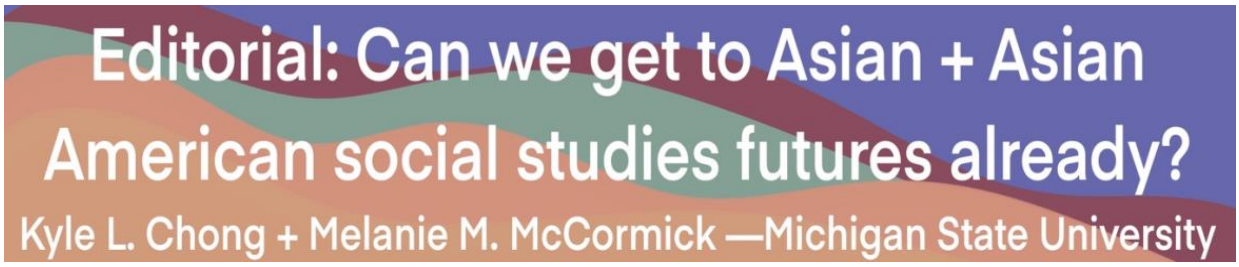
Iowa Journal for the Social Studies

A peer-reviewed electronic journal

Special Issue

Volume 31 Issue 1
Winter 2023

Table of Contents


Editorial: Can we get to Asian + Asian American social studies futures already?
Kyle L. Chong + Melanie M. McCormick —Michigan State University

Editorial: Can we get to Asian + Asian American social studies futures already?

Kyle L. Chong + Melanie M. McCormick
Michigan State University

"We're too distracted for nuance": Why Asian and Asian American Histories

We would like to first wish everyone a happy and healthy 2023, and we thank you for reading the *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies*! When we initially pitched a call for this special issue, it was actually quite different. The initial call centered unpacking what the Biden Administration refers to as 'strategic competition' with the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the dangers of conflating "China" with "Chinese people." The call sought manuscripts that shed light on how the Midwest reckons regionally with the shifting political and economic realities that inevitably will impact social studies education in the Midwest and nationally.

And then, we realized that what we needed to do first was continue to fill in nuances to support what teachers, teacher educators, and researchers know about Asian and Asian American histories. Specifically, we observe an alarming trend that researchers have noticed across education and beyond that anti-Asian racism, Asian Americans' invisibility and erasure from the social studies curriculum and state standards is not just a passive omission, but what An (2020, 2022) calls a curriculum of violence. We ultimately decided to center, even 40 years after the brutal murder of Vincent Chin, the "demystification," nuancing, and teaching of Asian and Asian American experiences as a transnational project of teaching social studies and social justice, especially because the U.S. Midwest being home to the fastest growing population of Asian and Asian American folx, there needs to be greater consideration of how Midwestern social studies educators can fight back against anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in solidarity with Black-led activism for racial justice.

As well, much anti-Asian racism and xenophobia is grounded in outdated and largely anti-Chinese (Sinophobic) (i.e. "COVID-19 = China Virus") tropes that target the entire Asian American community, which is a panethnic community, meaning that many ethnic communities share the Asian American Label. However, different communities within the Asian American panethnic community receive differing levels of formal and informal support (An, 2020, 2022; Liu, 2020). The foundations of the Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American and Asian (APIDA/A) coalition are grounded in Asia as "Other," to the west (Espíritu, 1992). This framing, called Orientalism, is largely to blame for a racial identity marker that a) represents more than half of the world's population, and b) is created by western scholarly traditions as a controlled place of difference ("the Other') (Leonardo, 2020; Said, 1979).

Moreover, damage-centered and colonial portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans, addition to other racialized communities, dominate the limited visibility of Asian Americans in "official" curricular narratives, like U.S. states' social studies standards, let alone Asian histories (An, 2022; Tuck, 2009). This problem extends to Asian American students and teachers in social studies classrooms that has historically relied on statistics and demographics to determine who is represented in the curriculum students of social studies learn (Kim & Hsieh, 2022; Rodriguez, 2018, Yi, 2022)

The thing is, it is these very Asian histories that are a necessary part of what leads many Asian Americans to navigate and negotiate pathways forward given our shared histories and

experiences in the United States, and the unique histories and traditions we carry forward. This reckoning has happened outside official curricular discourses, with counternarratives and, regrettably, at breaking points when violence is aimed at our panethnic community. Those histories are something we had to learn the hard way, in the wake of violence, and leads us to see our Asianness as both a lens, and a motivation to write more about it, as a result.

We feel that social studies curriculum materials, professional development opportunities, and teacher preparation programs need to be more inclusive of Asian and Asian American experiences and histories. Schools may celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month, but food and festivals are not enough for students, especially students with Asian and Asian American identities, to feel represented and for students with different ethnic, cultural, and racial identities to learn. We feel like there is a lack of resources for teachers, school administrators, curriculum developers, etc. to learn from to teach about Asian and Asian American experiences and histories. Our hope is to raise awareness in the field of education to support educators in teaching in more inclusive ways so that Asian and Asian Americans are not silenced or their histories are not erased from the learning.

"It's not like we've known this the whole time": Who We Are

I (Kyle, he/him/his) am Taiwanese and Japanese American. I am a transnational adoptee from Taipei, Taiwan, adopted by Chinese American parents from an upper middle class family in San Francisco, California. In this work, I often find myself unstably positioned in the Asian American community. For example, I was privileged to have been raised in a family of people who look like me and in a city which there were lots of people who look like me. I was surrounded by what I thought, and was taught, were Asian cultures. However, those "Asian" cultures were almost universally Southern Chinese heritage and community practices, drawn from the Cantonese majority in San Francisco (Paris, 2012). This left little space for me to understand my Taiwanese identity, especially growing up in a Chinese family for whom there was no distinction between Taiwanese and Chinese cultures. My life experiences have been impactful upon me as a scholar because of the ways "Chineseness" is an increasingly ubiquitous shorthand for all Asians and Asian Americans. Moving to the Midwest for my doctoral studies, however, equally influences the way I make sense of enacting anti-racist work in educational contexts. With there being a lot fewer Asian Americans in the Midwest, compared to the coasts, I have learned the ways in which political coalition and solidarity are formed when there are different negotiations on campuses between different ethnic communities that share the Asian American label.

I (Melanie, she/her/hers) am Korean American. I was adopted from Seoul at 5 months old. My family is white and I grew up in a predominately white community and attended predominantly white schools. Growing up I assimilated to a white cultural identity and actively denied any experiences my parents offered me to learn about my Korean identity. As an elementary teacher, I taught in an ethnically diverse school and taught many Asian and Asian American students. This experience in teaching opened me up to exploring my identity as an Asian American and I have continued this learning ever since. As a former teacher, I felt like I did not have access to information on teaching about Asian and Asian American experiences outside of my own. I never was offered professional learning opportunities and our curriculum materials were not very inclusive of Asian and Asian American experiences, which was disappointing. Currently, I work with many elementary schools and I have many students who

ask me if I am Chinese or if I am from China. I understand this is a way that young children are being curious, but it shows how there is a misconception that all Asian people are from China, which needs to be dismantled. We hope that this special issue can begin conversations around Asian and Asian American experiences and can support teachers in educative ways.

TransPacific TalkBack

We share our positionalities, and a little about ourselves, because of the ways we came to edit this special issue. That is, in some important ways, we are both Asian and Asian American. For us, there are ways in which the histories of the contexts in which we were born (Taiwan and South Korea) impact our individual and shared experiences as teacher educators in the United States. For example, as Ayres (2023) and Pol (2023) write in their articles in this issue, American military interventions across the Indo-Pacific, and Korea in particular, have been some of the few ways in which Asian contexts are mentioned in the social studies curriculum. For another, it was American economic and geostrategic interests that both caused nearly all countries to break diplomatic relations with Taiwan since the 1970s, and keeps Taiwan reliant upon American military protection. The experiences of curriculum builders in enacting more substantive, nuanced, and justice-oriented portrayals of Asian Americans remains challenged both in legislation that restricts ethnic studies and critical U.S. history teaching, the brave resistances to which Chosen Kin (2023) names in their article. With biological family in both Taiwan and Korea, the connections between these histories, and the need for more nuanced teaching about Asia and Asian Americans in social studies are of urgent importance for both of us.

Of equal importance are the ways in which Asian American teachers and students are supported in schools, and the ways in which they are empowered to talk back to the whiteness of social studies, as An (2023) pointedly elucidates. Kim and Hsieh (2022), in their recent book about the racialized experiences of Asian American teachers, note the glaring absence of Asian American experiences. We especially resonated with the insights that many APIDA teachers and students are silenced and marginalized in school settings. We believe that there is a need for teacher education as well as curriculum to better prepare pre-service teachers and teachers to teach about Asian and Asian American experiences and histories in classrooms. Currently there are inequities in the resources that teachers have access to as well as the training that teachers go through to teach about these experiences and histories. We also know that many teachers have not had personal experiences to learn about these rich histories and experiences throughout their own schooling. As educators, we know that preparation is key for teachers successfully leading rich discussions that are equitable, just, and inclusive in the classroom. We also hope that this issue can provide resources for teachers, curriculum designers, and other educators to utilize to improve their own practice.

The Urgency of Connecting Asian + Asian American Histories in Social Studies Education

In our stories, we also wish to center and share in the tremendous joy of our experiences. From sharing space with family (adopted, biological, and chosen), to asserting our voices in this conversation, we are especially grateful for our authors to help us consider our own stories anew— an invitation we extend to our readers to engage with these ambitious articles in this special issue:

Sohyun An, in her study about how four Asian American youth talked back to white social studies, found that these youth made connections between white social studies that perpetuates curricular erasures of Asian Americans and their experience of racist, xenophobic, heterosexist, and transphobic language at school. An, importantly, offers an urgent call for Asian American youth to continue to bring their cultural assets, as well as their demands to learn about their cultures, to school provides necessary scholarship about Asian American youth's sense making and responding to their social studies experiences. This article highlights the bravery of these youth in speaking back to the oppressiveness of social studies curriculum, which other Iowa Journal for the Social Studies authors, most recently Helena Donato Sapp (2022), have lifted up.

Kaylie Ayres explores representations of how hegemonic narratives are represented when teaching of United States led wars in Asia. In this conceptual paper, Ayers explains how curriculum and instruction can "other" and silence Asian histories. Ayres helpfully brings in perspectives from beyond the field of education, specifically from Asian and Asian American historians in her literature review which underscores the ongoing necessity of social studies as part of students' socialization about their identities, as is recommended by NCSS Theme 4 (Individual development and identity). She provides recommendations for secondary social studies teachers and educators from the unique vantage point of a preservice teacher candidate, with a particular focus on adding geographic dimensions to the teaching of U.S.-led wars in Asia, as recommended by NCSS Theme 3 (People, Places, and Environments).

Chosen Kin, a collective of liberatory educators and curriculum writers, provides a needed testimonio and counternarrative of their experience developing lesson plans for a K-12 curriculum about Asian Americans. When their work disrupted the centering and validation of the model minority myth and American dream, their work was censored. This article is a needed reflection on their resistances to being silenced and harmed by the curriculum developer that sought to reduce Asian and Asian American experiences to reinforce existing tropes. Chosen Kin's article offers four insights for social studies teachers and other educators that include an invitation into practicing collective refusal and fugitivity that honors the multiplicity of resistance praxes against dominant curricular ideologies in social studies.

Mariah Pol's article, like the previous two, focuses on the representation of Korean and Korean American history within U.S. social studies textbooks. Through her mixed-methods analysis and an Orientalist theoretical framework, her findings demonstrate the ongoing misrepresentation of Asian and Asian American histories within social studies and provides a compelling argument for ongoing skepticism towards official curricular and textbook narratives about Asian and Asian American communities.

