

Introduction:
From Cooper and Woodson to Schools Today
BLM and American Schools

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Black. Lives. Matter.

In the spring of 2013, a high school student, Rochelle,¹ was recalling her reaction to hearing Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit” for the first time with her grandmother. In my role as a teacher-researcher, I was thinking with students of color about how they negotiated difficult contexts within their overwhelmingly white² and conservative high school. In the interview, Rochelle noted she felt Black students were the metaphorical “strange fruit of the school.” She explained that her white peers, teachers, and administrators did not “care if [Black students] rot or if they die . . . as long as they are out of the way.” I left the interview thinking about all the ways that this young person came to see herself as the “bitter crop” of schools.

As time passed after the study’s conclusion, I remained haunted by Rochelle’s words, often finding myself reflecting on them over the years. Specifically, I am haunted because I know her story does not exist in isolation. It is part of an assemblage on which past, present, and future iterations of violence de- and reterritorialize (Wozolek, 2021). I have heard her words echoed in narratives from students across contexts who have articulated similar perspectives on the dehumanization they experienced in schooling. Like many scholars and activists, I remain troubled knowing

that every day in school, children are treated as if their voices, perspectives, and lives are disposable. Since 2013, I have remained in contact via social media with Rochelle and several other participants who wished to stay in touch. As I observe the next stages in their lives, I remain intimately aware that the anti-Black norms they described during our time together have spilled from classrooms and into communities, impacting them along the way.

For those who work with Black youth in schools or consider the impact of schooling on Black ways of being, knowing, and doing, Rochelle's reflection about being the strange fruit of the school, while enough to make one's blood boil (Du Bois, 1903), is often not surprising. After all, there are long-standing dialogues stemming from scholars across African American intellectual traditions (e.g., Bethune, 1938; Cooper, 1892; Du Bois, 1903; Woodson, 1933) that discuss the constant circulation of racism between schools and communities. Or, as Woodson (1933) more pointedly wrote, "There would be no lynching if it did not start in the schoolroom" (p. 3). More recently, contemporary scholars across fields have theorized what Rochelle expressed in the interview as a kind of onto-epistemological death for Black and Brown youth that is too often engendered and maintained in schools (e.g., Jocson et al., 2020; Morris, 2016; Noguera & Leslie, 2014).

The Black Lives Matter movement can be thought of as a societal response to the same anti-Blackness that students like Rochelle—and, more broadly, her family and intersecting communities—continue to experience both in and outside of educational contexts. As I will discuss later, while the overarching BLM movement is intimately connected to police brutality, the purpose of this book is to think critically about how such violence is tangled up in systems of schooling (Nespor, 1997) while considering the curricular implications of what it would mean for Black Lives to *actually* matter in schools.

Again, the idea of honoring Black lives in systems of schooling is certainly not new. Educators like Mary McLeod Bethune, Fanny Jackson Coppin, Susie King Taylor, Carter G. Woodson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Bettina Love, Crystal Laura, Denisha Jones and Jesse Hagopian, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and countless others have examined the theoretical and practical implications of Black Lives as they intersect with educational contexts. This book is meant to add to those voices with an emphasis on curriculum theory. This text comes at a time when teacher education programs across the United States have prioritized a focus on neoliberal practices

over curriculum theory for teacher candidates (Pugach et al., 2020). Yet, as I will discuss later in this chapter, curriculum theory is not only inclusive of instruction and the official knowledge of schooling (Apple, 2014) but it also critically considers all the ways that learning happens. Curriculum theory is therefore imminently complex; braiding theoretical lenses and disciplines to think about educational contexts and systems. Woven into teacher education programs not as a singular “curriculum” but as the polyvocal “curricula,” curriculum theory seeks to critically engage with ways of being, knowing, and doing as they spring from (or die out because of) schools (Berry & Stovall, 2013).

The authors pose questions like: What would it mean for *all* teachers to actively combat white supremacy on a daily basis in schools? What would it mean for schools to consider—and to intentionally create spaces for—the multiplicity of “being” within Black communities? What do city spaces offer as sites of curriculum? What is the curriculum that communities offer to us as academics? Steeped in curriculum theory and other critical fields of education, the contributors in this volume consider the many ways we learn from the presences and absences of Black lives across forms of curriculum—formal, enacted, hidden, and null—and the way that such lessons have impacted sociopolitical and cultural norms and values.

In light of the multiple and ongoing forms of violence against Black bodies and communities, this book is dedicated to the memory of those whose lives were cut short, to those whose ways of being, knowing, and doing have been irrevocably changed, and to those whose young lives will continue to be shifted in explicit and implicit ways through white supremacy. First and foremost, the work presented in this volume has been curated to honor Black experiences across systems of schooling, and to attend to the relationship between schools and communities. Additionally, honoring the significance of coalition building, this book recognizes those who live as accomplices (e.g., Love, 2019)—those who engage in equity and access across contexts to promote Black excellence, and to interrupt anti-Blackness that is sociopolitically and culturally normalized in the United States and around the globe.

Scholars such as Audre Lorde (1984), Monique Morris (2016), Beverly Tatum (1997), Carter G. Woodson (1933), and others have explored the “how,” “what,” and “where” learning takes places as an always already complex assemblage of spaces, places, events, and affects. Rather than a linear line between contexts, the rest of this introduction tacks back and forth between schools, communities, and the content of this book.

Much like the chapters included in this book that move between the curriculum, classrooms, personal experiences, and broader sociocultural narratives, this introduction honors the many ways the curricula speak, leak (Helfenbein, 2010) and spill (Gumbs, 2016) across contexts. I will begin by describing my positionality as it is related to how this book has taken shape over time.

Coming into Being

All books have their own origins stories. The first iteration of this book was a newsletter that was published by the Curriculum Studies Division (Division B) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). At that time, I was a graduate student who served as the division's newsletter editor. I was asked by Vice President Ming Fang He to craft a response to the Charleston Church shootings that occurred on June 17, 2015, taking the lives of nine African American congregants at the hands of a white supremacist. While I was honored to undertake such an important task at an early stage in my career, I felt uneasy. As a first-generation, queer, biracial woman with Indian roots, I certainly understand the devastating impact of colonization. I identify as a queer Brown person who grew up in an overwhelmingly white and straight town in the Midwest. I am therefore no stranger to the everyday racisms and antiques bias that were likely behind the reasons my white neighbors chained me to a tree and left there for hours at a young age (Wozolek, 2021).

I also recognize that while my personal experiences with racism might be similar in kind to those of my Black peers, they are ultimately different in critical ways that should not be conflated or overlooked. With this in mind, and in the spirit of coalition politics, both the original newsletter and this volume foreground the voices and perspectives of those who have experienced the vitriol of anti-Black violence personally; be it sociopolitically, culturally, physically, emotionally, institutionally, or across the many other ways that such violence pervades our society. It also includes the perspectives of scholars like me who work as accomplices to the Black Lives Matter movement, particularly as it resonates with and against systems of schooling.

Since the inception of this book, there have been multiple attacks on people of color carried out by white extremists and at the hands of police who purport to "serve and protect" all United States citizens. One

of the difficulties in editing a volume like this is that the sociopolitical and historical context of the United States means that there is always “one more” event that could, and should, be included as examples of why Black Lives should be honored, recognized, and respected everywhere—from the curricula in schools to every single community across the nation. The *Washington Post*, for example, reports over 5,000 fatal police shootings by on-duty police officers across the United States since 2015, when the first iteration of this text was released. In the past year alone, there have been 950 fatal police shootings (*Washington Post*, 2021). Within these troubling numbers, Black Americans are killed by police at more than twice the rate of white Americans (Hemenway et al., 2019). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States witnessed the murder of George Floyd and a backlash from conservatives on the inclusion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in classrooms. Needless to say, an attention to how, what, and when schools teach about Black lives is important. This is not only true when considering the significant contributions that Black people have made around the globe that resonates through every discipline taught in school but, as Critical Race theorists have explored, it is critical when exploring how racism is sociohistorically enmeshed with the very fabric of the United States. A critical attention to both Black excellence and the tenets of CRT as it related to historical and contemporary lessons taught in schools continues to be of utmost importance in interrupting various forms of violence—from police brutality, to mass shootings, to the silencing of Black voices, histories, and perspectives—that continue to be normalized across spaces in the United States.

In the original version of this introduction, I had included several examples of police violence and mass shootings where communities of color were targeted. However, given the collective trauma experienced by witnessing the 9 minutes and 29 seconds of George Floyd’s murder, and as forms of media continuously air other atrocities that are in a similar vein to Floyd’s murder, I reconsidered these examples. While I refer to these events, rather than describe them in great detail, I have left citations available in the references for readers to explore on their own. Borrowing from Rochelle, I recognize that some of the work included in this book can be triggering enough without recounting the many ways that too often Black people become the strange fruit of, in, and through schools and communities. To better contextualize this work, this chapter will now turn to the national and global significance of the Black Lives Matter movement.

#BlackLivesMatter across Contexts

In the African American intellectual traditions, the image of fire has often been used to symbolize aggression carried out by white supremacists against people of color (e.g., Baldwin, 1963; Truth, 1850), and as a general metaphor for the state of the nation within these violent interactions (e.g., Cooper, 1892; Douglass, 1855; Garvey, 1922; Woodson, 1933). In our contemporary context, cities burning from uprisings in places like Ferguson, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis, mirror the literal and metaphorical fires explored by educational ancestors. As Baldwin (1963) argued, these fires burn as a symbol of the necessary life-and-community-saving changes that must happen to ensure equity and access, but more pressing in an era when white supremacy is again on the rise, the necessity of basic human rights for all citizens. While these scenes might evoke a sense of much needed urgency and attention, it is important to remember that the desire to rise against violence is not new in the United States. For example, the genocide of Indigenous people and cultures laid the groundwork for the normalization of trafficking and enslaving people, for eugenics, and for the unabated murders of Black and Brown people (Dunbar-Ortiz & Gilio-Whitaker, 2016). In short, the United States is a country founded on the bedrock of oppression and violence against Black and Indigenous people, and People of Color.

Given the historical and contemporary iterations of violence that are central to white supremacy, it is not surprising that Black Lives Matter (BLM) is simply the most recent example of sociopolitical movements aimed at dismantling oppressive structures across the country. BLM was started in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. This movement was sparked as a direct response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who murdered Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African American high school student on February 26, 2012. Martin was unarmed and simply visiting relatives in Zimmerman's gated community. Zimmerman's acquittal understandably raised tensions across the country and the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter quickly trended on social media. BLM continued to develop when in 2014 Michael Brown, another unarmed Black man, was murdered by the Ferguson police. Brown's death became another watershed moment in the movement, with Black Lives Matter chapters popping up across the country (Jones & Hagopian, 2020; Taylor, 2016). Since these early roots took hold, the movement has become internationally recog-

nized as an “ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systemically and intentionally targeted for demise” (Black Lives Matter, 2020, n.p.).

Although Black death continued to be normalized, with cases of police brutality continuing well after BLM chapters became established, the murder of George Floyd was yet another defining moment in the movement. The public lynching of Mr. Floyd sparked protests across the nation in the summer of 2020, with activists calling for legal and policing reforms that would impact several sociopolitical systems, including education. A few months prior to Floyd’s death, Nikole Hannah-Jones’s “1619 Project” was published by the *New York Times*. This project aimed to “reframe the country’s history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contribution of Black Americans at the very center of the United States’ national narrative” (Hannah-Jones, 2019, n.p.). Although Hannah-Jones and the *New York Times* faced backlash from this project (with Hannah-Jones eventually being denied tenure from the University of North Carolina and finding an academic home at Howard University), the project itself generated curricular questions in schools by asking when Black voices emerge, and in what light, through the curriculum. The murder of George Floyd, along with the publication of “The 1619 Project,” became important catalysts for the exploration of Black narratives (or the lack thereof) in schools.

In September 2020, amid BLM protests after Floyd’s murder, the Trump administration launched an assault directly on Critical Race Theory. Specifically, in a series of tweets and through an executive order, Trump banned federal contractors from conducting racial sensitivity training, emphasizing that such work indoctrinates “government employees with divisive and harmful sex-and race-based ideologies.” Trump tweeted that CRT and antiracist training was “divisive, un-American propaganda.” Missing the fact that any nation’s history with racism is significant in contemporary norms, and the fact that citizens of the United States are not living in a postracial utopia, the Trump administration saw the banning of CRT as a way to “defend the virtue of America’s heroes, and the nobility of the American character.” The impact of the Trump administration’s ban on CRT has significantly impacted schools, with districts across the country banning any dialogue that might relate to Critical Race Theory from the curriculum. One might argue that the current moment in the BLM movement is a fight for a formal curriculum that includes an accurate representation of the nation’s history with racism.

Finally, it is significant to note that Black liberation movements in the United States have been central in creating space for Black people and communities against oppressive ideologies and violence. It is also important to recognize that such movements have historically been disproportionate in that they overwhelmingly carved out space mostly for straight, cisgender men—leaving women and queer people either absent from or in the background of the movement (Garza, 2014; Taylor, 2016). BLM activists have attended to this disparity, working to create more inclusive spaces and to honor Black experiences across ways of being, knowing, and doing, both in and outside of the cis-hetero patriarchy. Alicia Garza, one of the cofounders, openly identifies as queer and, along with her cofounders, has argued for the necessary inclusion of voices across the Black experience. As Ray Charles (1993) once sang, “None of us are free if one of us is chained.”

The Black Lives Matter movement has been significant in resisting and refusing deadly oppressions while affirming the significance of Black communities across historical and contemporary events in the United States (Hannah-Jones, 2019; Ransbury, 2018). While Black Lives Matter as a movement is relatively new, its ideologies have been central to the work of antiracist and abolitionist educators who actively resist exclusionary systems of schooling (Morris, 2016; Nespore, 1997). For example, the journal *Theory, Research, and Action in Urban Education* (TRAUE), put together a special issue on #BlackLivesMatter committed to sparking a dialogue across educational experiences for students, educators, scholars, administrators, and community organizers (Menjivar, Vogel, Laksimi-Morrow, & Robinson, 2017). In addition, there are several scholars who have argued that schools and systems of schooling are essential in the resistance and refusal of sociopolitically normalized racism (e.g., Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016; Gordon, 1993; Howard, 2019; Huckaby, 2019; Love, 2019; Pinar, 1991). Following this call to action by scholars, this chapter will now attend specifically to schools and curricula before thinking about the contributions of each chapter.

The Curriculum: The Being and Doing of Black Lives in School

The forms of curriculum can be envisioned as a gordian knot—an impossibly entwined set of knowledges, ontologies, and actions that happen in,

through, and between educational spaces and places. While scholars might momentarily attend to one form of curriculum by falsely bracketing it from the others, the sticky, messy nature of schooling almost demands that it be quickly folded back into the rest of the curricular assemblage. Yet, there is a danger in falsely bracketing any form of curriculum without recognizing its impossibly entwined nature with other forms of curriculum. That is, by assuming that the formal curriculum is “the” curriculum, it easily allows educational stakeholders to be self-congratulatory about what is taught (see, for example, the idea that the nation’s virtue must be defended by silencing a CRT curricular lens), while releasing educators from the responsibility engaging students with difficult histories with race, genders, disabilities, and the like that are central to current sociocultural ideologies. An attention to only the formal curriculum allows people to overlook oppression through the practice of silencing while ignoring the many places that learning happens in schools in ways that only reinforces oppressive norms and values. This book, much like the forms of curriculum, remains an entangled mess, asking the reader to imagine curricular possibilities, challenges, and oppressions within the assemblage that is curriculum theory, rather than as siloed ideas about how, what, when, and where we learn. The purpose of this section is twofold: the explicate the forms of curriculum while underscoring one of the themes of this book: everything is always already a form of curriculum. In short, this book asks: Where does learning *not* happen?

Curriculum scholars have asked similar questions across traditions, specifically thinking about what counts as knowledge and whose knowledge is of most worth (Grant et al., 2015; Malewski, 2009; Pinar, 2004; Spencer, 1860; Watkins, 2001). This book attends to these traditions by weaving chapters that follow a narrative style (see Ngozi Williams, Roland Mitchell, David Stovall, and Denise Taliaferro Baszile) with other forms of inquiry (see Kirsten Edwards, Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Marcelle Haddix, Cluny Lavache, Walter Gershon, Sherick Hughes, and Reagan Mitchell). The purpose of braiding these chapters is twofold: To honor the polyvocal ways of engaging with the topic of Black Lives Matter and education, while recognizing that each chapter is in and of itself a form of curriculum. Although each chapter resides under the broad umbrella of Black Lives Matter and education, they all hold curriculum as a common touchstone.

An attention to curriculum studies is important because systemic oppressions in schools are enacted and maintained across curricular forms. Entangled with broader norms and values, the curricula of schooling can

be understood an assemblage that functions as a set of “sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans” (Weheliye, 2014, p. 4). In short, curricular entanglements in schools facilitate dehumanization, eventually teaching students, educators, and administrators across identities that Black lives, voices, and perspectives are inferior (Woodson, 1933). The racialized nature of the curricula is insidious in that it permeates every layer of scale in schools. For example, every semester, I ask students that take my educational foundations class to think of every scientist that they can in 20 seconds who has the perceived identity of a white man. The room is generally filled with names like Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin, or Stephen Hawking as students shout names confidently and quickly. Then, I reset the timer. I ask them to shout out the names of every white woman scientist that they can. There is far more silence but, generally, at least one student usually yells out, “Marie Curie!” I repeat this activity by asking students to respectively name Black men, Black women, and, finally, any queer scientists that they can think of without using the internet. By the last round, there is complete silence and uneasy tension. Every student who is enrolled the courses I teach managed to get through high school, pass the ACT or SAT, and have been admitted to the institution. Yet, regardless of race, ability, genders, sexual orientations, home language, and other such factors, the result has been the same—enthusiastic, fast replies for the first round and silence, if not embarrassment, for the last three rounds.

What one learns in school, what Michael Apple (2014) called the “official knowledge” of schooling, can be understood as the lessons that are intended through schools (Page, 1991). Often, when I work with teacher candidates, this is what they are referring to when they mention “the” curriculum in terms of state standards, textbooks, and the district curriculum. This can also be thought of as the names that students easily recall during the activity discussed above. The null curriculum (Eisner, 1985) is what is unintentionally not taught. These are the scientists that students could not easily name as these are the scientists who are often absent from the formal curriculum. The contributions of scientists like Alice Ball, Mae Jemison, George Washington Carver, Benjamin Banneker, Sara Josephine Baker, Richard Summerbell, and others, remain largely absent from the formal curriculum but rather present within the null curriculum. As scholar like Berry (2010) and Watkins (2001) argued, the null curriculum is often haunted by those pushed out of the formal curriculum

as a way of engendering and maintaining hegemonic norms and values. The formal and null curriculum deeply impact both the hidden (Giroux & Penna, 1983) and enacted curricula (Page, 1991; Schwab, 1969). The hidden curriculum can be thought of as the broader cultural norms and values that are often hidden to those participating in a cultural context. Students, teachers, and administrators tend to unconsciously attach value to the voices represented in the formal curriculum and, similarly, degrade those that are relegated to the null curriculum. Trump's perspective on the "virtue of American heroes" is but one example of how the formal curriculum posits mostly white, straight men as the "heroes" of American history. This narrative impacts the core values, beliefs, and attitudes of any person who participated in systems of schooling and, over time, such beliefs become taught through the hidden curriculum.

As people interact, the attitudes and values across the hidden curriculum become apparent through what is known as the enacted curriculum. Page (1991) argues that learning is ubiquitous. Students do not just interact with each other and adults in the building. Any person entering a school interacts with the physical building. Think, for example, what can be learned from the placement of classrooms for students with disabilities that are often hidden in the school, or what students with disabilities learn about their role in the building from the placement of their classroom (Jones & Hensley, 2012). Similarly, students, teachers, and administrators alike learn from interacting with the voices that are present (or absent) from textbooks, how the school-to-prison pipeline functions not just outside but as a part of school culture (Kim et al., 2010; Love, 2019; Meiners, 2016), and through the school-to-coffin pipeline that is a normalized way of pushing queer youth out of school and into the hospital or grave (Wozolek, Wootton, & Demlow, 2017). It is no small wonder that through the various forms of curriculum many citizens—from police officers to white extremists, and teachers to administrators—are comfortable "exploiting . . . or exterminating a class that everybody is taught to regard as inferior" (Woodson, 1933, p. 3).

While schools and systems of schooling regularly dehumanize Black youth and communities, it is significant to note that the curriculum of racism (Bethune, 1983; Cooper, 1892; Love, 2019; Morris, 2016) has not gone unabated. Scholars across fields of education have a long-standing history of arguing the broader implications of racialized practices in schools that express sociocultural norms and values (Cooper, 1892; Du Bois, 1903; Watkins, 2001; Winfield, 2007; Woodson, 1933). As a result, arguments

for equity and access in schools have made several significant inroads that have resulted in the proliferation of questions about representation, voice, and power in schooling. For example, scholars have unpacked the relationship between broader cultural movements, ideas, and ideals as they are entwined with schooling (e.g., Apple, 1971; Skutnabb-Kangas; 2000; Taliaferro Baszile, Edwards, & Guillory, 2016), analyzing, for example, how eugenics or cultural genocide has shaped the curricula. Scholars have also discussed how schools can interrupt raced and racist cultural norms (e.g., Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016; Bracho & Hayes, 2020; He & Ross, 2012). While such inroads to discussing race and schooling are not mutually exclusive, it should be noted that regardless of positionality or questions of scale, these dialogues have significantly contributed broader conversations regarding marginalization and violence against people of color in schools and across the country. As people of color in schools, and the communities with which they are knotted (Nespor, 1997), continue to experience violence that has been taught and normalized across spaces, it becomes abundantly clear that academic dialogues and ideas are not just theoretical. They are enacted in daily, targeted violence against bodies of color across the United States.

Given that the indelible images of contemporary lynchings are entangled with what scholars like Du Bois (1926) referred to as a “choking away” of onto-epistemologies through white educational ideologies, it becomes clear that schooling provides a form of ontological death that is mirrored in the physical murders of Black people across community contexts. In short, because schooling normalizes the dehumanization of all bodies outside of the white cis-hetero patriarchy, racist police officers and white extremists have sanctioned inflicting physical pain on Black people and in Black communities. This brings to the fore the following questions: What does it mean for a child to be metaphorically lynched or choked through the schoolroom, as scholars like Du Bois (1926) and Woodson (1933) have described? As such, how does the everyday choking away (Du Bois, 1926) of a child’s way of being and knowing contribute to larger sociocultural violence against people of color? What roles do and should scholars play in the interruption of this marginalization, both in theory and practice? These are difficult questions that the contributors to this book wrestle with as they explore the intersection of schooling and less local aggressions.

The rest of this introduction focuses on unpacking contributions to this volume. Although strong scholarship has been dedicated to the Black Lives Matter movement (Taylor, 2016), this book is devoted to continuing

such dialogues through the lens of schooling, curriculum, and the multiple ways in which educational contexts effect and affect students of color. Examining the intersections between schooling and Black Lives Matter is significant because while the normalization of aggression against people of color is always already in broad circulation between schools and their communities (Brockenbrough, 2016; Dumas & Nelson, 2017; Woodson, 1933), interrupting this violence should also be central to the everyday experiences of schooling.

Honoring Black Lives across the Pages and Beyond

The recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery—alongside the ubiquitous harassment of Black folks enjoying a barbecue, a Black child selling water in her neighborhood, Black people enjoying time watching birds in the park, and other stories that might not have made national news—resonate within the echo chamber of racism that is prevalent across the United States. The chapters in this book speak directly to these tensions, showing a necessity for the ideas shared across the chapters presented in this work. While I engage in bracketing some of the forms of curriculum represented in each chapter, it is important to note that every form of curriculum is always at work in and across contexts.

The first chapter of this book highlights the work of Sherick A. Hughes. Aligned with Bethune's (1938) dialogue on how one might clarify sociopolitical and cultural contexts with the facts, and building on Pinar's (1991) conversation on curriculum as a racialized text, Hughes's chapter can be understood as an interruption of the hidden curriculum that proliferates false narratives and news around Black lives, the BLM movement, and the Black experience in the United States. Almost a forward to the other chapters, Hughes's work is first in this volume because it is intended to stand as a corrective curriculum to what is often read as the official knowledge that propagates in communities and leaks into schools. In short, Hughes's chapter is a way of setting the record straight before the other chapters build various forms of curriculum. Hughes investigates the facts behind #BlackLivesMatter to interpret the myths constructed by white nationalists that are in opposition to the BLM movement. In this chapter, Hughes weaves literatures that are related to the Black Lives Matter movement to think about intraracial crime, policing, and affirmative action. Hughes's work is significant in that he not only lays out the

opposition's ideas about BLM but he deeply and critically engages with the implications of the myths, the realities, and their relationship with sociopolitical norms, values, and movements. By challenging schools and colleges of education to revisit how racial epistemologies can be hidden within the curriculum, Hughes argues that in resolving this challenge, Black Lives Matter in schools can no longer be easily dismissed or distorted, something that schools and universities desperately need if white supremacy is to be interrupted, resisted, and refused.

Following Hughes's work, the next chapter focuses on the experiences of Ngozi Williams. It is important to note that Williams began writing the first iterations of this chapter in high school. Her voice is significant to this text because Black youth are, in many ways, the backbone of not only the BLM movement but, one could argue, perhaps one of the most significant reasons to create a safer sociopolitical and cultural context. Williams boldly asks, "If not for Black youth, then for whom do we do this work?" The book therefore follows Hughes's corrective curriculum with Williams's salient call to action as a reminder that despite the BLM movement, Black youth around the nation still struggle with various forms of oppression that they learn through iterations of the enacted curriculum. Using narrative inquiry, Williams highlights the challenges of learning through the enacted and hidden curricula. As the daughter of immigrant parents in an overwhelmingly white context, her chapter explores the imbrications of race and queerness that many young people experience. Attending to many salient issues that Black queer youth face, Williams discusses topics such as physical health, beauty standards, and social exclusion. Williams's work brings to the fore the lived experience and voice of Black queer youth as it is entangled with sociocultural violence in her local and less local contexts.

Roland Mitchell's chapter compliments Williams's work in that their respective narratives are both related to racist affects and events that are normalized within the enacted and hidden curricula. While Williams's work focuses on racism experienced by Black youth, Mitchell expresses events entangled with racism as a Black adult. Mitchell uses the deluge of and after Katrina, and the murder of Alton Sterling, as a backdrop to his dialogue about what it means to be a Black academic and a dean. Through his narrative he shows how his personal mantra—Know who you are, control what you can, and stay focused—has shifted as a result of these events, as they are knotted with his academic experiences. By exploring how the "river of white supremacy has shaped the institutional

coastline” and the many ways that “levees of resistance in communities of color” have refused to accept further floods of racism, Mitchell explicates how we might all function as systems of refusal for raced and racist norms in the academy.

Following Mitchell’s dialogue, Kirsten Edwards’s work can be understood as an exploration of the null and enacted curricula. Edwards unpacks how traditional theoretical frameworks and methodologies not only limit Afrocentric inquiry but often fail to disrupt anti-Blackness in and across academic spaces. Edwards’s work is significant in that it questions how Black spaces are made in and across Critical Race Theory, intersectionality, and collegiate marronage. The implications of reconceptualizing institutional spaces that Edwards discusses offer programmatic and systemic possibilities that reject inquiry rooted in anti-Blackness to “draw on the strength of critical, dexterous, Black curiosity.” Edwards’s work puts into action what she calls for throughout the chapter—the pursuit of unapologetically recognizing and using Black intellectual thought and traditions to create a space against white patriarchal values that are business-as-usual in higher education.

Continuing Edwards’s dialogue on dismantling systemic oppression in educational spaces and places, Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Marcelle Haddix, and Cluny Lavache discuss the absence of Black voices in literacy education. Their contribution explores the formal and null curricula, considering what it might mean to foreground Black Lives Matter in literacy by asking: What would it look like? How would it be enacted? Who creates it, teaches it, and how is it taught? Their work mirrors those of educators who contributed to early editions of the *Journal of Negro Education*, where contributors similarly thought through a curriculum that not only foregrounds but is constructed with Black lives, experiences, and ideas first, rather than as an afterthought. This means that teacher candidates, as the authors argue, “have the ability to see greatness in the Black students they may one day service, and not only understand and theorize that Black lives matter, but believe . . . and demonstrate that through their actions, deeds, and instructional practices.”

Mirroring Sealey-Ruiz, Haddix, and Lavache’s call for teacher candidates who are concerned with equity and access, Walter S. Gershon’s chapter attends to the necessary work of being an accomplice as an educator concerned with antiracist policies and practices. A strong example of how the forms of curriculum are entangled, Gershon explicates what he calls a “curriculum of lying, choking, and dying,” that pervades systems of

schooling across the United States. The argument for what a curriculum of onto-epistemological death might mean for Black youth, while hauntingly evocative, is well aligned with other scholars within the African American intellectual traditions that have explicated the link between physical and metaphorical violence to what is learned through schooling (e.g., Cooper, 1892; Du Bois, 1926; Woodson, 1933). Gershon's work is significant in that it carefully traces the roots of a racialized curriculum in the United States—from Franklin Bobbitt to Simon-Binet IQ tests. Gershon's chapter also critically considers how curricular roots have given life to the tree where students' onto-epistemologies are metaphorically—yet intentionally—killed by and through the classroom and corridors as students of color become the strange fruit (Meeropol/Holiday, 1939) of today's schools. Similar to Schwab's (1969) curriculum in-action or Love's (2019) dialogue of a curriculum that moves as much as it is moving, Gershon argues that “curricular understandings indicate actions as they convey content and normalize violence” against Black people and communities.

Following Gershon's historical and contemporary account of a curriculum fraught with violence, David Omotoso Stovall considers how the Black Lives Matter movement is often reduced to images of reactionary protests, rather than an ideal of consistent, and constant, work that demands justice, equity, and access. Echoing the narrative styles of Williams and Mitchell, Stovall gives a personal account of living in Chicago. Drawing lines between gentrification, the execution of Laquan McDonald, Obama-era politics, and a “curriculum of fugitivity,” this work is important because it unmask the hypersegregation that impacts communities and schools that displace and dispossess people and communities. While Stovall attends to Chicago, it is critical to remember that his points are applicable across contexts and layers of scale. As Stovall argues, because of this lived reality in and across the United States, it is time to recognize that “the claim to Black life is a claim to the humanity of all.”

Connecting Stovall's complicated conversation on Black voices and feminisms in and across city spaces, Reagan P. Mitchell engages in an enacted curriculum through a letter to Pauli Murray. Mitchell's work can also be understood as an engagement with the null curriculum as Murray's legacy is often absent from K–12 and many university spaces. Through his letter, Mitchell thinks about southern queerhood as it lives within, and sometimes against, the call for equity and access in Black communities. Mitchell argues that Afro-surrealism is significant as a means to “permeate, envelope, and destroy the template” of the Enlightenment that has sustained “linear trajectories [for] queer, feminist, gender fluid/

nonconforming, dis/abled, impoverished senses of time as deficient.” Mitchell’s work is important in that it uses a Black feminist praxis to articulate the line between voices like Zora Neale Hurston, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill-Collins, and Pauli Murray that is disruptive to normalized ideas and ideals within the cis-hetero patriarchy.

Finally, this book concludes with the deeply personal and strong scholarly voice of Denise Taliaferro Baszile. In her chapter, Taliaferro Baszile thinks critically about how memory is formed and informed by oppression and, toward that end, how such memory might be interrupted through the praxis of protest. Theorizing “democracy in the break,” Taliaferro Baszile argues that engaging the breaking and breaking open of democratic practices is central to moving beyond current sociopolitical and cultural norms and values. Taliaferro Baszile offers readers a moment to pause, heal, and (re)consider what lies beyond everyday oppressions that are business-as-usual across American cultures.

Conclusion

In her book, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Christina Sharpe (2016) argues that the ocean still swells with the violence from slave ships traversing its waters. Looking at the time it takes for a substance to enter and then leave the ocean, a process that is known as “residence time,” Sharpe found that sodium has a residence time of 260 million years. The “human body,” Sharpe writes, “is salty [and] what happens to energy produced in the waters? It continues cycling like atoms in residence time . . . Black people exist in the residence time of the wake, a time in which ‘everything is now. It is all now’” (p. 40). In this case, I’m speaking literally, not metaphorically. Salt is shared and recursive. The violence is literally in the salt, in the water, in our bodies. But it is also metaphorically true. This is where it gets complicated. The trauma of America’s history with racism is always at once metaphorical and material.

This begs the question: What violence exists in the soil, churned constantly as the next wave of whiteness impacts, and too often kills, the bodies and ways of being of Black and Brown people and communities? Racism, and its toxic remnants are therefore in our oceans, on our lands, and in the air. In schools, this manifests as a curriculum of violence (Wozolek, 2019, 2021), where racism is akin to lead in water. It is not a question of the lead being in the water but, rather, how much of the water one has to drink and whether or not you have the privilege of a filter. In the case

of this book, racism is the lead that impacts Black people across sexual orientations, gender identities, ability, home languages, and the like—is always in the water. Drinking water is a necessity to live. However, the ability to purchase, or being given, a filter to protect you from the carcinogens of racism is a question of privilege. How one uses the filter, as an ally or accomplice for those who do not have filters, is a matter of agency.

Black Lives Matter in US Schools is a significant text in that it thinks about how schools—from kindergarten through to the academy—are responsible for the violence that normalizes the murders of Black people across the United States. Additionally, it is significant because it considers not only how one might filter out racism, but the authors actively attempt to construct educational spaces that are inherently and intentionally antiracist. If, to recall the words of Woodson, we are to overcome the contemporary lynchings that are all-too-familiar headlines, we must begin with curricula that are more than inclusive, respectful, and responsible to and for Black lives. We must enact, engender, and maintain curricular spaces that are antiracist at their core. Returning to Rochelle’s dialogue at the beginning of this chapter, this book asks what it might mean for children to never feel like strange fruit in school, at home, or in their communities again. We must therefore be more than well-intentioned but, rather, explicitly intentional about how Black Lives Matter in our communities in general and, especially, in the place where they should be foregrounded as a mechanism for abolishing sociopolitically normalized racism—at school.

Notes

1. A pseudonym given to the student to protect her anonymity.
2. Throughout this book, the authors follow Crenshaw’s (1991) capitalization of *Black*, because it refers to a cultural group and therefore requires capitalization. Alternatively, *white* does not refer to a specific cultural group and therefore is not capitalized.

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