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Being Against The Black: Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism (Guest Editors' Introduction)

Amir A. Gilmore
Washington State University, amir.gilmore@wsu.edu

LaToya Brackett
University of Puget Sound, lbrackett@pugetsound.edu

Davida Sharpe-Haygood
Pierce College, DSarpehaygood@pierce.ctc.edu

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Abstract

As a special journal issue, the guest editors continued their study on (anti)blackness within K-12 schooling and teacher preparation programs. Through the introduction's *white space*, the guest editors attempt to theorize and center (anti)Blackness. Moreover, they existentially critique the "ordinary" assumptions about who can be a human and explain why Black existence *continues on* despite their collective suffering. The introductory article is organized as follows: (1) a thorough explanation of bad faith and antiblackness, (2) an illustration of antiblackness' manifestations in K-12 schooling, and (3) the importance of using jazz as an analytic frame to curate the contributors' scholarship.

Keywords

Anti-racism, bad faith, antiblackness, controlling images, K-12 schooling, self-evasion, jazz

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Cover Page Footnote

We are beyond thankful to NWJTE for organizing this special issue on antiblackness in teacher education. Moreover, we are thankful for the brilliance, vision, and scholarship of the contributors that submitted to this special issue. Thank you for inviting us all to engage in a Black study to combat antiblackness and center Black humanity. Special thanks to the reviewers for providing their labor, insights, and constructive feedback to make the contributors' articles the best that they could be. Lastly, a special thanks to all those that will read and engage with this work to ensure educational justice for Black students.

Introduction: Call It What It Is: Anti-Blackness

What is to be done in a world of near universal sense of superiority to, if not universal hatred of, Black folk?

–Lewis R. Gordon (1997, p. 1)

The Human is not an organic entity but a construct; a construct that requires its *Other* in order to be legible; and why the Human Other is Black.

–Frank B. Wilderson III (2020, p. xi)

Anti-blackness covers the fact that society’s hatred of blackness, and also its gratuitous violence against black people, is complicated by its need for our existence.

–kihana miraya ross (2020)

To teach and learn through antiblackness, we must commit to seeing it.

–Justin A. Coles (2019, p. 5)

“Call It What It Is: Antiracism.” kihana miraya ross’ (2020) words have remained with us since reading her *New York Times* opinion article after the extrajudicial quarantine killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Rayshard Brooks, Sean Reed, and so many others. Her words have remained with us—so much so—that they are the title of this special issue in the *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education* (NWJTE). This special issue’s creation was serendipitous. We all met at the 2020 Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE) conference to present on antiblackness and teacher education programs. It was at WACTE where the *academic stars* aligned for us. Our presentation on antiblackness and teacher education provided us additional opportunities to speak at different forums, dive deeper into a Black study, and grow as friends.

Dumas (2016) argued that while most educational stakeholders *might* express commitments to equity and diversity or recognize violence against Black lives as examples of racism, there is a paucity of research theorizing about the specificity of (anti)blackness in education. Inspired to continue our Black study, we situated our understandings about antiblackness’s pervasiveness within K-12 schooling and teacher preparation programs into a special journal issue. We agree with Warren and Coles (2020) that the “future of black education research and practice hinges on both documenting barriers to black student school success and identifying promising pathways to actively dismantle such barriers” (p. 3).

Therefore, as Black scholars deeply committed to Black joys, brilliance, survivance (Vizenor, 1998), educational well-being, and liberation, we invite Black and non-Black educators to not only *see* antiblackness but actively combat it to secure Black humanity.