Our Hopes, Moving Forward

While Covid-19, and the anti-Asian racism stoked in its wake, have left numerous deep scars on social studies teaching practices, there is ample room for our collective knowledge to continue to grow as a social studies community. We have tried to move and imagine pathways forward as we begin to emerge from this global pandemic for social studies teaching, teacher education, and education research broadly in The Iowa Journal for the Social Studies, and beyond (Chong, 2021, Chong & Orr, 2023; Jones & McCormick, 2020; McCormick & West, 2022; Reichmuth & Chong, 2022).

As we look ahead, we hope teachers and researchers will take up some of these implications into their own praxis. As our collective knowledge about the experiences of the Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Community in social studies education deepens, we remain aware of the ways in which (anti-)Chinese tropes, stereotypes, ideologies and logics, continue to inform how the entire Asian American community is treated in social studies. We hope that this special issue will contribute to lifting up Asian and Asian American experiences and histories. We hope to continue to create more inclusive and just spaces to learn about these experiences and histories.

We want to thank everyone who sent us articles for this special issue of the Iowa Journal for the Social Studies— with every love to the authors for trusting us with their work. We are especially thrilled with the geographic and intellectual diversity of the authors and articles in this special issue. We also wish to give special thanks Drs. Jane Lo, Sohyun An, Anne-Lise Halvorsen, Jungmin Kwon, and Dean Vesperman, and the Executive Board of the Iowa Council for the Social Studies for their support throughout the production of this special issue and for giving us the space to edit this special issue and the opportunity to lift up authors whose work we admire. Lastly, we want to thank all of the readers of the IJSS and our reviewers who provided humanizing and supportive feedback to our authors throughout the process. We wish you a happy and healthy new year.

Kyle L. Chong and Melanie M. McCormick ~ Guest Editors

References

An, S. (2020). Disrupting curriculum of violence on Asian Americans. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 42*(2), 141-156. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2020.1753492

An, S. (2022). Re/Presentation of Asian Americans in 50 States' K–12 U.S. History Standards, *The Social Studies, 113*(4), 171-184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2021.2023083

Chong, K. L. (2021). Exploring Curricular Ambiguity, Erasure, and Political Invisibility of Asian Americans in the Secondary Social Studies Curriculum, *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies, 29*(2), 30-57, https://iowasocialstudies.org/resources/Documents/IJSS%20Summer%202021%2029(2).pdf

Chong, K. L. & Orr, S. M. (2023). Towards an Antiracist Pedagogy of Humanizing Co-Creatorship in Teacher Education, *The Educational Forum, 87*(2), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2022.2153188*

Donato-Sapp, H. L. (2022). Brave and I didn't know it: A 12-year-old decolonizes her elementary education, *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies, 30*(2), 6-64.

Espiritu, Y. L. (1992). *Asian American panethnicity: Bridging institutions and identities.* Temple University Press.

Jones, B. L. & McCormick, M. M. (2021). Racism, COVID, Virtual- Oh My!:Using Read-Alouds as a Tool to Teach Virtual Antiracist Social Studies, *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies, 29*(1), 8-32.

Kim, J. & Hsieh, B. (2022). *The racialized experience of Asian American Teachers in the US: Applications of Asian Critical Race Theory to resist marginalization.* Routledge.

Leonardo, Z. (2020). *Edward Said and Education.* Routledge.

Liu, W. (2020). Internationalism Beyond the "Yellow Peril": On the Possibility of Transnational Asian American Solidarity, *Journal of Transnational American Studies, 11*(2), 13-16. ttps://doi.org/10.5070/T8112050102

McCormick, M. M. & West, A. N. (2022). Seen but not Seen: Supporting Transracial and Transnational Adoptees in the Classroom, *Social Studies and the Young Learner, 34*(4), 26-31.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy : A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice, *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 93-97. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Reichmuth, H. M. & Chong, K. L. (2022). Teaching Asian American Contributions to the Civil Rights Movement Through Children's Literature. *Social Studies and the Young Learner, 35*(2), 11-18. https://www.socialstudies.org/social-studies-and-young-learner/35/2/teaching-asian-american-contributions-civil-rights-movement?nocache=TRUE&check_logged_in=1 **

Rodríguez, N. N. (2018). From margins to center: Developing cultural citizenship education through the teaching of Asian American history. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 46*(8). 528-573 https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2018.1432432

Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism.* Vintage Books.

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(3), 409-427.

Yi, J. (2022). Reading diverse books is not enough: Challenging racist assumptions using Asian American children's literature, *Social Studies and the Young Learner, 34*(3), 8-13.

Abstract: This article moves Asian American youth voices from the periphery to the center of discussions about racism and social studies education by sharing Asian American youth's experience of social studies amid the upsurge of anti-Asian violence since the COVID-19 pandemic. Employing AsianCrit as a theoretical lens, this article attends to Asian American middle school students' sensemaking, critiques, theories, and proposals for change that arose from an "unofficial, unconventional social studies space for students of color." Doing so, the article seeks to not only affirm Asian American youth's experiential knowledge but also draw educational insights for transforming official social studies curriculum toward an antiracist, antioppressive space for all students.

Keywords: Asian American youth, white social studies, COVID-19 pandemic, AsianCrit, unofficial social studies space

Annie: No school on Friday!

Sunny: Yay! But sad.

Toni: What do you mean?

Sunny: When the Atlanta spa shooting happened, the school didn't say anything. Now with the Atlanta Braves winning, all schools are closed to celebrate?!

Adithi: Not surprising.

Toni: They don't care about us!

Sunny: The game ended last night. Today we got the school closing news?!

Annie: That was quick!

Adithi: Who doesn't like an extra day off? But the school should not care about only white people.

It was Wednesday afternoon, November 3, 2021. Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni[1] were busy texting while waiting for the school bus to go home. These four 8th graders were among the few Asian American students at Dale Middle School, which was in a conservative white-dominant[2] town in metro Atlanta, Georgia. The four were talking about the school district's announcement that had been sent just before the school ended that day: *In celebration of the hometown team's World Series Championship, all schools in Dream school district will be closed on Friday, November 5.*

While excited for the extra day off, these four Asian American youth felt uneasy. They remembered the school's complete silence on the Atlanta spa shooting earlier that year, in which a white man killed six Asian immigrant women and two others (Taylor & Houser, 2021). The shooting happened only 10 miles from the school, and Asian American students, albeit not the majority, made up 16% of the student population at Dale. Not a single teacher, however, mentioned the tragic event the next day or in the following days. The school carried

on as if nothing had happened. In a stark contrast, when the Atlanta's Major League Baseball team won the World Series, the school district announced the district-wide school closing on Friday to have a three-day weekend for celebration— less than 24 hours after the Braves' win. Teachers also encouraged the students to attend the celebration parade. Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni felt disturbed. They were reminded again of where the school's priorities and values lied.

Stories like this vignette are rarely told. Often viewed as a model minority who does well in school, or perpetual foreigners who do not count as real Americans (Lee, 2009), Asian American students have too often been excluded from discussion on racism, and thus their perspectives and experiences are unfamiliar to many. Listening to Asian American youth, however, not only affirms their experiential knowledge but also provides important perspectives that need to be considered if social studies education can be antiracist and antioppressive for all students (King, 2019; Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2022).

This article moves the voices of Asian American youth from the periphery to the center of the discussion about racism and social studies education by sharing stories of Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni. As Asian American students in a white-dominant school in Georgia, the four youth were navigating a white-centric social studies curriculum at school. Their en/countering of white social studies took place against the backdrop of increased anti-Asian violence and other social justice struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet schoolteachers' general avoidance of teaching anything deemed controversial left the youth as well as other students at Dale by themselves to make sense of the world. In search for guidance, Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni created their own "unofficial, unconventional social studies space" (King, 2019, p. 100) through a book club, in which they read Asian American literature and discussed issues of racism and other forms of oppression. This space helped the youth connect the dots between white social studies and psychological and

physical violence on Asian Americans as well as other marginalized groups in school and society and further to build an emerging sense of agency and responsibility to act for change.

This article attends to the Asian American youth's sensemaking, critiques, theories, and proposals for change regarding official social studies curriculum, which arose from the unofficial, unconventional social studies space. In doing so, this article draws important educational insights for transforming social studies toward a truly antiracist space (King, 2019). Below, I first situate the study within the relevant literature and outline the theoretical framework. Then I explicate the research method and present the study findings and implications.

Literature Review

White Social Studies

A school curriculum "is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation" (Apple, 1996, p. 22). Instead, Apple (1996) writes, it is produced out of "a politics that embodies conflict over what some regard as simply neutral descriptions of the world and what others regard as elite conceptions that empower some groups while disempowering others" (p. 23). What is included and how it is depicted in school curricula through this political process sends an important message to students about whose knowledge counts and whose does not, thus implicitly and explicitly shaping social reality (Apple, 2004; Milner, 2010).

Far from serving as an honest mirror of reality, the social studies curriculum has been what Chandler and Branscombe (2015) termed "white social studies" (p. 63), which promotes a white version of reality by privileging master or dominant narratives while silencing counternarratives. Master narratives are sociohistorical mythologies that "construct realities in ways that legitimize [white] power and position" (Tate, 1997, p. 221). Counternarratives,

in contrast, draw upon "the actual experience, history, culture, and intellectual tradition of people of color" (Matsuda, 1995, p. 63) and debunk the objectivity claims of the master narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Decades of curriculum studies have uncovered continued trends of white social studies, such as centering whiteness as the norm while excluding or misrepresenting Indigenous, Black, and other marginalized peoples and their perspectives in telling the story of the United States (An, 2022; Busey et al., 2021; Davis, 2019; Sabzalian, 2019; Sabzalian et al., 2021; Salinas et al., 2016; Santiago, 2017; Shear et al., 2015).

This practice of white social studies functions as a source of violence, not a source of humanity and safety. In explicating never-ending anti-Black violence in the United States, Cridland-Hughes and King (2015) stated, "While violence on unarmed Black bodies occurs on the streets, the idea of violence against nonwhite bodies begins in the classroom" (p. 100). This means that Black deaths committed or sanctioned by the white-dominant society are preceded by perceptions of African Americans as subhuman, and this dehumanizing perception starts in classrooms where official and enacted curricula exclude or misrepresent African Americans as dangerous, inferior, and unworthy (Brown & Brown, 2010; Johnson et al., 2017).

This logic can explain curricular violence against marginalized communities in general. When an official curriculum excludes or misrepresents historically marginalized groups as insignificant, inferior, unworthy, or dangerous, it sends a message that these peoples are not and should not be valued, cared for, or respected. This message, when not interrupted by teachers through enacted curriculum, becomes a source of psychological violence by telling the marginalized youth that they have no value in their own country and, thus, killing their spirit and humanity (Dozono, 2020; Johnson & Bryan, 2016). Further, the

oppressive curricular message can result in physical violence when people take up the message and attack marginalized people (Cridland-Hughes & King, 2015).

The upsurge of anti-Asian violence during the COVID-19 pandemic can be partly explained by the curricular violence of white social studies. In other words, blaming Asian Americans for the pandemic is allowed, promoted, and justified by the curricular message from white social studies—Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners and can be punished when they pose a threat to "Americans" (An, 2022).

Curriculum matters. Whether and how Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are included and represented in official curriculum is not an academic debate— it is a life-and-death issue. Despite emotional challenges in engaging with difficult histories, learning about and from marginalized communities and their experiences and critiques of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and other structural violence is a must to create a more just and humane world (An, 2021; van Kessel & Saleh, 2020).

Asian American Youth on White Social Studies

How do Asian American youth make sense of white social studies? How do they respond to a social studies curriculum that excludes or misrepresents Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners or a quiet, obedient minority (Hartlep & Scott, 2016)? How do they react to curricular mistreatment of marginalized groups in general? The extant research provides some insights on this.

The middle-class Korean American high school students in An's (2009) study, for example, generally found little problem with the white social studies by embracing the dominant racial ideology of whiteness as the American identity. They took for granted the white-centric curriculum because in their view, "whites are the majority," "America started with a bunch of European immigrants," and "Asians are new to America." In contrast,

working-class Korean American high school students in Lew's (2007) study were critical of the school curriculum that marginalized their ethnic, racial identity. They found school irrelevant and meaningless in their daily lives and resisted the uncaring, exclusive school environment by dropping out.

Hmong American youth in Lee et al.'s (2020) study were also discontent with school that did not speak to or for them, and they yearned to talk about race and racism in school. Their thirst led to participation in community-based educational spaces where they could explore what mattered to them. Meanwhile, Verma's (2006) study on Sikh immigrant youth from India in the aftermath of 9/11 revealed that Sikh students attempted to negotiate the backlash against them by performing patriotic identities, but many ended up feeling depressed or even suicidal in the face of the attacks. Ghaffar-Kucher's (2012) study uncovered working-class Pakistani American youth who were alienated at school as perpetual foreigners and enemies of the nation.

Although most extant studies on Asian American youth have focused on general school experiences, not social studies-specific experience, they provide insights on how Asian American youth might en/counter white social studies. Above all, the literature suggests that Asian American youth's engagement with social studies can vary, and the variance may partially relate to varied sociohistorical positionalities of the students. This article builds on and extends the literature by exploring Asian American middle school students 'experiences of social studies against the backdrop of anti-Asian violence and other social justice struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

This study grounded in AsianCrit. As an extension of Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1995; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado & Crenshaw, 1993), AsianCrit seeks to recognize and

forefront the racialized history of Asian Americans and its subsequent impact on Asian American experiences (Chang, 1993). Charted out by Iftikar and Museus (2018), an AsianCrit framework has seven interconnected tenets.

First, the Asianization tenet explicates racism that is specific to Asian Americans (Iftikar & Museus, 2018). A distinctive nature of anti-Asian racism rests on xenophobic narratives of Asians as the "Yellow peril" who embody economic, political, cultural, and public health threats to the white nation (Lee 2016; Wu, 2002). That is, since their earliest arrivals to the United States, Asian Americans have been racialized as dangerous foreigners who can never become American and can be punished when they are perceived as a racial, economic, political, or public health threat to the dominant white majority (Lee, 2016). This racialization has been at the core of anti-Asian discrimination and violence throughout US history (Lee, 2016, 2019). In the meantime, Asian Americans have been elsewhere (or erstwhile) touted as the model minority for being successful, hardworking, and uncomplaining about the status quo (Hsu, 2015; Wu, 2014). This racialization has served to strengthen white supremacy by erasing the presence of Asian American struggles with oppression; upholding anti-Black arguments that those who do not thrive are at fault, not the white supremacist system; and pitting Asian Americans against Black and Brown communities in competition, rather than in solidarity against white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Hsu, 2015; Wu, 2014).

Second, the transnational contexts tenet highlights the fact that Asian migration to the United States and their post-migration lives cannot be fully understood without considering transnational factors such as US imperialism, militarism, and capitalism in Asia (Lee, 2016; Okihiro, 2017). Third, the (re)constructive history tenet underscores the fact that Asian Americans have been largely excluded from American history and thus seeks to transcend the invisibility by constructing a collective Asian American historical narrative (Lee, 2016).

Fourth, the strategic (anti)essentialism tenet cautions against the oppressive nature of panethnicity while at the same time supporting the strategic use of panethnicity, particularly when the political strength is derived from a unified front rather than from the separate efforts of individual subgroups (Espiritu, 1992).

The remaining three tenets are reiterations of CRT tenets. First, AsianCrit employs CRT's counterstory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) to center the voices of Asian Americans on dismantling white supremacy. Second, AsianCrit concurs with CRT on intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), explicating how racism and other systems of oppression intersect and mutually shape Asian American lives. Third, AsianCrit agrees with the CRT tenet of social justice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) because ending anti-Asian racism is a part of the larger social justice project against white supremacy. In short, AsianCrit builds on and extends CRT to offer a refined set of tenets that can advance critical analyses of racism specific to Asian Americans and explicate how white supremacy operates in shaping Asian American lives (Iftikar & Museus, 2018).

Methodology

Research Design

AsianCrit informed the research design. First, the social justice and counterstorytelling tenets justified listening to Asian American youth and their social studies learning experiences as a part of the social justice project to debunk and disrupt the curricular violence of white social studies. With this goal in mind, the research question of the study was, How do Asian American middle school students make sense of and respond to social studies taught at school? Second, the tenets of Asianization and intersectionality guided data analysis regarding how Asian American youth respond to anti-Asian racism reflected in or condoned by white social studies as well as how students 'varied identities intersected with and shaped their social studies experiences.

Third, the strategic (anti)essentialism tenet informed the definition of Asian Americans in the study. Mindful of the danger in both uncritical reification of a racial category and complete rejection of racial categorization, I defined Asian Americans in this study as people whose ethnic backgrounds originate in the Asian continent. Further, I sought to elucidate, if possible, common experiences of Asian American youth for their shared panethnic identity, while at the same time I was vigilant to their different experiences, if any, due to their divergent ethnic, religious, gender, or other identities.

Research Context

This study organically grew out of a book club that Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The four met in sixth grade at Dale and became friends. Toward the end of sixth grade, the pandemic hit the country, followed by stay-in-shelter recommendations and the switch to virtual schooling. When the new school year began, the school offered both virtual and face-to-face learning options. Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni were among 62% of students at Dale who chose the virtual option. After more than a year of virtual learning, the four went back to face-to-face schooling when their eighth grade year began. To feel connected during isolation, social distancing, and virtual schooling, Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni relied on each other through texting and video chats. Then, one day in seventh grade, they came up with a virtual book club idea, through which they wanted not only to read and discuss their favorite books but also to talk about their daily lives. They named their book club *Basement*.

A turning point for *Basement* was the Atlanta spa shooting in March 2021. The event happened just 10 miles from where the students lived. They were shocked, scared, sad, mad, and confused. Yet their teachers said nothing and carried on teaching as if nothing had happened. This is when I was brought into *Basement*. I am the mother of Sunny, one of the *Basement* members. *Basement* members asked me to come to their space as an expert on

Asian American studies and guide them to make sense of the mass shooting of Asian immigrant women.

After the meeting, the students decided to turn *Basement* into a space for learning Asian American histories through Asian American literature. They asked me to recommend children's and young adult literature on Asian American history and invited me regularly (once a month on average) as a content expert to provide historical contexts on the topics addressed in the books (see Appendix for the list of books and topics addressed). The book club continued till the end of eighth grade, meeting biweekly online or offline.

Research Participants and Data

Near the end of the students' eighth grade year, I invited Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni to a study on Asian American youth's social studies learning experiences. All agreed to participate. While sharing a panethnic identity as Asian American, the four differed in terms of ethnicity, religion, and gender identity. Annie self-identified as a Chinese Christian girl, Adithi as a Hindu Indian girl, Toni as a Vietnamese biracial nonbinary, and Sunny as a Korean girl.

Data were generated through semistructured interviews. First, I conducted a group interview, in which the four students shared, interrogated, and reflected together on their K–8 social studies experiences. Second, I conducted individual interviews, in which each student elaborated on what the student had shared during the group interview and shared their family histories and other topics of their choice related to social studies learning (see Appendix for interview questions). The approximately 2-hour-long group interview and about 1-hour-long individual interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. I shared the transcriptions with the students for review and asked them to choose their pseudonyms. Students also chose pseudonyms for their schools and other individuals whose names appeared in the transcripts.

For analysis, I first read the transcripts multiple times to fully immerse myself in them. Then, following the methodology of Saldaña (2016), I began two cycles of coding. First, I used descriptive and in vivo coding to summarize a passage with a word or short phrase from the transcripts. Second, I applied focused coding, for which I explicitly used the theoretical lens and research question as a guide to group the frequently occurring and significant codes. Third, I analyzed how the categories from the previous cycle related to one another. To ensure the centering of youth's knowledge, I conducted member checks, bringing my analysis to the students to confirm that my interpretations seemed accurate to them.

Researcher Positionality

My researcher positionality is important because it describes the relationship between the researcher and the research participants as well as the research topic. I was a regularly invited guest to the book club as a content expert as well as a mother of one book club member. I related to the youth through my Asian American identity, yet I was in many ways an outsider to their world due to my positionality as a straight Korean adult woman. I am also a social studies teacher educator. Therefore, I came into this study as a learner with humility, listening to the youth deeply to learn from and cocreate knowledge with them regarding Asian American students' social studies experiences.

Working with youth of Color indeed engenders quandaries about how and what researchers present when sharing learnings about work done with the youth (Player, 2021). Following wisdom from Player (2021) and other scholars who have worked with youth of Color with ethics of caring (Ngo, 2017; Ybarra, 2021), I worked diligently to produce nonexploitative research that centers youth voices while still respecting their rights to opacity. I also discussed with the youth what was acceptable to share and what was not, providing them opportunities to screen and revise my analysis (Player, 2021). In sharing their

stories below, I endeavor to present the youth in their own terms, using as much of their actual voices as possible.

Findings

As Asian American students attending a white-dominant school in Georgia, Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni had lots to say about social studies taught and untaught at the school. The findings that follow reflect three salient themes that emerged from their stories: talking back at the curricular exclusion of Asian American history, talking back at the curricular exclusion of other marginalized histories, and planning to act for change.

Talking Back at the Curricular Exclusion of Asian American History

First, the four Asian American youth "talked back" (hooks, 1994) on the complete exclusion of Asian American history in the social studies curriculum at their school. Their initial reactions to the interview question, "What is your overall evaluation of social studies you learned at school?" were "not good," "boring," "all about white people," and "nothing about Asian Americans." In explicating their responses, they showed me the group text messages that they sent to each other on the day that their school district announced the school closing for celebrating the Atlanta Braves' World Series championship.

Sunny: It's like this. When the Atlanta spa shooting happened, the school said nothing. When the Atlanta Braves won, there was even a three-day weekend for celebration! The school doesn't care about us!

Adithi: Yeah. We didn't learn anything about Asian American history. Like Wong Kim Ark, Vincent Chin, or Sammy Lee, we now know about them not because of school but because of *Basement*.

Annie: Angel Island and Japanese American incarceration too. I mean, we learned about Pearl Harbor; we learned about Ellis Island over and over! But no teacher talked about Angel Island or Japanese American incarceration!

Toni: That's why I said it's about all white people. Well, we learned a little bit about African Americans and Native Americans, but that was basically it.

Adithi: Yeah, I used to think I don't like social studies because it's boring and there's just too much to memorize, but now that I think about it, it was because there was nothing about people like me.

The four expressed undeniable discontent with curricular silence on Asian American history. They elaborated their responses further during their individual interviews. Sharing her experience of learning about immigration, Annie said that fourth-grade teachers at her school conducted an Ellis Island simulation, in which all fourth graders were to dress up as European immigrants entering Ellis Island. Many white parents and grandparents volunteered to come dressed up and played roles as government officers, medical doctors, or other personnel in the immigration station. It was only after reading *Landed*—a picture book on early Chinese migration and Angel Island—in *Basement* that Annie came to realize how white-centric the school lesson was.

> Back then, I didn't know anything about Angel Island. Even my parents had no clue. They are third- or fourth-generation Chinese Americans, you know?! I was given a role as an Irish girl coming to Ellis Island. Well, it was a fun day running around school. But looking back now, I am upset. Instead of spending a whole month talking about Ellis Island and preparing for the show, teachers could have taught Angel Island too.

Toni elaborated their evaluation of social studies as "all about white people" during the individual interview. Taking the Vietnam War as an example, they said:

> I am Vietnamese, and I wish I learned about Vietnamese experiences of the war, how they got here, and what was their life like in America. But there was nothing. It was always names and dates and stuff. Actually, books we read in *Basement* [*Inside Out & Back Again* and *Dia's Story Cloth]* taught me more about the war.

When I probed Toni about home learning on the Vietnam War, they explained, "My mom is white, so I guess she doesn't know much. My dad is Vietnamese, but he didn't talk much about it" until "I asked him about it as I was reading these books and got curious."

Sunny also elaborated on her frustration with curricular silence on Asian American history. Reflecting on Korean War lessons taught in elementary and middle school, Sunny wished that "my teachers could have used books like *Finding Junie Kim*, instead of using worksheets and talking about the American perspective only!" She added, "I mean it was always like America went to Korea to rescue poor Koreans from evil communists. There were no stories from Korean perspectives." Meanwhile, Adithi pointed to a missed opportunity in the eighth-grade social studies, which was a year-long study of Georgia history: "What about early Asian migration to Georgia when talking about post-Civil War Georgia? What about the ATL spa shooting when talking about Georgia today? There was zero time spent on Asian American history."

These four youth connected the dots between the curricular exclusion of Asian American history and anti-Asian racism rampant at school and in society. During the group interview, Annie theorized, "If kids don't learn at school, they would think and act like what they learn at home." She supported her theory with her lived experience: "There's this kid

named Jared. He annoys me all the time. Like, '*Do you eat bat? China virus! When are you going back to China?'* He must be watching Fox News at home." Sunny joined in, saying, "Yeah, he used to call me Kim Jung Eun or communist. Now with the pandemic, he began to call me China virus! I said STOP! But he continued!" Adithi added, "Kids are also mocking Indian accents all the time! They think it's just funny!" Toni chimed in, saying, "That's not funny at all! It can turn into really ugly like the Atlanta spa shooting!" Likewise, the youth were clear on the danger of the curricular exclusion of Asian Americans.

Talking Back at Curricular Silence on Other Marginalized Groups

Second, these four students talked back at social studies (un)taught at school, which went beyond the issue of Asian Americans. The exchange below came from the group interview.

Annie: It's not just Asian Americans. School doesn't teach other minority groups ' histories either. Except the civil rights movement or MLK and Rosa Parks, we didn't learn much about Black history. When there was a BLM protest right here in Atlanta, no teachers talked about it.

Adithi: Yeah, we are missing a lot, I guess. All we learned in class was what great things white men did.

Toni: No current events either! I mean, in elementary school, kids were saying nasty things about Hillary Clinton. My teacher said we are not talking about politics and moved on. I also remember some kids were talking about the Muslim ban or ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] as if Trump was doing the right thing. My teacher heard but just walked away!

Sunny: See, that's why middle school is a mess! Literally kids say all these racist, sexist, transphobic, Islamophobic stuff every second! School bus, hallway, cafeteria. But teachers pretend nothing is going on.

Indeed, the formative years of these students took place within the period of the Trump administration, which was openly hostile to minority rights, evidenced by continued state-sanctioned violence against Black people, an attempted Muslim ban, misuse of ICE, and scorn for the Black Lives Matter movement. Now the students were also experiencing anti-Asian violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. They wanted to talk about these issues in class and learn how the past shaped the present issues, yet their teachers remained silent. In the opinion of these youth, such silence is harmful. During the group interview, they expressed these views as follows:

Adithi: If not school, where? These kids go home and hear what their parents or Fox News or their church talk about Asians, Blacks, Latinx, Indigenous, and nonbinary people! Many kids at school, they really believe BLM are terrorists or Mexicans are illegal! It's not just White kids. Asian kids too!

Annie: Right! The other day in the discord chat, we were talking about the abortion ban. One kid was against abortion, saying if a girl is raped, it's her fault! Several kids agreed with him! Can you believe? Some of them were Asian.

Adithi: Yeah, it's everywhere.

Toni: For me, some random kids come up to me and say, '*tranny, are you a girl or a boy? You can't be boy!'* They laugh at me. I laugh at them! But it's too much!

Sunny: So sorry Toni. I know these kids. I went to the same elementary school and rode the same school bus. They were nice little kids back then. But in middle school, they somehow turned into this racist, sexist, transphobic. I don't know what happened to them! It must be home! Or school that doesn't do anything.

Instead of being a site where everyone's humanity and safety were assured, the school was where both blatant and subtle forms of racist, heterosexist, transphobic, and xenophobic languages and interactions were allowed or condoned. The four youth were theorizing a possible relationship between the exclusive curriculum at school and the oppressive thoughts and actions rampant at school.

Planning Action for Change

When I asked the students if they reported bullying and harassment to schoolteachers, all four said no. Toni explained, "I don't think it would make any difference." Adithi agreed, saying, "We have this social emotional learning time when the school counselors talk about no bullying and stuff. But see, it's not working." Sunny added the virtual schooling during the pandemic as another barrier because "even communicating with teachers for homework and stuff was hard." Annie extended this thought, saying, "Plus, things may get worse. I mean kids like Jared will make my life more miserable in the school bus if I report him!" Toni agreed, saying, "Yeah, sometimes it's just better to ignore them."

With these various reasons, the youth chose silence. Rather than indicating a lack of agency and power, the students 'silence can be seen partly as a strategic response to protect themselves from further dehumanization and harm (Subedi & Maleku, 2021). That is, the youth were refusing to engage in interactions that would otherwise further harm them psychologically or physically.

Reflecting on their K–8 social studies learning experience, the four brainstormed possible future actions.

Annie: I remember we talked about Illinois becoming the first state to require Asian American history to be taught. Also some similar efforts going on in Georgia. Maybe we can be part of that?

Sunny: I'm in! High school will be super busy, but why not?! I also think we need to speak up for ethnic studies in high school.

Toni: Right! If not, we will have the exact same white-centric social studies. Along with that, I am thinking about starting a student club for nonbinary kids at Wilson [high school]. I know it will be tough though.

Adithi: Yeah, you know this conservative neighborhood! For me I don't have specific ideas yet. But I will support whatever you all are doing.

During the individual interviews, students elaborated on their future action plans. For Toni, "middle school has been rough" because of their nonbinary gender identity along with their parents getting divorced. Attributing a positive effect to *Basement* for "keeping me alive," Toni shared, "I feel like I can do something. I mean I need to do something to stand up for myself and other kids like me." Although unsure yet, Adithi was thinking out loud, saying, "I really liked our *Basement*. So maybe the four of us can lead a book club for younger kids?!" Annie and Sunny also exhibited a sense of agency and responsibility to challenge white social studies through speaking up at school and beyond.

Discussion and Implications

Asian American Youth Talk Back at White Social Studies

As King (2019) noted, the field of social studies is overwhelmingly white-centric and has been so since its inception. The stories of Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni confirm the

prevalence of white social studies and its insidious harm. Up until the eighth grade, the four Asian American youth said they did not learn any Asian American history at school. At home, most parents, whether first-generation or fourth-generation Asian Americans, did not talk much about Asian American history, which might be possibly and partially due to their lack of time, knowledge, or resources (An, 2009). *Basement*, the book club that the youth launched during the pandemic, was the sole space where the students got to learn about Asian American history and realize how white-centric the social studies curriculum at school was.

This realization led the youth to connect the dots between white social studies and the pervasiveness of racist, heterosexist, transphobic, and xenophobic language and interactions at school. Having epithets hurled at them like "China Virus," "bat eater," "communist," "Kim Jung Eun," or "Go back to your country," or being teased for their parents 'English accents, or hearing their peers say "Mexicans are illegal" or "it's the girl who's to blame for being raped," the four youth in this study saw how white social studies can condone or promote oppressive thinking and acting. This reckoning was behind their newfound desire for social studies that would guide them to learn about their own and others 'histories, make sense of how the past shapes the present, and build knowledge and skills to work together toward justice.

For such a curriculum to happen, the students realized they could not just sit and wait, because otherwise the high school curriculum would be as exclusive as that of elementary and middle school. Albeit at a brainstorming stage, these eighth graders were charting out possible future actions, such as speaking up for ethnic studies in high school, participating in a local movement for ethnic studies, or starting a space for marginalized youth at school or beyond.

The en/countering of white social studies by Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni corroborate what scholars have long reported: (a) students of different sociohistorical

identities have divergent understandings of history (An, 2009; Barton, 2001; Dan et al., 2010; Epstein, 1998; Jaffee, 2016; Levy, 2016; Salinas & Alarcón, 2016; Urrieta, 2009; Yoder, 2020); (b) they distrust social studies teachers and the official curriculum for excluding or misrepresenting non-whites ʾperspectives (Busey & Russell, 2016; Santiago, 2017; Woodson, 2016); and (c) they yearn to learn about their communities ʾhistories in schools but continually get disappointed by an exclusive curriculum (Lew, 2007; Ngo, 2017; Urrieta, 2009). While affirming previous findings, this study contributes to the scholarship by adding Asian American youth's sensemaking of and responding to social studies, which has been lacking in the literature.

Specifically, the study findings unsettle the lumping of diverse Asian American students into a monolithic group of high-achieving, obedient, quiet, problem-free students (Lee et al., 2020). The four students discussed here have been facing subtle and overt anti-Asian racism, and the specifics of their experiences varied along their different sociohistorical positionalities. Whereas Toni was struggling with heterosexist, transphobic bullying due to their nonbinary gender identity, Adithi was having to deal with kids mocking her parents' Indian English accents. Meanwhile, Annie and Sunny were encountering anti-Chinese, anti-communist harassment due to their Chinese and Korean ethnic backgrounds in the midst of the pandemic.

Encountering complex forms of anti-Asian racism, the four youth were not quiet or powerless. Although they did not report hostile incidents to their teachers due to distrust, they had lots to say and proposals for change. While sometimes speaking back to bullies, at other times they chose disengagement with potentially confrontational or harmful interactions. Such refusals were not due to powerlessness but represented a form of agency to protect the self from further dehumanization (Subedi & Maleku, 2021).

An Urgent Call for Antiracist Social Studies

The study findings put forth an urgent call to end white social studies. If social studies claim responsibility for developing the next generation of democratic citizens, the trends of white social studies cannot continue (King, 2022; Vickery & Rodríguez, 2022). In efforts to transform social studies toward a new antiracist, antioppressive paradigm, King (2019) advised us to learn from "unofficial and unconventional social studies spaces for students of color" (p. 91). These spaces, according to King (2019), are not associated with official schooling and do not conform to whiteness. Instead, the spaces are where students of Color learn about themselves and their histories in critical and engaging ways. These spaces are "special and sacred" for students of Color because they are "the only bright spot in the students 'educational career" and further help the youth heal from "the psychic violence students of Color are confronted with on a daily basis" (p. 93).

Examples abound. The after-school writing club in a study by Player (2021), the community-based youth theater program in one by Ngo (2017), and an ethnic studies course offered at a community learning center in a study by Ybarra (2021) were all spaces where students of Color could explore racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression they faced in school and society and develop a social critique of injustices as well as agency to bring change. The book club in this study was in a sense such an unofficial, unconventional social studies space for Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni. The four Asian American middle-school students were in search of guidance to make sense of the March 2021 Atlanta spa shooting and the upsurge of anti-Asian violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet at school there was complete silence. It was the book club they initiated that helped them learn about Asian American history, connect the dots between white social studies and psychological and physical violence on Asian Americans and other marginalized groups in school and society, and build an emerging sense of agency and responsibility to act for change. Of course, these four youth have not reached full awareness of the inequalities that exist in their lives and the

world. Rather, they have only begun a long continuous journey to learn, reflect, and act for justice (Freire, 2000).

As King (2019) noted, many students of Color may not have such unofficial and unconventional social studies spaces. Further, an antiracist social studies curriculum is also needed for dominant youth groups (Swalwell, 2013). Therefore, a fight within official social studies spaces must continue. In transforming official social studies into a liberating and empowering space for all students, we can draw lessons from unofficial, unconventional social studies spaces for students of Color. Above all, a key lesson from such spaces is that antiracist social studies is only possible when it decenters whiteness and centers ethnic studies so that students can build terminology and frameworks to describe their lived experiences, make sense of the injustices they face, and imagine and fight for a better world (Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2022).

Such a transformation is easier said than done given the persistent attacks against ethnic studies and even against simply teaching truth (López et al., 2021). Yet the stakes are too high to keep white social studies intact because "what is at stake is human lives" (Vasquez, 2018, p. 17). Students, particularly Indigenous youth and youth of Color will continue to suffer from psychological and physical violence endorsed by white social studies (King, 2019; Sabzalian, 2019).

Future Research

Annie, Adithi, Sunny, and Toni are just four out of millions of Asian American students in US schools today. Their stories therefore cannot be generalized, nor should that be the case for any stories about any individuals or small groups of Asian American students (Hsieh & Kim, 2020; Player, 2021; Subedi & Maleku, 2021). Instead, the social studies field must continue to engage in research to learn from and support Asian American youth and, in fact, all marginalized youth. This is particularly important as nonwhite students continue to

grow and, as a field, social studies research has not caught up (Busey & Russell, 2016; Yoder, 2020).

Marginalized youth are indeed producers of knowledge and bringers of change whom we, the social studies teachers and researchers, need to partner with, listen to, and learn from. As today's K-12 ethnic studies movement across the US shows, Black and Indigenous youth and youth of Color are at the forefront of disrupting the status quo of white social studies. They are willing to cocreate knowledge with us and transform social studies together. All we need is to show up and learn from and with them.

Note

1. All people and school names used in this article are pseudonyms.

2. Critical race legal scholar Neil Gotanda (1991) wrote that white "is better left in lower case, rather than privileged with a capital letter. 'Black,' on the other hand, has deep political and social meaning as a liberating term, and, therefore, deserves capitalization" (p. 4). Agreeing with Gotanda, I use the lower case white in this article.

References

Apple, M. (1996). *Cultural politics and education*. Open University Press

Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

An, S. (2009). Learning U.S. history in an age of transnational migration. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 41*(6), 763-787.

An, S. (2021). Selective (un)telling of difficult knowledge of U.S. wars in children's literature: The Korean War as a case study. *The Social Studies, 113*(2), 68-80.

An, S. (2022). Re/presentation of Asian Americans in 50 states US history standards. *The Social Studies, 113*(4), 171-184.

Barton, K. (2001). A sociocultural perspective on children ′s understanding of historical change: Comparative findings from Northern Ireland and the United States. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(4), 881-913.

Bell, D. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Law Review, 893(4),* 893-910.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without racists: Colorblind racism and racial inequality in contemporary America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brown, A. L., & Brown, K. D. (2010). Strange fruit indeed: Interrogating contemporary textbook representations of racial violence toward African Americans. *Teachers College Record, 112*(1), 31–67.

Busey, C., & Russell, W. (2016). "We want to learn": Middle school Latino/a students discuss social studies curriculum and pedagogy. *RMLE Online, 39*(4), 1-20.

Busey, C. L., Corral, Á. J., & Davis, E. L. (2021). "All enemies, foreign and domestic": The presence of Anti-Latinx political rhetoric and Latinxs as third world threats in secondary U.S. citizenship curriculum. *Teachers College Record, 123*(2), 1–40.

Chandler, P., & Branscombe, A. (2015). White social studies: Protecting the white racial code. In P. Chandler (Ed.), *Doing race in social studies: Critical perspectives* (pp. 61-87). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Chang, R. S. (1993). Toward an Asian American legal scholarship: Critical race theory, poststructuralism, and narrative space. *California Law Review, 19*, 1243-1323.

Clay, K., & Rubin, B. (2020). "I look deep into this stuff because it's a part of me": Toward a critically relevant civics education. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 48*(2), 161–181.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241-1299.

Cridland-Hughes, S., & King, L. (2015). Killing me softly: How violence comes from the curriculum we teach. In K. Fasching-Varner & N. Hartlep (Eds.), *The assault on communities of color* (pp. 99–102). Rowman & Littlefield.

Davis, E. (2019). (Mis)representation of Latinxs in Florida social studies standards. *Social Studies Research and Practice, 14*(1), 1-13.

Dan, Y., Todd, R., & Lan, W. (2010). Consensus and difference: American students ' perspectives on the national history. *Education, 131*(2), 331–341.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York University Press.

Dozono, T. (2020). The passive voice of white supremacy: Tracing epistemic and discursive violence in world history curriculum. *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies, 42*(1), 1-26.

Epstein, T. (1998). Deconstructing differences in African-American and European-American adolescents ′†perspectives on US history. *Curriculum Inquiry, 28*(4), 397-423.

Espiritu, Y. L. (1992). *Asian American panethnicity: Bridging institutions and identities*. Temple University Press.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* (39th ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Ghaffar-Kucher, A. (2012). The religification of Pakistani-American youth. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(1), 30–52.

Gotanda, N. (1991). A critique of "Our constitution is color-blind." *Stanford Law Review, 44*(1), 1–68.

Hsieh, B., & Kim, J. (2020). Challenging the invisibility of Asian Americans in education. *Review of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies, 42*(2), 95–103.

Hsu, M. (2015). *The good immigrant: How the Yellow Peril became the model minority*. Princeton University Press.

Hartlep, N. D., & Scott, D. P. (2016). *Asian/American curricular epistemicide*. Sense Publishers.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.* New York: Routledge.

Iftikar, J., & Museus, S. (2018). On the utility of Asian critical (AsianCrit) theory in the field of education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 31*(10), 935-949.

Jaffee, A. T. (2016). Social studies pedagogy for Latino/a newcomer youth: Toward a theory of culturally and linguistically relevant citizenship education. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 44*(2), 147–183.

Johnson, L., & Bryan, N. (2016). Using our voices, losing our bodies: Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and the spirit murders of Black male professors in the academy. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 20*(2), 163–177.

Johnson, L., Jackson, J., Stovall, D., & Baszile, D. (2017). Loving Blackness to death":(Re) Imagining ELA classrooms in a time of racial chaos. *English Journal, 106*(4), 60-66.

Jones, S. (2020). Ending curriculum violence. *Learning for Justice, 64* (spring). https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2020/ending-curriculum-violence

King, L. (2019). Unofficial and unconventional social studies spaces for students of color. *Journal of Social Studies Research, 43*(2), 91-95.

Kong, L. (Ed.). (2022). *Racial literacies and social studies: Curriculum, instruction, and learning.* Teachers College Press.

King, L., & Woodson, A. (2017). Baskets of cotton and birthday cakes: Teaching slavery in social studies classrooms. *Social Studies Education Review, 6(*1), 1-18.

Lee, E. (2016). *The making of Asian America*. Simon & Schuster.

Lee, E. (2019). *America for Americans*. Basic Books.

Lee, S. J., Xiong, D. P., Pheng, L.M., & Vang, M. N. (2020). "Asians for Black lives, not Asians for Asians": Building Southeast Asian American and Black solidarity. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 405-421.

Levy, S. (2016). Parents', students, 'and teachers 'beliefs about teaching heritage histories in public school history classrooms. *Journal of Social Studies Research, 40*(1), 5-20.

Lew, J. (2007). A structural analysis of success and failure of Asian Americans. *Teachers College Record, 109*(2), 369-390.

López, F., Molnar, A., Johnson, R., Patterson, A., Ward, L., & Kumashiro, K. (2021). *Understanding the attacks on Critical Race Theory.* Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved [date] from http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/crt.

Matsuda, M. (1995). Looking to the bottom: Critical legal studies and reparations. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp.63–79). New York, NY: The New Press.

Matsuda, M., Lawrence, C., Delgado, R., & Crenshaw, K. (1993). *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the First Amendment.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Milner, H. R. (2010). *Start where you are but don't stay there: Understanding diversity, opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms*. Harvard Education Press.

Ngo, B. (2017). Naming their world in a culturally responsive space: Experiences of Hmong adolescents in an after-school theatre program. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 32*(1), 37–63.

Okihiro, G. (2017). Imperialism and migration. In O. Franklin (Ed.), *Finding a path forward: Asian American Pacific Islander national historic landmarks theme study* (pp. 27-29). National Historic Landmarks Program.

Player, G. (2021). "People get mistaken": Asian American girls using multiple literacies to defy dominant imaginings of Asian American girlhood. *Reading Research Quarterly,* 1-18.

Rodríguez, N. N., & Swalwell, K. (2021). *Social studies for a better world: An anti-oppressive approach for elementary educators.* WW Norton.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sabzalian, L., Shear, S., & Snyder, J. (2021). Standardizing Indigenous erasure: A TribalCrit and QuantCrit analysis of K–12 U.S. civics and government standards. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 49*(3), 321-359.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Sage.

Salinas, C., & Alarcón, J. D. (2016). Exploring the civic ientities of Latina/o high school students: Reframing the historical narrative. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 18*(1), 68–87.

Salinas, C., Fránquiz, M., & Naseem Rodríguez, N. (2016). Writing Latina/o historical narratives: Narratives at the intersection of critical historical inquiry and LatCrit. *The Urban Review, 48*(3), 419-439.

Santiago, M. (2017). Erasing differences for the sake of inclusion: How Mexican/Mexican American students construct historical narratives. *Theory Research in Social Education, 45*(1), 43-74.

Shear, S. B., Knowles, R. T., Soden, G. J., & Castro, A. J. (2015). Manifesting destiny: Re/presentations of indigenous peoples in K–12 U.S. history standards. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 43*(1), 68-101.

Swalwell, K. (2013). *Educating activist allies: Social justice pedagogy with the suburban and urban elite.* Routledge.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 23–44.

Subedi, B., & Maleku, A. (2021). Bhutanese-Nepali young women's experiences of racism inside and outside of schools. *Educational Studies, 57*(2), 142-165.

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of Research in Education, 22,* 195-247.

Taylor, D., & Houser, C. (2021, March 17). What to know about Atlanta spa shooting. *New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/17/us/atlanta-spa-shootings.html

Urrieta, L. Jr. (2009). *Working from within: Chicana and Chicano activist educators in whitestream schools.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

van Kessel, C., & Saleh, M. (2020). Fighting the plague: "Difficult" knowledge as sirens ' song in teacher education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, *2*(2), 1-2.

Vasquez, R. (2018). They can't expect to be treated like normal Americans so soon: Reconceptualizing Latinx immigrants in social studies education. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis, 7*(1), 2-24.

Verma, R. (2006). Trauma, cultural survival and identity politics in a post-9/11 era: Reflections by Sikh youth. *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory, 2*(1), 89–101.

Vickery, A. E., & Rodríguez, N. N. (2022). *Dreaming out loud: Critical race theory & social studies future.* Teachers College Press.

Woodson, A. (2016). We're just ordinary people: Messianic master narratives and Black youths 'civic agency. *Theory Research in Social Education, 44*(2), 184-211.

Wu, E. (2014). *The color of success: Asian Americans and the origin of the model minority.* Princeton University Press.

Wu, F. (2002). *Yellow*: *Race in America beyond black and white*. Basic Books.

Ybarra, M. G. (2021). "Because we have lived it": Chicanx/Latinx multimodal literacies in youth participatory action research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 1-20.

Yoder, P. (2020). "He wants to get rid of all the Muslims": Mexican American and Muslim students ʾuse of history regarding candidate Trump. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *48*(3), 346-374.

Authors Biography: Sohyun An (she/her) is a Professor of Social Studies Education at Kennesaw State University which occupies the ancestral land of GWJ&9ƆƆ Tsalaguwetiyi. Her teaching and research centers on issues of racism, war, migration, imperialism, and citizenship within the context of social studies education. She is a founding member of Asian American Voices for Education, a grassroot collective in Georgia with a mission to advance ethnic studies in Georgia's K-12 schools. Her recent works include *Asian American Studies K-12 Framework* co-authored with Dr. Noreen Naseem Rodríguez and *Teaching Asian America in Elementary Classroom* (coming soon) co-written with Dr. Noreen Naseem Rodríguez and Dr. Esther June Kim.

Appendix A. Books and Discussion Topics in the Book Club

- Atkins. L., & Yogi, S. (2017). *Fred Korematsu speaks up.* Heyday. Japanese American incarceration
- Brockenbrough, M., & Lin, G. (2021). *I am an American: The story of Wong Kim Ark*. Little, Brown and Company. Racism and citizenship.
- Cha, D. (1996). *Dia's story cloth*. Lee & Low Books. Vietnam War, Hmong migration
- Conkling, W. (2013). *Sylvia and Aki.* Yearling. Japanese American incarceration
- Krishnaswami, U. (2017). *Step up to the plate, Maria Singh.* Tu Books. Indian American experience during WWII era.
- Lai, T. (2013). *Inside out & back again.* HarperCollins. Vietnam War, Vietnamese migration
- Lee, U-B. (2019). *When spring comes to the DMZ*. Plough Publishing House. Korean War
- Lee, M. (2006). *Landed.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Early Chinese migration. Angel Island.
- Oh, E. (2021). *Finding Junie Kim*. HarperCollins. Korean War.
- Phi, B. (2017). *A different pond*. Capstone Publishing. Vietnam War, Vietnamese migration
- Polacco, P. (2015). *Tucky Jo and Little Heart.* Simon & Schuster. WWII in the Philippines. Filipino migration
- Smith, I. (2010). *Half spoon of rice*. East West Discovery Press. Vietnam War, Cambodian migration
- Yin, C. (2003). *Coolies.* Puffin. Early Chinese migration. Transcontinental railroad construction.
- Yoo, P. (2021). *From a whisper to a rallying cry*. Norton Young Readers. Murder of Vincent Chin, Asian American movement
- Yoo, P. (2010). Sixteen years in sixteen seconds: The Sammy Lee story. Lee & Low Books. Korean American experiences in the early 1900s. Anti-Asian racism.

Appendix B. Interview Questions

Group interview

1. What is your overall evaluation of social studies you learned at school and why?
2. What did you learn in elementary and middle school social studies classes? What is your favorite memory of social studies learning at school and why?
3. What was missing in social studies you learned at school?
4. What do you wish you learned from social studies class at school and why?
5. Can you share your ideas to bring change to social studies taught at school?

Individual interview

1. During group interview, I remember you said _____. Can you elaborate on it?
2. Is there anything you'd like to talk more on your social studies experiences and thoughts? If so, can you share it with me?
3. Can you tell me about yourself and your family that you feel comfortable to share with me?

Abstract: Building on the scholarship of curriculum studies, this conceptual paper explores representations of hegemonic narratives in the teaching of United States.-led wars in Asia after and including World War II. These narratives, ubiquitous and unchallenged in social studies instruction at the secondary level, rationalize violent conflict in the Asia-Pacific region and discourage critical analysis of American military operations past and present. Starting with a chronology of Yellow Peril and anti-Asian attitudes in the United States, white supremacy, and the creation of a racialized "Other" are highlighted as forces integral to the politics underpinning these conflicts. These factors, along with the interests of key figures and powers, are discussed as dominant players in the shaping of curriculum about warfare. Instruction is then examined as a means of creating national memories that selectively include and exclude knowledge in service of these hegemonic, self-justifying narratives. Lastly, recommendations for the critical and mindful teaching of conflict are presented and laid out alongside arguments for the transformative societal potential of critical civic literacy.

Keywords: Hegemonic narrative, national memory, Yellow Peril, difficult knowledge, critical civic literacy, critical pedagogy

Curricular Narratives and National Memory: Teaching 20th Century U.S. Conflicts in Asia

> ***Paul Tibbets****: They gave everybody in those airplanes a pair of welder's glasses to protect…from the flash, which they said was equivalent to ten times the brilliance of the sun. Well, one would have to imagine how bright that is, but it was definitely bright because we saw it inside that airplane. The whole sky lit up when it exploded.*
>
> ***Interviewer****: I doubt that you actually saw what happened on the ground though. I mean itself.*
>
> ***Tibbets****: No, we did not. We did not see that because by the time we turned around to look at it, there was nothing but a black boiling mess hanging over the city. It was actually obscuring everything…You wouldn't have known that the city of Hiroshima was there unless you had seen it coming in.* [1]

I. Introduction

The most memorable aspect of my education on the nuclear holocaust (Wake, 2021) is that I hardly remember it at all. History teachers walked us through the standard crash-course affairs of World War II – the great "powers," events, battles, leaders, and the scale of death and destruction wrought across Europe. We learned that President Truman had to make a very difficult decision. Let brutal fighting in the Pacific "theater" claim a million more American lives or deliver the Japanese an unmistakable message. Two cities, two bombs. Tens of thousands of civilians vaporized in the blink of an eye; tens of thousands more burnt and scarred beyond recognition. The stubborn Emperor yielded at last, and the war ended. An American victory, so it was told.

---

[1] Atomic Heritage Foundation. (n.d.). [Interview, 1989].

My teachers presented these facts to us in a detached, logical sequence, the way one might describe a series of chess maneuvers. The A-bombs, rather than representing instruments of unfathomable annihilation, were to inspire in us a sense of awe at humanity's technological capacities; the culmination of thousands of years of scientific progress and the collaborative efforts of every genius in the Northern Hemisphere. And the story of the first- and only-time nuclear weapons were deployed on a population came to a simple and satisfying conclusion: Certain people, in certain places, died for peace. They had to – it couldn't have been any other way. It's a shame, but war is war. Generals and presidents can't be blamed for decimating *their* civilians when *our* soldiers' lives hang in the balance.

In hindsight, my social studies education was strung together by stories like these – though they were never cataloged as stories. Many of these narratives surrounded conflict, as the history of the United States was rendered much like "a grim procession from one war to the next" (Pearcy, 2011, p. 9) with little reflection on the enduring interests that make conflicts possible and profitable. American wars themselves were characterized not as tragic products of choice, but as inevitable and unavoidable features of human interaction (An, 2021). One may have assumed they were natural disasters, for all the critical analysis they were afforded in the classroom. And when they took place overseas, on distant islands, in foreign jungles, with and among and against people of Color, the mythos surrounding these conflicts turned defensive – ostensibly, thousands of American men heroically perished in the Pacific, Korea, and Vietnam because they fought nobly to fend off empire and autocracy. Stories detailing the immeasurable sacrifices and suffering of the people who called these places home – both civilians and "enemy" forces – were markedly absent from these tales, unless to justify further intervention.

These anecdotes give a glimpse into the hegemonic narrative – the dominant vision of history promoted by the State in service of its national interests – that largely defines and directs instruction on American-led wars. To contextualize the rise of this narrative, I will begin by explaining the factors – including white supremacist notions of citizenship and belonging – which underlies the campaigns of mass violence instigated by the United States in Asia over the last century. I will then outline the role of history education in forwarding particular narratives, what ends these narratives serve, and how they go on to constitute our collective memories of war. Finally, this literature review will conclude by discussing scholars and experts whose work and recommendations present powerful avenues for change in this field, with distinct emphasis on critical civic literacy. Motivated by a concern for the role of racialization in justifying warfare abroad, as well as a curiosity over the fundamental purpose of war history education, I argue in this paper that the teaching of 20th century conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region reflects and upholds hegemonic national narratives which function to continuously justify violent conflict overseas.

It's no secret that history is taught to foster a collective sense of national identity and encourage adherence to common societal values; nor are these objectives unique to American curricula (Lin et al., 2009). But many scholars (An, 2021; Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Goodwin, 2010; Griffen, 1974; Harrison-Wong, 2003; Nguyen, 2013; Rodríguez, 2018) have identified omissions, erasures, and silences within educational materials addressing U.S. conflicts taking place in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. As such, the concept of "difficult" knowledge or histories (An, 2021; Gibbs, 2019; Rodríguez, 2020) serves as an illuminating framework for this review because it articulates many of the forces that shape hegemonic narratives. According to Rodríguez (2020), difficult histories encompass "historical narratives of

the nation-state that may seem to contradict purported values and ideals and/or may cause controversy or conflict" (p. 309). Building on Britzman (1993) and Pitt & Britzman (2003), An (2021) found that what makes this knowledge "difficult" is the manner of subject – often violence and destruction – as well as the centrality with which this content challenges dominant national narratives. In this sense, difficult knowledge can be contrasted with "official" knowledge, memories, or history (Harrison-Wong, 2003), which present the version of events, or stories, most compatible with the interests of national policymakers.

As a pre-service social studies teacher, I am professionally invested in the untangling of education and civic responsibility. I am inspired by the hope that my future students will not leave my class feeling as I once did, resigned and indifferent to the permanence of soldiers dying and killing overseas to protect my "freedom." And as an undergraduate student of international relations, I am both academically and personally interested in the processes through which industrialized warfare becomes cemented as a foregone conclusion within national culture. This field is home to a great wealth of scholars who investigate the strategic causes of conflict between states, including experts in postcolonial studies who analyze dynamics of racism and imperialism as they inform foreign policy. But less commonly does international relations inquiry look inward, toward the cultural mechanisms erected by great war powers to manufacture consent to their violent campaigns abroad. The wars in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam represent three salient case studies for this examination, as the devastation dealt to these lands and peoples by American forces was total and geographically concentrated. In addition, these conflicts are identified with the origin and expansion of the modern American military-industrial complex over the last century, which is a development essential to understanding the continued proliferation of war (Brunton, 1988). This is not to overlook the terror likewise inflicted in

Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, and other Asian and Indo-Pacific territories, but to focus on three relatively recent and large-scale campaigns that occupy a complex place in national memory.

The instant General Paul Tibbets dropped "Little Boy" over the city of Hiroshima, he solidified his place as one of mankind's biggest mass murderers. Stating this fact in an American classroom would trigger an argument if the notion isn't aborted immediately. Defenders of American military objectives have determined that shame, regret, and empathy have no place in our national memory and consciousness. As a result, sterilized histories of U.S. warfare have been forwarded for decades, forging a national memory that is deeply embedded in hegemonic narratives resistant to critique or questioning (An, 2017; Au et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017). Through this process, State-led violence against anyone not considered American – and especially anyone who is not white – becomes systematically rationalized to generations of students. This in turn engenders within society a sense of civic powerlessness that undermines efforts to organize resistance to future armed conflicts.

What follows is a literature review interspersed with personal and historical narrative. This project endeavors to reveal the throughline of xenophobia, military action, and history education; in doing so, it contributes to the body of knowledge on civic literacy and the process of fortifying civic literacy through pedagogy.

II. Constructing an "Other": Yellow Peril and American Aggression

Many servicemen in the Pacific Theater were inundated by stories replete with vile characterizations of the Japanese…Robert Lekachman, who served in the Army, recounted that he "had been fed tales of these yellow thugs, sub-humans, with teeth that resembled fangs. If a hundred thousand Japs were killed, so much the better." All of

> *these traits stood in contrast to the presumption of righteousness on the United States' side. An enemy this heinous deserved no consideration…In this way, wholesale slaughter would relieve the burden of the Yellow Peril on the United States.* [2]

In this section, I review some of the scholarship that highlights the aversive attitudes of white Americans toward peoples of East Asia and the Indo-Pacific (Kolakowski, 2018), beginning in the 18th century and extending to modern conflicts. Often absent or glossed over in educational accounts of wars taking place in Asia, this history helps contextualize the American role in initiating, escalating, and legitimizing the industrialized warfare that has deeply scarred the region. According to Rodríguez (2020), Asian American history is commonly reduced to two events in U.S. history curricula: Chinese exclusion in the 1880s and Japanese incarceration during World War II. While certainly significant to the transnational stories of these respective communities, these developments, separated from greater historical context and attitudes, offer an incomplete view of racially exclusionary visions of citizenship that have shaped and continue to shape U.S. policy toward the diverse peoples of East Asia and the Indo-Pacific. White supremacy, xenophobia, nativism, jingoism, and Orientalism, operating in tandem, long defined white Americans' regard for Asian peoples of various origins, within and beyond the U.S. border, and whether or not they held U.S. citizenship (An, 2020; Au et al., 2016; Chong, 2021; Lee, 2015; Said, 1978). The social and political construction of the "Yellow Peril" – an imagined menacing Asian "other" (Seto, 2015, p. 57) – across the 19th and 20th centuries partially explains the ease and enmity with which American warmakers conducted campaigns of terror in Asia during and after the World War II.

[2] Seto, 2015, p. 61

Fears of the Yellow Peril most directly affected the treatment of Asian immigrants living in the United States, where Chinese and Japanese American communities grew significantly throughout the 19th century. Even as these communities supplied the United States with incalculable economic and cultural wealth, their presence represented a competing "Oriental civilization" incompatible with the homogenous visions of the white establishment (Lee, 2015, p. 64). This conception of distinct races engaging in a zero-sum game – where, for instance, Chinese prosperity correlated directly to white poverty – dominated popular thought for decades, with devastating consequences to Americans hailing from the Asia-Pacific. Au and colleagues (2016) detail the legal, social, and institutional mechanisms through which Asian Americans were denied citizenship and treated as foreign invaders, irrespective of the imperialism and white supremacy that catalyzed waves of migration from Asia to the United States. This long history features the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and incarceration of Japanese Americans as two examples of myriad discriminatory practices founded in anxieties that immigrants would "wipe out 'American' identity, the white race, and Western civilization" (Au et al., 2016, p. 234). As such, white Americans' unease, fueled by nationalist conceptions of racial and cultural purity, served as a powerful precondition for armed resistance to the threat of a racial "Other," both at home and across the Pacific (Ang, 2001).

Examining white Americans' racial perceptions of the Japanese and Chinese across the 20th century, Seto (2015) connects the pre-war experiences of these communities in the United States to wartime and post-war developments. Given the pretext of the World War II, the 1940s brought upon white America "the birth of a Japanese bogeyman imbued with all the fears of the Yellow Peril" (Seto, 2015, p. 59). In an extension of the zero-sum philosophy that stoked white Americans' fears of immigrants, the imperialist designs of the Japanese empire alarmed the

United States, by this time an established imperialist power. Thus, “the threat of Japan and the threat of Japanese immigrants were linked together” with intensifying fervor before World War II, preempting violent aggression towards both (Lee, 2015, p. 93). However, in Seto’s (2015) view, it was the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 that truly transformed the Japanese into “a superhuman threat” (p. 59) in the eyes of the U.S. military and society. In this evaluation, hatred and distrust of Asian communities simmered from the very beginning, requiring only a single provocation to ignite into total war.

White American beliefs toward the peoples of Asia only grew more deterministic as the 20th century progressed. In a logic that became violently cemented during Cold War-era conflicts in Southeast Asia, “so-called oriental peoples” (Seto, 2015, p. 58) were assumed authoritarians, innately drawn to oppression and cruelty, whereas Western societies were viewed as natural bastions of democracy and individualism. Indeed, according to a 1941 report conducted by the U.S. Office of War Information, over 40 percent of Americans believed that the Japanese were innately inclined to war for the sake of “mak[ing] themselves as powerful as possible” (Jones, 2010, p. 61). Clashing with Japan in the Pacific Theater thus produced and reproduced an image of a bloodthirsty enemy unable to be civilly reasoned with. Enabled by xenophobia, World War II popularized a collective and perennial vision of “foreigners” whose men, women, and children could be rendered expendable.

However pervasive, white supremacy and Yellow Peril do not exclusively explain American military engagements across Asia. Economic, ideological, and geopolitical interests certainly contributed in tandem, as with all interventions. But it is likewise imprudent to dismiss the role of racial perceptions in creating narratives that inform destruction abroad and instruction at home. Returning to the case of the nuclear holocaust, Seto (2015) provides that racial enmity

may not have been the decisive factor in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but maintains that it must have functioned to reassure Americans grappling with the ethics of the decision. Similarly, Jones (2010) highlights the attack on Pearl Harbor, the brutality of the Pacific campaign, and a 1945 Gallup poll indicating the American public's overwhelming support for the use of the atomic bomb as vital factors in Truman's judgment. The same ethical calculus might explain the uncritical teaching of nuclear terror decades after the fact. The purpose of this discussion is to illuminate a significant and persisting piece of warmakers' logic – one which is seldom addressed in contemporary instruction on these events. As historical accounts suggest, stigma, stereotypes, and misconceptions exerted and continue to wield great power over foreign policy making. This is especially the case within the context of a bitter war with an unfamiliar adversary. In the President's own words, penned mere days after the bombings: "When you have to deal with a beast you have to treat him as a beast" (Truman, 1945).

After wresting a surrender from Japan in World War II, the United States went on to involve itself in proxy conflicts which mutilated Southeast Asia – always framed in historical narrative as peripheral; a footnote to the remarkable "peace" between the Cold War superpowers (Chamberlin, 2018). During the Cold War era of the 1950s through 1970s, "Asia became a special focus of U.S. military, economic, and political power" which was channeled through a series of bloody interventions in Korea and the Indochinese peninsula (Lee, 2015, p. 196). With Japan subdued, the reticle shifted to the threat of "Red China," whose advancing armies seemingly jeopardized the military and ideological balance established in postwar East Asia. The major campaigns in Korea and Vietnam, while lesser in scale than American mobilization against Japan, demonstrated the lengths the U.S. and Western allies were willing to sacrifice to maintain a foothold in Asia. But as control over these conflicts waned and became eclipsed by

financial and personnel costs, the military establishment found it increasingly difficult to defend the American presence in Indochina. Peace activists of the 1960s and 1970s took advantage of growing discontent to bring attention to the relationship between (de)colonization, racial justice, and violent warfare in the "Third World,"[3] which led to the proliferation of Pan-Asianism, ethnic studies teaching, and a transnational and multiracial coalition in support of Black-led civil rights work (An, 2021b; Chuck & Chuck, 2019; Liu, 2020; Yui, 1992). These developments attest to the continuity of Yellow Peril ideology, as well as the significance of identifying racial-imperial conquest as a common force against which to organize popular resistance.

Establishing this background is necessary to illuminate the origins of a pattern which connects conflicts themselves to their depictions in curricula and classrooms. The cultural narrative of bloodthirsty foreigners underpinned war with Japan before taking on an ideological tint during the Cold War. Leaving the impact of Yellow Peril mania out of the historical record further estranges modern students from the motivations that precipitated mass destruction and forecloses the possibility of analyzing its enduring effects. Writing on the American-Chinese war in Vietnam, Nguyen (2013) underscores the significance of this remembering: "All wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory" (p. 144). Underlying forces which intrench both fights – namely, white supremacy – must be elucidated if that memory is ever to be reckoned with.

III. War in Education: Power, Purpose, and Potential

> ***Paul Tibbets****: My conception was at that time, if this thing is successful, we will bring this war to a close… I think in the intervening years, that I have arrived at the same*

[3] "Third World" is used here in the context of the Cold War alliance system.

conclusion because by ending the war, we would save lives. That was my idea. Save lives, not destroy them.

A well-known adage, dubiously attributed to Winston Churchill (n.d.), alleges that "the victors" are the authors of history. While simplistic, this argument provides a launch point for two major questions surrounding the role of historical education in society: 1) *Whose perspective(s)* are privileged in curricular storytelling?; and 2) What *purpose* does any particular history or historical narrative serve? To address these related inquiries, many studies have examined the influence of power – that is, the capacity to impose a "hegemonic legacy via a variety of structures and mechanisms" (Goodwin, 2010, pp. 3,110) – on shaping these ends across numerous subjects and contexts. In this analysis, power is conceived primarily as a racial, cultural, and political force that operates through a network of national institutions, with military-industrial power being a primary example. While these power structures are reinforced in schooling through all grade levels (An, 2021), hegemonic narratives are most apparently and explicitly forwarded at the secondary level, when students are exposed to curricula that curates learning of 20th century conflicts.

Education is a key instrument in the formulation and perpetuation of national or cultural memory: the collective conceptualizations and imaginings that define historical moments or bodies of knowledge (Brown & Au, 2014). These memories invariably reflect the interests of societal powers in their parsing of when to include, exclude, emphasize, minimize, amplify, and silence given perspectives to preserve a stable and singular narrative of national cohesion (Au et al., 2016). The dominant U.S. national memory of the war in Vietnam, for instance, is characterized by the noble sacrifice of 60,000 Americans and the self-righteous mission of defending a helpless people from the encroachment of Communism (Griffen, 1974; Nguyen,

2016). Even when it is acknowledged that the United States did not decisively triumph in Vietnam or Korea, national memory is reticent to question the virtue of our motives or draw attention to the unconscionable scale of destruction inflicted by our military's designs.

In classrooms, national memory is reinforced by compound pressures that urge social studies teachers to present uncomplicated versions of events that elevate official narratives and eliminate dissonance, such as the lived curricula of children of Color (Aoki, 2005; Love, 2019). One high school teacher articulated this discomfort: "If I say we lost the war in Vietnam, now does that kid [the descendant of a veteran] feel there's no value to what his grandpa did and died for?" (Gibbs, 2019, p. 109). These concerns, while understandable in context, reflect the hegemonic perspective of the state by centering the experiences of one group – the American soldier and their descendants – over those of Vietnamese resistors, and over an honest discussion of a war's resolution. A parallel question, prompted by concern for the descendants of civilians massacred by American forces in Vietnam, might instead wonder, "If I say America lost the war in Vietnam, does *that* kid feel there's no reason their grandparents fought and died?" This comparison is not to reduce the struggle of conveying conflict to a binary choice, but to illustrate the ways in which dominant perspectives drive educational decision-making at all levels of inquiry.

Goodwin (2010) expands on the dual potential of educational curriculum to act as either an emancipatory or colonizing agent in the lives of students, particularly those belonging to groups marginalized or "sidelined as 'Other'" (pp. 3,121). In this conception, social studies instructors and curriculum developers are envisioned as gatekeepers whose judgments of what knowledge is worth passing on – inevitably shaped by the values of dominant groups – further solidify what becomes official, sanctioned, or legitimate knowledge. These values are then

(re)presented to society as generations of students accept and internalize these selective interpretations – without necessarily being aware that they *are* interpretations and not "just the facts," (Harrison-Wong, 2003, p. 16) as it were. The cyclical nature of this effect speaks to education's function as a cultural and collective mode of remembering. Taking this view into account, instructors can consider their roles in shaping students' socialization as a small, but significant part of the aggregate process which forms, re-forms, and constitutes national memory over time.

Returning to the excerpt that opens this section, one understands that value-based choices are an intimate part of history, particularly as these choices determine the fate of countless noncombatants caught between warring powers. Nothing illustrates this phenomenon like the way American national interests and the actors that represent them have coalesced to eliminate skepticism – and in turn, moral responsibility – surrounding the 20th century's nuclear holocaust. If it can't be construed as a unilaterally "good thing," it must, at the very least, always carry an air of ambiguity and relativism. This crystallization of the bombs' legacy exemplifies the power of official narratives to create and re-create individual and collective memories. Whether deliberately rehearsed or simply an attempt to rectify cognitive dissonance, General Tibbets echoed verbatim the defense championed by President Truman's Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, in a widely publicized issue of *Harper's Magazine* (February 1947). Writing after the war's end, Stimson insisted that the only viable alternative to nuclear holocaust was an intense air and sea blockade, followed by a costly ground invasion that would demand the sacrifice of five million men in total. In his own words:

> The decision to use the atomic bomb…brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese. No explanation can change that fact… But this deliberate, premeditated

> destruction was our least abhorrent choice. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the Japanese war. (p. 16)

This was the birth of a powerful cultural narrative – one of many – sustained and largely unchallenged by American educational materials to this day (Harrison-Wong, 2003). Subsequent scholars and historians (Alperovitz, 1995; Harrison-Wong, 2003; Takaki, 1996) have called into question Stimson's reasoning, highlighting the imprudence of President Truman's insistence on unconditional surrender and presenting the counter-claim that the Japanese emperor would have accepted a surrender under modified terms. Others (Miles, Jr., 1985; Skates, 1994) have pinpointed a lack of evidence that the United States ever intended to launch a ground invasion and disputed the origin of the "millions of men" figure brandished by the president and his secretary. Still, decades of curricular storytelling has ascertained this justification as hegemonic; obscuring the existence of credible and important alternative interpretations in favor of upholding a comforting conclusion. General Tibbits, along with Robert McNamara, Douglas MacArthur, Henry Kissinger, and hundreds of other powerful commanders and accomplices to American carnage, have these stories to thank for the maintenance of their honor, which has allowed them to – quite literally[4] – sleep soundly. Consequently, the atomic bombings and their legacy represent but one case of hegemonic narratives commandeering historical education and national memory to suit the evergreen interests of U.S. warmakers.

To summarize and return to my initial questions: The perspectives privileged in curricular storytelling are overwhelmingly dominant perspectives buoyed by racial, cultural, political, and institutional expressions of power. Their curated histories serve to protect and uphold this power in perpetuity. These principles, reflected in the teaching of violent conflict, are systemic features

[4] Tibbets: "With that [Hiroshima] situation, I am supposed to have lost sleep over what I did, have a certain amount of morose, and so forth. I can assure you, I have never lost a night's sleep on the deal." [Interview, 1989]

of any reproduction of national history. However, individuals and groups charged with creating and disseminating curricular storytelling also hold power. Equipped with the proper tools and vision, educators can critically confront official narratives at the benefit of both students and society.

IV. Ramifications & Remedies: Difficult Knowledge and Counternarratives

> ***Paul Tibbets****: I made up my mind then that the morality of dropping that bomb was not my business. I was instructed to perform a military mission to drop the bomb. That was the thing that I was going to do [to] the best of my ability. Morality, there is no such thing in warfare. I don't care whether you are dropping atom bombs…or shooting a rifle. You have got to leave the moral issue out of it.*

When citizens aren't encouraged to think critically about their country's actions and their roles in its destiny, they conclude that orders are orders, and any suffering inflicted on their behalf can be neatly rationalized. In positions of power, they cast off concerns of morality, empathy, and regard for humanity as illogical considerations with no place in wartime judgments which mete out death after death. The same decisions play out in classrooms as instructors determine how – and if – they will convey such complexities to students. Furthermore, what people learn and absorb in schools reverberates beyond the individual. Conveying knowledge to cohort after cohort for generations produces a ubiquitous singular story, or mythos, which becomes part of national culture through repetition (Bell, 2003). This makes the critical teaching of war, especially those instigated by the United States, an essential civic project. Its importance is underscored by the staying power of curricular narratives in national memory, and the affects left by this memory on successive generations and the world they inhabit (Nguyen, 2013).

Griffen (1974), concerned about State Department and Pentagon control over the teaching of the Vietnam War in American schools, discusses the concept of "habituated passivity" as a societal consequence of history written by war planners (p. 617). Habituated passivity encompasses the cynicism, powerlessness, desensitization, and lack of civic agency which results from uncritical, one-sided teaching of conflict (An, 2021; Lo, 2019). Educational rituals that minimize or omit suffering incurred by warfare – and avoid assigning concrete responsibility for that suffering – estrange students from the realities of conflict and in turn condition them to accept narratives that justify its perpetuation. In his qualitative study of war history education at one school, Gibbs (2019) found that:

> Most [students] indicated that wars were inevitable. Far from seeing war as a series of individual and collective acts that could have gone differently, students seemed to think of wars as waves that would crash upon the shore regardless of action. In a sense, students generally indicated that they were civically powerless. As one student said, "I would like to say that my actions matter...that I could stop something big like war...but I just don't think so" (p. 109).

This feedback should be a cause for alarm and a call to action for those invested in social studies education. When students are rendered incapable of imagining the violence orchestrated by historical actors as dynamic decisions made among alternatives, they cannot visualize modern-day foreign policy as essentially manmade and changeable. The United States has been at war for the entirety of the 21st century, and indeed, for most of its existence as a nation. Americans are socialized to not only view war as a natural state, but as "moral, just, honorable…and necessary" (An, 2021, p. 2) for the preservation of security and furtherance of national interests. And why shouldn't we, when practically all our cultural messaging relates

conflict and suffering – when that suffering is acknowledged – as a static, foregone conclusion? As long as this narrative remains unexamined, the violent status quo will prevail, and stories about the breathtaking cultural, ecological, and human costs of these campaigns will remain relegated to the margins. The impetus for change is therefore both individual and societal, a balance reachable by the unique station of the teacher.

One approach to combating these developments is known as "critical civic literacy" or "critical pedagogy," which argues for the reading and teaching of historical events in a manner that challenges and questions socially-constructed hegemonic narratives (An, 2021; Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Gibbs, 2019; Harrison-Wong, 2003; Rodríguez, 2018). In the classroom, critical civic literacy asks students to read, write, discuss, and listen analytically and constructively, rather than passively absorbing information. Scholars who champion this discipline maintain that it is paramount to the development of "democratic patriotism" (An, 2021, p. 4), which impresses students with the skills needed to navigate complex issues and empowers them to advocate for change (Westheimer, 2007). Accordingly, this approach addresses the disillusionment created by habituated passivity and gives students the tools needed to understand, interpret, and interrupt power structures as they encounter them in their own lives (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994). It urges young thinkers to see history holistically, as a moving picture of human interactions that they themselves inherit and sustain. It also benefits students by imparting them with analytical skills and tools that can be used beyond the classroom. Simultaneously, critical pedagogy asks teachers to perceive their job as deeply ideological, inviting them to reflect and act on the ways their teaching is informed by their own positionalities.

Critical civic literacy comprises not just a mode of teaching and learning, but consideration for the content presented to learners. Here, I return to the concept of difficult knowledge – facts and stories that detail the full picture of wartime suffering and in turn disrupt dominant narratives (An, 2021). Difficult knowledge and histories are suppressed in education for a variety of reasons, ranging from time pressures to desire to shield students' mental health, to teachers' concerns over their career security and potential backlash (Gibbs, 2019). However, experts in critical civics call for schools to embrace difficult knowledge, as it provides students with opportunities to engage with marginalized perspectives and opens new avenues for dialogue (An, 2021; Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Gibbs, 2019). Guided by the work of these scholars, social studies teachers can take advantage of these opportunities by introducing students to difficult histories in a manner that invites deliberate personal reflection and interpersonal conversation.

Another opportunity for dialogue is in centering counternarratives, counterstories, and counter-memories in instruction about U.S. conflicts (Kolano, 2016; Rodríguez, 2020). These include experiences and viewpoints typically excluded from dominant narratives, particularly those belonging to people "who suffer from war…usually People of Color, women, children, the poor, and other vulnerable groups at home and abroad" (An, 2021, p. 3). Counternarratives are also often transnational in nature, owing to the complexities of conflict, migration, and survivorship. In her book chronicling the stories of Japanese American and Korean American survivors of the nuclear holocaust, Wake (2021) writes that these stories represent "a counter-memory of the bomb – a memory both marginal and resistant to the national remembering in America, Japan, and Korea" (p. 2). The act of recalling and sharing these counter-memories can shed light onto the totality of destruction caused by nuclear weapons and the ways intersecting

identities uniquely shaped survivors' experiences. Thus, the value of difficult knowledge and counterstories lies in their capacity to confront inconvenient truths, empathize with those whose suffering has been pushed aside, and encourage future generations to learn from the full richness of human history.

Still, some curriculum scholars (Au et al., 2016) have maintained that the mere inclusion of alternative perspectives ("additive inclusion," p. 36) is not sufficient to address the harms of hegemonic narratives and national memories manipulated by white supremacy and imperialism. As Rodríguez (2018) cautions, "counterstories can be used in ways that uphold the dominant narrative rather than resist it" (p. 556). Therefore, educators "must be intentional in both using a critical lens…as well as contextualizing history" (Rodríguez, 2018, p. 556) when relating these stories. This further affirms the importance of recognizing persistent historical patterns – i.e., systematic racism and Yellow Peril. In congruence, Goodwin (2010) identifies the scarcity of "culturally-located insiders" (p. 3,122) in educational positions such as teachers, administrators, and curriculum writers as a further obstacle to the development and circulation of emancipatory instruction. These critiques outline a need for substantial and integrative – rather than supplementary and additive – counter-storytelling that centers counternarratives and difficult knowledge.

Building on Griffen (1974), teachers should act on historical warnings and advance counter-narratives, primary sources, and storytelling as forms of legitimate knowledge alongside and in contrast with hegemonic narratives. Among other uses, primary sources humanize conflict, helping people understand wars as collections of human experiences and revealing memorable details about individual lives. This is especially important in relation to Asia and the Indo-Pacific, whose people were regarded by the American war machine and white American

society as subhuman, unrelatable, and indistinguishable – all the easier to conquer, destroy, or save. Pushing back against these conceptions through education is pivotal because U.S. troops remain stationed globally, spilling blood to uphold American military-industrial eminence. As demonstrated in this section, these operations are at least partially enabled by historical narratives canonized by instructors and curriculum unwilling or unable to enact durable critique.

Additionally, teachers can make use of online resources compiled by scholars of critical civic literacy, Asian American histories, and decolonial studies to inform their instruction of 20th century conflicts.[5] If curriculum schedules allow, students could explore such resources directly with the aid of guided activities. Otherwise, instructors might incorporate alternative narratives into lessons organically by adjusting their framing of events – for example, making sure not to imply a dichotomy between immigrants and "true" Americans, or enumerating the extent of civilian suffering caused by U.S. weapons. These changes could be as simple as a shift in wording, or as extensive as additional projects and overhauled learning objectives. To take full advantage of the power of critical civics, teachers may require support and flexibility from administrators, curriculum writers, and education policy experts, necessitating open communication between these branches of education. But far from "difficult," these recommendations leverage social studies skills toward affective ends, sharpening educators' abilities to connect past, present, and future in a civically empowering way.

Framing atrocities like nuclear warfare as inevitabilities devalues the lives of people who are easily constructed as national enemies and fuels tacit acceptance of their annihilation in the name of "security," "freedom," or "peace." At the same time, it's not possible or even desirable for educators to forge a new national memory through the presentation of mere counter-

[5] One such collection of resources: Rodríguez, N. N. (n.d.). *Asian American History Curriculum.* