations (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally relevant pedagogies involve teachers' use of cultural referents alongside dominant curricular narrative demonstrating African American cultural contributions, "not merely [as] vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p.18). For this reason, African centered and critical race curricula are found in culturally relevant pedagogies as Ladson-Billings (1994) considers the objective of "culturally relevant teaching is to assist in the development of a 'relevant black personality' that allows African American students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and African American culture" (p.17).

In other words, culturally relevant pedagogy redirects traditional education from miseducating students by reconnecting educational aspirations to community development and values (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Woodson, 1933/2017). Culturally relevant pedagogy intersects with epistemological racism and Eurocentric curricula by challenging and transforming African American students experience with teachers who perpetuate stereotypes of African American intellectual inferiority into an educational experience that fosters double-consciousness and Africanization (Carruthers, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Essentially, culturally relevant pedagogy entails teachers' awareness of epistemological racism and students' as well as their own racialized social location to awaken the black conscious through African history,

intellectualism, and resistance within US society. As a result, students gain a critical consciousness that aids their comprehension of their racialized social location and their interactions in and understanding of US society.

In conclusion, while African centered curriculum, critical race curriculum, and culturally relevant pedagogy are not panaceas to prepare black youth for a white supremacist society, they are useful critical pedagogies that highlight racial realities within education and society, and are capable of producing a critical conscious to redress/prevent experiences of mental slavery from epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum. Examples of curriculum and pedagogy to produce Africanization through African Centered curriculum, critical race curriculum, and culturally relevant pedagogy can be found in *Teaching for Black Lives* (2018), this is a textbook that presents “critical perspectives on the role of schools in perpetuating anti-Blackness” (p.12) as well as offers examples of curricular narratives, teaching practices, and policies that center the lived experiences of African American students and how race is communicated through curriculum.

Teaching for Black Lives (2018) utilizes mainstream narratives of Reconstruction, slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Panther Party to name a few examples, critiques how white supremacy influences how these topics portray African Americans, then counters these narratives through lessons that highlight African American perspectives and contribution demonstrating African American agency and autonomy in society, essentially counteracting prescribed white supremacist roles. While this work presents examples of critical pedagogies within and outside of schools, with the theory of interest convergence—avenues for racial justice limited to ensure white dominance—many critical pedagogies are found outside of

mainstream public education, in schools and communities that provide opportunities for cultural knowledge and interpersonal and cross-racial knowledge production. In fact, other examples of opportunities to produce a critical conscious within African American students entails Rites of Passage Programs, socially conscious parents/family members, social media outlets that provide access to links, resources, and videos for students to take up autodidacticism as they progress in their educational pursuits.

Section 4: Conclusion

This literature review sought a better understanding of racial ideologies within US Eurocentric curriculum and how this curriculum perpetuates a white supremacist social framework by influencing African American students' interactions in and understanding of US society. Utilizing critical race theory (CRT) in education as the theoretical, methodological, and conceptual framework, I presented literature to investigate the complex and contextual comprehension of ideology, race/ethnicity, the school, society, and curricula; as well as how these ideologies and institutions intersect to create and foster intellectual disadvantages and the lack of self-knowledge among African American students, families, and communities. The review addressed three questions: how does white supremacy intersect with Eurocentric curriculum, how does the intersection (epistemological racism) affect the psyche of African American students, and how can CRT in education and critical pedagogy aid African American students in comprehending their social identity and their interactions in and understanding of US society?

Section one addressed the first question in three levels to address the connection between education and society; white supremacy ideology and racism in US society; and white supremacy ideology's intersection with Eurocentric curriculum. This section provided the foundation to comprehend ideologies within curricula and how ideologies reflect the social framework. As the

foundation, the tri-level answer to how does white supremacy ideology intersect with Eurocentric curriculum postulates education and society's complex dialectical relationship that perpetuates the sociohistorical intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum to maintain the slavocracy social relations between African American and white people in the US through epistemological racism. Thus, the intersection of white supremacy ideology and curriculum is epistemological racism.

Section two addressed the intersection's effect on the black psyche, answering the second question of the review: how does epistemological racism affect the black psyche? I reviewed Woodson (1933/2017), Fanon (1952/2008), Grier and Cobbs (1992), Wilson (1978), and Du Bois (2009) to acknowledge racism's effects on the black psyche. Along with, theories from Freire (2001) and Shujaa (1994) to present the theoretical underpinnings of epistemological racism and African American students' psychological experiences, then I provided my educational narrative as an example of African American student's experience with Eurocentric curriculum and epistemological racism, as well as synthesized theory with experiential knowledge. Building off the literature reviewed in section one and the theories presented in section two, I answered the second question suggesting epistemological racism from Eurocentric curriculum affects the black psyche through three psychological experiences: mental slavery—perpetuating white supremacist prescribed roles, double-consciousness—awareness of epistemological racism and racialized social location, and Africanization—awakening the black conscious and producing a critical conscious to challenge and redress epistemological racism.

Section three focused on educators' attempts to challenge Eurocentric curriculum and epistemological racism, answering the third question of the review: how can CRT in education and critical pedagogy aid black students in comprehending their social identities and their interactions

in and understanding of US society? I reviewed African centered education, CRT in education's critical race curriculum, and culturally relevant pedagogy and their intersection with epistemological racism to focus on how a critical education can prevent/alleviate mental slavery and produce double-consciousness and Africanization. Essentially, section three centered the liberatory power of non-Eurocentric curriculum to engender a critical conscious that helps students understand and navigate a white supremacist society through their racialized social location by centering African epistemologies of culture, history, intellectualism, and resistance beyond Eurocentric prescribed narratives.

Thus, the literature review provided an analysis of epistemological racism and psychological experiences through contextual evidence that investigated the complex web of ideology, race/ethnicity, the school, society, and curricula; and how these ideologies and institutions intersect to create and foster intellectual disadvantages and the lack of self-knowledge among African American students, families, and communities. In fact, the literature review provides the foundation for future research into school's involvement with epistemological racism as well as analyzing how political institutions (such as schools) and educational policies and practices affect racial identities and political ideologies that I hope to address in my later doctoral studies. With this in mind, as well as Shakur's (2001) recognition that this form of liberatory education will not be given within a white supremacist framework, the theory of interest convergence—African American progress occurs if/when there is a benefit to or little to no disruption of the white supremacist framework—presents the impetus for why further research within epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum is needed as white students are also affected psychically by epistemological racism.

For example, analyzing the psychological experiences of African American students from epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum only addresses one-side of the African American-white white supremacist social framework. According to Asante (1991), Blau (2003), Au, Brown, and Calderón (2016), Brown and Keffrelyn (2015), and DiAngelo (2018) and Gambrell (2017) white students are also affected by epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum. For a Eurocentric curriculum instills pseudo-superiority that sustains white dominance and white fragility when the status quo is challenged. Essentially, how curriculum communicates race socializes students into the white supremacist social framework and influences psychological experiences: mental slavery, double-consciousness, and Africanization in African American students and pseudo-superiority and white fragility for white students. Altogether, further research is needed to investigate epistemological racism and Eurocentric curriculum to acknowledge that while a Eurocentric curriculum is detrimental to African American students as it maintains subservience to whites, white students are also affected for Eurocentric curriculum detaches them from their sociohistorical position that secures their present privilege and role in perpetuating racism. In sum, with further researcher it is possible to acknowledge how the critical pedagogies discussed above can transition society away from interest convergence to racial progress that benefits all, as a critical conscious is needed for African American and white students to transform mindsets and behaviors that maintain white supremacy into mindsets that center social justice.

Glossary

Cultural Racism- in a diverse multicultural society where one race's cultural history dominates acting as the standard that determines epistemologies, norms, and values (Franklin, 1999; Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly, 2006).

Individual Racism- believing one's race is dominant over others and behaves prejudicially towards races considered below his/hers (Franklin, 1999; Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly, 2006).

Institutional Racism- “patterns, procedures, practices, and policies that operate within social institutions so as to consistently penalize, disadvantage, and exploit individuals who are members of nonwhite racial/ethnic groups” (Better, 2008, p.11).

Interpersonal Racism- “the experience of being treated unfairly due to being Indigenous (Paradies & Cunningham, 2009, p.550).

Structural Racism- “a social, economic, and political system built on the belief that race is real” (Goodman, Moses, & Jones, 2012, p.147) where the dominant white race's views and beliefs are prioritized over and discriminates people of color through institutions that sustain society.

Systemic Racism- the system of racism that entails “the dominant racial hierarchy, comprehensive white racial framing, individual and collective discrimination, social reproduction of racial-material inequalities, and racist institutions integral to white domination of American of color” (Feagin & Bennefield, 2014, p.7).

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