We are indebted to ross' (2020) scholarship because her poignant words captured what it means to *bear witness while Black* to anti-Black vitriol—to witness Black suffering and death's spectacular yet utter mundaneness in an *alleged* racially egalitarian, anti-racist, and post-racial country. To approximate what Black people have experienced and continue to experience as simply "racism" fails to provide an adequate composite of Black lived-realities that illuminate the racial grammars of suffering, alienation, exploitation, antagonism, and gratuitous violence (Wilderson, 2010) against *the Black* (Gordon, 1997; Sexton, 2008; Dumas, 2016). The Black refers to "the presence of Black bodies, or more precisely, the imagination of the significance of Black bodies in a certain place" (Dumas, 2016, p. 13). ross' (2020) scholarship reminds white people—or those that have been racialized as *white*—and their *junior partners* (Wilderson, 2020) that the structural violence against and the social death of the Black is *not new* and is masked as normal (Mustaffa, 2017). Black life's ever-present degradation is necessary to sustain civil society and the realm of *the Human* (Wilderson, 2017). Humanity is not a universal experience, as strict demarcations about Humanness racially enclose white as Human(e) and Black as non-Human(e) (Wilderson, 2010, 2020; Mills, 1997). This *color line* (DuBois, 1903)—this permanence of racial stratification constructed "between blackness and everything else" (2008, p. 13), holds Black people *at the bottom of the well* (Bell, 1992). Regardless of the era of U.S. existence—chattel slavery and its ever-enduring afterlife (Hartman, 2002, 2008; Sharpe, 2016; Warren & Coles, 2020)—there is a fundamental understanding that your livelihood may not be the greatest, but at least *you are not Black*. Wilderson (2020) denoted that the spectacle and ritualization of violence against the Black is the "ultimate stabilization" for civil society:

I know I am a Human because I am not Black. I know I am not Black because when and if I experience the kind of violence Blacks experience there is a reason (p. 225).

Following Wilderson's (2020) theorization, ross' (2020) analysis on the saturation of violence against the Black illuminated the societal psyche and ethos of antiblackness and raised the critical question of *what does it mean to be against the Black?* The research within this special issue is essential to Black students, Black (teacher) educators, staff, non-Black people of color, and white people. Through our introduction's *white space* and the special issue contributors'

scholarship, we attempt to theorize and center (anti)Blackness collectively. Towards that end, our introductory article is organized as follows: (1) we present a thorough explanation of bad faith and antiblackness, (2) we illustrate antiblackness' manifestations in K-12 schooling, and (3) we layout the organization of the contributors' scholarship.

Bad Faith: The Evasion of Truth, Choice, and Responsibility

What does it mean to be against the Black? As an organizing site of Blackened consciousness, the fundamental question surfaces that Black people inhabit a world predicated on *bad faith*—a symbolic and literal world that would “ultimately be better off without blacks” (Gordon, 1997, p. 6). Gordon (1995) defines bad faith as anguishedly fleeing “a displeasing truth for a pleasing falsehood” (p. 8). Further, Gordon (1997) stated that people who choose to act in bad faith use “ideal belief as [their] standard of belief in order to use pleasing evidence as [their] standard of ordinary belief” (p. 11). Therefore, bad faith is grounded on people evading their humanely world responsibilities by using pleasing evidence to convince themselves (and others) that a falsehood is, in fact, true. In bad faith, the truth is expendable, as lying to oneself and others are necessary actions. People's collective bad faith is expressed, manifested, perpetuated, and maintained institutionally in societal belief systems and everyday activities (Gordon, 1997). As a *near-magical* group denial, white people's manifestations of bad faith—such as the self-evasions and self-construction about Black humanity situates Black existence to inhabit an anti-Black world.

Denied at the phenomenological level, Gordon (1997) denoted that Black people are situated “in the what mode of being,” instead of a “who” mode of being, where they “‘must’ provide justification for their continued presence” (p. 6). Black existence continues to be existentially constructed, construed, and exploited as a non-Human sentient being with little-to-no value. Contrary to white people's phenomenological (pre)determination of the Black, Black people are indeed *humans* who have *value*. Therefore, an anti-Black world is mired in institutional bad faith because white people anointed themselves the power to fundamentally exclude Black people as humans, demand justification for their existence, and exercise their right to subjugate them. Thus, Black people's inhumanity, expendability, demonization, and social suffering is an act of racial gaslighting—an act *not* historically grounded upon white people's epistemological ignorance (Mills, 1997) or institutional unwillingness to value Black lives, but the *proclaimed* scapegoating belief that Black people are “responsible for the systemic oppression and violence that they experience” (Martin et al., 2019, p. 35). It is white people's self-evasion of their choices and responsibilities as the Human that created *the fact of Blackness* (Fanon, 2008).

White people's self-denial of controlling what they have control of (Gordon, 1995) perpetuates and maintains antiblackness.

Antiblackness: The Lived Experience of the Black

What does it mean to be Black? The question of Black being-in-the-world raised the existential questions of, what does it mean to suffer? (Wilderson, 2020) and “what is to be understood by black suffering?” (Gordon, 1997, p. 1). These questions surface what Fanon (2008) called *l’expérience vécue du Noir* (the lived experience of the Black), and they serve as a constant reminder that Black people struggle to exist as *humans* within the U.S. (and global) society where there is “a cultural disregard for and disgust with blackness” (Dumas, 2016, p. 11). As a theoretical framework, antiblackness is “not simply racism against Black people,” but rather a “broader antagonistic relationship between blackness and (the possibility of) humanity” (Dumas & ross, 2016, p. 429). Dumas (2016) denoted that theorizing about antiblackness “is not to offer solutions to racial inequality, but to come to a deeper understanding of the Black condition within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence against the Black” (p. 13). This antagonism, utter contempt, and cultural disregard towards the Black materialized from the institutional practice of chattel and plantation slavery. Marked outside of Humanness, Black people's bodies were rendered as property—*fungible* objects to cultivate white social, political, and economic desires (Spillers, 1987). As “propertied owners,” white people utilized the Black's fungibility not only to accumulate material wealth but also supply ever-expanding opportunities to subjugate Black lives (Hartman, 1997). Despite the near-universal hatred of Blackness (Gordon, 1997), the U.S. is fundamentally sustained upon maintaining the Black's *thingification* (Spillers, 1987). Though chattel slavery's practice was “abolished,” its institutional structures, value-laden social processes, and technologies of violence continue to be reinscribed into new manifestations of Black death and subjugation (Hartman, 1997; Dumas, 2016). The Black remains *historically still* (Wilderson, 2020)—socially and culturally positioned *as a slave*, “dispossessed of human agency, desire, and freedom” (Dumas, 2016, p. 13). Thus, antiblackness is the residual of chattel slavery's continuous and changing narrative of dispossession and captivity, unfolding before us (Hartman, 2002; Sharpe, 2016; Warren & Coles, 2020).

Since the Black's *chattel-slaveness* marks Black people's ontological position, acknowledging Black agency and citizenship is non-existent because Black life does not possess an *auditor* (Wilderson, 2020). It means that Black existence is unimagined as an entity with a heritage of rights that can be violated (Wilderson, 2020). Therefore, racial conflicts cannot simply be remedied through organized political appeals to civil society's psyche because of the

irreconcilability between the Black and the Human. Thus, *living in the wake* (Sharpe, 2016) of the *afterlife of slavery* (Hartman, 2008), antiblackness is a crisis of fundamental rights and imagination, as discourses on humanity, who can occupy it, are structured against the Black. Antiblackness is a *permanent wall* (Coles, 2019) separating Black life from Humanity, denying them full participation within civil society (Dumas 2016; Wilderson, 2010; Warren & Coles, 2020). Antiblackness is spatially committed to the devaluation of the Black across social institutions through interdependent relationships, interactions, and policies—regardless of Black people’s profession, accolades, or adherence to respectability politics.

As *the thing most despised* (Gordon, 1997) within the white racial and spatial imaginary (Yancy, 2005; Jenkins, 2021), Black existence is symbolized as *the problem* (DuBois, 1903)—a threat to society (Sexton, 2008)—an ontological terror (Warren, 2018)—a marker and counterpoint for others to measure their Humanness, their whiteness, and their proximity and adjacency to it (ross, 2020). Imbued by anti-Black polity, the Black body becomes a racialized territory where civil society maintains economic expansion, social order, and authority. As such, whiteness has—and—continues to deputize itself, engaging Black life through spectacularized and mundane acts of surveillance, control, capture, and violence to secure rights, socioeconomic privileges, and sustain Humanity (Wilderson, 2020). Antiblackness is the *fulcrum* of white supremacy (Nakagawa, 2012)—the political mechanism that executes *The Racial Contract* (Mills, 1997), enriching whiteness at the expense of Blackness. Therefore, Black mattering is only circumstantial to the Human, depending upon its desires to exploit or harm the Black. Thus, Black life occupies a liminal state of not necessarily being *wanted* but is *hated to be lost* because of Humanity’s need for Black existence.

To understand this, look no further than the plight of Black women’s social relations in academia (and society)—the constant derides and microaggressions (i.e., microassaults, microinsults, microinvalidation) towards their existence, socio-cultural knowledge, and scholarship—the ubiquitous use of *controlling images* (i.e., Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire) to thingify them (Hill Collins, 2000)—the invisibilized cultural taxation and over-expected obligations of care-labor regarding students and diversity service work—and the alleged *leaky* pipeline of hiring Black women faculty and the scarcity of them as full professors. Bad faith operates academia’s social hierarchy, as Black women are relegated to the bottom through domination, subordination, and servitude. Often asked to share themselves as the *face* or *voice* for diversity but never valued for their scholarly contributions or pursuits, Black women’s societal value is affixed to their “mammified” position of servitude that provides labor to all. This bad faith logic typifies the normalcy of antiblackness in higher education, but also the world. As long as white people are in bad faith, anti-Black racism will endure

(Gordon, 1997). This is crucial to understand because antiblackness is not a grave miscalculation, but rather a *total climate* (Sharpe, 2016)—a present and unfolding philosophical endeavor—a normalized sociopolitical construction of racialized alienation, predicated on the death, disposability, suffering, and subjugation of Black people (Hartman, 1997; Sharpe, 2016), permeating all facets of life, including education.

Antiblackness in K-12 Schooling: An Organizational Arrangement of Bad Faith

Black youth are under attack in all spheres of education. While public schooling has been lauded as a *social good*—a bastion of democracy, liberty, social change, and mobility, it operates in bad faith because antiblackness' entrenchment in schools has dire impacts on Black children's educational outcomes and well-being. The field of Black education has long indexed antiblackness' structural realities in K-12 schooling. Carter G. Woodson's (2017) foundational text, *The mis-education of the Negro*, held the educational system accountable for the routine marginalization and deriding of Blackness and the deleterious effects of decontextualized and invisibilized notions of Black history in K-12 instruction:

The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything while, 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 peoples (p. 21).

Woodson's (2017) analysis illuminated that Black communities do not have much (if any) control over the organizational arrangement of schools that they send their children to. Black children's education is entirely in the hands of those that have enslaved and segregated them. Black communities are compelled to endure physical, epistemic, symbolic, psychospiritual, linguistic, curricular, and structural violence (Jenkins, 2021; Martin et al., 2019; Love, 2019) that materializes in schools (and society) as their inevitable condition. Therefore, Black children's racial exclusion in educational spaces is normalized and justified. When Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced Critical Race Theory (CRT) to the field of education, they elucidated how white communities exercise their "absolute right to exclude" (p. 60) Black children from school. White people's social unimaginability of Black children (Dumas & Nelson, 2016) causes them to sit *in tension* (Dumas & ross, 2016) and be invisibilized within the

educational spatial imaginary. Gordon (1997) stated that “the black is invisible because of how the black is ‘seen.’ The black is not heard because of how the black is ‘heard.’ The black is not felt because of how the black ‘feels’” (p. 37). Denied a sense of belonging and symbolic *place* in schools, Black children become *strangers* to their educative experience as *space invaders* (Puwar, 2004; Gilmore, 2019).

The modus operandi of antiblackness is *stranger making* (Gilmore, 2019), and it permeates K-12 educational policy (Dumas, 2016), teaching, learning, leadership (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021), and in-person (and online) social interactions. This strangeness results from chattel slavery’s social imaginations and technologies foreclosing the Black body to symbolize everything that white people were not or did want to be (i.e., delinquent, violent, thug, shiftless, loud, ghetto, unkempt, uneducable) and situating educational spaces as sites of “containment, regulation, punishment, capture, and captivity” (Sharpe, 2016, p. 21). As a state apparatus of white middle-class norms and Black social control (Annamma, 2018), schools manage white phobogenic anxieties about Black children through the denial of play (Bryan, 2020; Dumas & Nelson, 2016), Black joy (Gilmore, 2021), Black (educational) space (Jenkins, 2021; Warren & Coles, 2020); technologies of surveillance and secondary policing (Parker, 2017), school discipline, punishment, and social exclusion (Coles & Powell, 2020; Morris, 2016; Wun, 2016), anti-Black linguistic racism (Baker-Bell, 2020), Black consciousness’ erasure from the curriculum (King, 2020), anti-Black curriculum-based violence (Brown & Brown, 2020), the non-arrival of comprehensive social mattering (Carey, 2019, 2020), and the liminality of Black childhoods and inelasticity of Black innocence (Gilmore & Bettis, 2021). Fearing Blackness in day-to-day practices of education and schooling (Doret & Gordon, 2018), antiblackness operates as an *institutional narrative* (Ferguson, 2003), positioning Black bodies as *bad* and in need of disciplining (Dumas, 2018).

When Black children enter (white) educational spaces, their existence is not only denied at the phenomenological level, but the *white gaze* (Morrison, 2012) *phenomenologically returns* their bodies as inferior (Yancy, 2005). As such, Black youth are denied having/inhabiting an *honest body* (Jordan, 1992), an honest and secure relationship with their minds, bodies, and spirits. This perpetual ritualization of *deficiency* disembodies the Black self, reducing Black children to an “object in the midst of other objects” (Fanon, 2008, p. 82)—an inferior plaything that “must learn to live with mediocrity and accept [their] place within the ‘natural’ order of things” (Yancy, 2005, p. 231). Thus, for many Black children’s K-12 experience, schools operate as a site of *Black social suffering* (Dumas, 2014)—a site where they strain against “specific anti-Black ideologies, discourses, representations, (mal)distribution of material resources, and physical and psychic assaults on [their] Black bodies” (Dumas, 2016, p. 15). These social

dynamics ensnare Black children within a (re)traumatizing cycle of violence (Sharpe, 2016). Their suffering becomes invisible and inconsequential because K-12 schooling's carceral logics uphold white comfort, feelings, idealism, and safety at the expense of Blackness. These anti-Black curricular confrontations shape a Black child's understanding of their symbolic place in the world. What does a Black child *explicitly* and *implicitly* learn (Eisner, 2002) about their role and belonging within the world? What are they not allowed to learn? (Milner, 2017) Further, how does a Black child continue to learn after being assaulted, ridiculed, humiliated, and devalued? Black children learn that "violence against their bodies and minds is warranted" (Martin et al., 2019, p. 35) because their bodies are the archetypal site of danger and violence (Rollo, 2018), where civil society maintains order and authority. They learn that their lives often do not matter to social institutions, and if they do, they only matter in *partial* or *marginal* ways (Carey, 2019).

With the immense vitriol for the Black *foregrounded* and *backgrounded* in K-12 schooling, the question that lingers with us is, "why would a Black child—that has been pathologized and maligned within the K-12 education system—desire to return to that very system and become a Black teacher?" As Black professionals situated in institutions responsible for Black students' educational outcomes and occupational futures, this is an essential question that must be addressed to thwart and counter antiblackness in K-12 schooling and teacher preparation programs. How Black students are treated in school can heavily affect how they imagine themselves and their future occupation(s). The question above concerns Blackness effectively not being seen, heard, felt, or mattering within education. This lack of corporeal registry prompted Ohito and Coles (2020) to ask, "how does my Black life and the Black lives of others move from invisibility to becoming rendered as both worthy and crucial?" (p. 19). Such a question raises another question: "How does one become free of suffering?" (Wilderson, 2010, p. 126). How can we temporarily interrupt the Black's inhumanity in K-12 schooling and teacher preparation programs as an intellectual project? We see both as critical spaces that can comprehensively recruit and retain future Black teachers and forge radical pathways and social possibilities that reduce Black suffering and secure Black humanity. Reflecting on our understandings on antiblackness, the final question that we bring forward is— "What would preservice, and in-service teacher education *look like* if it were in active solidarity with Black Lives Matter?" (Mayorga & Picower, 2018). This critical question animates much of this intellectual project's theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and narrative scholarship. We appreciate the articles in this NWJTE special issue and are eager to invite you into this Black study.

The Layout of The Articles: Why Do We Go On?

Curating this *Blackened* special issue for NWJTE has been a challenging project but one filled with joy. Woodson (2017) stated that "the portrait of the Negro has seldom been drawn but by the pencil of his oppressor" (p. 124). As editors, we attempted to dismiss the *oppressor's pencil* to see the beauty of Black thought by being entirely intentional regarding our declarations about who this special issue is *for* and/or *about*. Our first declaration was that this NWJTE special issue was *not* seeking empty declarations of solidarity, an outward integration with whiteness, or the white introspection of fragile white feelings (Love, 2020). This *stance of refusal* (Tuck, 2009) is imperative to avert the spectacle, marginalization, subordination, and commodification of the *white gaze* (Morrison, 2012). To refuse whiteness and push whiteness's toxic demarcations on Humanness *elsewhere*—even if temporarily, to center and defend Blackness—gave us joy.

Our second declaration was that we were uninterested in engaging with white people's bad faith because it is a form of bad faith. (Gordon, 1997). Anti-Black racism *is* entrenched within K-12 schools and higher education institutions' organizational arrangements. Therefore, this special issue was not seeking to answer *if* schools and schooling are anti-Black, but *how* K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs are innate fabricators and/or enablers of antiblackness (Coles & Stanley, this issue). Antiblackness is foundational a *thread that binds the fabric* of U.S. social relations. To confront and disrupt antiblackness for Black students and Black (teacher) educators, Coles (2019) reminds us that "we must commit to seeing it" (p. 5). To *see* it, our special issue builds upon a developing body of Black educational scholarship, theorizing the effects of antiblackness on Black youth in K-12 schooling.

As a "mode of being in the world" (West, 1991, p. 150), we organized the articles like a jazz album. Jazz is an artform and analytic frame of world-making that serves as a critical inquiry into studying the *forms* and *changes* (Bland, 1959) of the Black's conditions in the U.S. Moreover, jazz provides a pathway to secure Black liberation by *improvising* within/for our current/future lives (Gilmore, 2021). Improvisation is how we make a way out of no way—and in some ways—Black scholars conjure and improvise about the specificity of Black existence and futurity by intentionally carving out Black space through our theoretical richness as writers (Ohito & Coles, 2020). We organized the contributors' sonority into three themes: (1) *Educational Injustice Against the Black*, (2) *Centering and Defending Black Life in Teacher Education*, (3) *Narratives and Reflections of (Anti)Blackness in Pre-and In-Service Education*. **Theme 1** illuminates the mundaneness of anti-Black violence against Black youth and the denied opportunities for a meaningful educative experience. **Theme 2** offers frameworks and pathways to intentionally center Black children's humanity and protect them

from antiblackness' routine marginalization in education. Through a *personal existential context* (Yancy, 2005), **Theme 3** surfaces the importance of Black mattering and the manifestations of antiblackness' intricate nature within Black educators' professional lives. Proceeding below is a *roadmap* to trace this conceptual/theoretical ensemble of Black writing.

Serving as **the prelude**, "Using the White Space to Center Blackness: A Conversation with Guest Editor, Dr. Amir Gilmore," sets the album's tone by explaining the motivations behind the special issue; the importance of Black (Boy) Joy, anti-Black curricular confrontations in teacher education, un-suturing from whiteness (Yancy, 2015), and undoing anti-Black structures within K-12 schooling.

Track #1, entitled "Beyond Brutality: Addressing Anti-Blackness in Everyday Scenes of Teaching and Learning" by Karen Zaino and Jordan Bell, centered Saidiya Hartman's (1997) foundational text, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, to illuminate the "pervasiveness of anti-Blackness in the mundane routines of teaching and learning in schools." These everyday scenes of racial subjection and terror are an affective phenomenon maintained by students' relationships with teachers, school security officers (SEO), and school administrators. Despite schools' commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, chattel slavery's affective technologies within contemporary schooling continue to punish, exclude, and devalue Black youth.

Track #2, entitled "Not Suspended but Not Protected: Challenging School Discipline Reform in the Name of Restorative Justice for Young Adult Black Girls" by Iesha Jackson, illuminated the hyper-criminalization of young adult Black girls' actions and behaviors in high school because they do not *fit* the archetype of white middle-class heterosexual femininity. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework and interpretative case study as a methodological approach, Jackson explicates how a New York City (NYC) transfer high school's mediational approach failed to protect overage under-credited young adult Black girls from anti-Black violence.

Track # 3, entitled "Zero Tolerance Policies are Anti-Black: Protecting Racially Profiled Students from Educational Injustice," by Jonathan Lightfoot, examined how zero-tolerance policies disproportionately put Black students towards the pathway of the school-to-prison pipeline. Using CRT and the theorization of antiblackness, Lightfoot analyzes qualitative data from NYC public-school leaders on how school disciplinary policies operate in a school setting.

Moving on to **Theme 2, Track 4**, entitled, "Black Liberation in Teacher Education: (Re)Envisioning Educator Preparation to Defend Black Life and Possibility" by Justin A. Coles and Darrius Stanley revealed that P-12 classrooms and teacher education programs are *currently insufficient* to reduce the harm

caused by the permanence of anti-Black racism, due to these educational spaces' reliance on race-neutral or color-evasive pedagogies. Black children and Black (teacher) educators experience routine marginalization by being derided or invisibilized in the classroom and curriculum. To counter antiblackness and defend Blackness within educational spaces, Coles and Stanley conceptualized the multidisciplinary framework called "Black Liberation in Teacher Education (BLiTE)."

Track # 5, entitled, "If You Are Not Ready, Then Step Aside: Intentionally Centering the Black Male Body in Teacher Education" by Cherrel Miller Dyce and Julius Davis, highlighted the discursive practices of "institutionalized anti-Black maleness" that afflict Black male students K-12 schooling and teacher education programs. Miller Dyce and Davis emphatically call in and out educators unwilling or unready to intentionally center the Black male body within education to *step aside* from the profession. To center the Black male body, Miller Dyce and Davis strongly suggested using Afrocentric Assessment Mattering Pathways (AAMP) as a paradigm shift away from deficit-based approaches towards an asset and strengths-based paradigm.

As an interlude to theme 3, **Track # 6**, entitled, "Racialization of Knowledge: How the Marginalization of Black History and Knowledges Fosters a Lack of Racial Literacy among Teacher Candidates," by Patrick Radebe and Bathseba Opini perfectly illustrated how Blackness could sit in tension (Dumas & ross, 2016) within the educational imaginary—even in a "diverse" country like Canada. By situating their Black teacher educator experiences, Radebe and Bathseba revealed how teacher education programs at two Canadian universities enable and perpetuate anti-Black symbolic and epistemic violence to keep the racialization of knowledge white. Radebe and Bathseba's research illustrated the challenges of centering Blackness while navigating antiblackness within primarily white institutions (PWI).

In **Theme 3, Track # 7**, entitled, "Voices of Teacher Graduates: Preparation for Black Mattering in Schools" by Loyce E. Caruthers, Jennifer Waddell, Bradley Poos, and Ashley N. Smith utilized BlackCrit's (Dumas & ross, 2016) working theories as a framework and methodology to interview their Institute for Urban Education (IUE) graduates on how they established Black Educational Spaces (Warren & Coles, 2020) in schools, by centering Black mattering. So often, Black and white teacher candidates are taught white middle-class norms and idealisms to become an "effective teacher." By centering Black mattering, teacher candidates learned how to combat antiblackness and culturally sustain Black youth.

Track # 8, entitled "When the Teacher is the Token: Moving from Antiblackness to Antiracism" by Manya C. Whitaker, reflected on the existential and pedagogical tensions that "Black teacher educators have instructing a

predominately white preservice student body *about* antiblackness without becoming complicit *in* antiblackness.” Writing from a site of exposure (Yancy, 2005), Whitaker interrogated how to teach white students about Blackness without sacrificing or tokenizing her own identity.

Track # 9, entitled "Unlearn: Preparing Preservice Teachers as Antiracist Educators" by April Eddie, narrated and reflected on her curricular and pedagogical approaches in “providing preservice teachers a holistic, antiracist preparation.” By shifting her praxis to center Blackness instead of “generalized race and racism” in her curricula, Eddie’s research revealed antiblackness’ entrenchment and the defense of whiteness in her teacher candidates.

Track # 10, entitled, “This Ain't Yo' Mama's Composition Class: Addressing Anti-Blackness by Implementing Anti-Racist Pedagogy,” by Sharanna B. Brown, narrated her student’s opposition and uneasiness in addressing antiblackness in her freshman composition course designed around anti-racism. With their resistance to anti-racist pedagogy stemming from their K-12 experiences, Brown detailed how she had to pedagogically “somersault between coddling non-Black students and defending my instructional choices.”

Bringing it *home*, **Track # 11**, entitled, Reflections on the Politics of Professionalism: Critical Autoethnographies of Anti-Blackness in the ELA Classroom” by Stephanie P. Jones and Robert P. Robinson, employed the theorization of antiblackness and Critical Race Theory frameworks to offer compelling testimonies about how “antiblackness can infect what Black educators expect, and demand from students.” As former Black English teachers whose “pedagogies remained in close proximity to whiteness,” Jones and Robinson use vignettes to atone for and repair their “(un)conscious alignment and approval of white cultural norms.”

By gathering and curating these Black lyrical tracks, we invite you to study the tensions and understandings of the Black condition within a society situated *against the Black*. Despite being situated as *the damned of the earth* (Fanon, 1963), the Black stands an *existential enigma* (Gordon, 1997) to the Human and its junior partners. Eyed with suspicion and incomprehensibility, Black existence—which has been historically constituted as social deviance and the breakdown of (white) reason—is beset with the existential question of: “Why do they go on?” (Gordon, 1997, p. 5). *We go on* because of Black joy and liberation’s cries to end Black social suffering. *We go on* because we phenomenologically reject the white gaze’s (Morrison, 2012) ritualization, (anti)Black pathologies, and our subjugated *place*. *We go on* because we *choose* to live and get free—even if momentarily—from the imminent threat of anti-Black violence and skewered life chances. *We go on* because Black lives have value (Gordon, 1997). *We go on* because we are *human beings* and will always move to *our beat* and purposely be *off-beat* to white supremacy and antiblackness.

Thus, through a *bone-deep* listening, we hope you *linger* with the sounds of Black love, joy, anguish, responsibility, defiance, resistance, subversion, refusal, and liberation as we existentially critique the “ordinary” assumptions of *who* can be a human.

Notes on The Contributors

Amir Gilmore, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in Cultural Studies and Social Thought in Education at Washington State University. His interdisciplinary background in Cultural Studies, Africana Studies, and Education allows him to traverse the boundaries across the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities. Amir’s broad research interests are Black Aesthetics, Black Masculinities, Afrofuturism, Afropessimism, and the political economy of schooling. He is sometimes on Twitter @amir_asim.

LaToya T. Brackett is an assistant professor of African American Studies at the University of Puget Sound. She earned her B.A. in Africana Studies from Cornell University and her Ph.D. in African American and African Studies from Michigan State University. As a Black female scholar teaching about her oppressions, she focuses on the process rather than the product in her classroom.

David Sharpe-Haygood is a tenured professor and interim director of education born and raised in Phoenix, AZ. She comes from a legacy of community leaders, educators, and activists who helped pave the way for her and trained her to be a leader that amplifies social justice. Davida holds a master's degree in early childhood education and special education, a bachelor's degree in business administration, and is pursuing a doctoral degree in organizational leadership. Within teacher education, Davida works to train future teachers through an anti-racist and anti-bias pedagogical framework. Davida is passionate about anti-blackness in education because of the impact it has not only on students, the educational system but all aspects that make up our society.

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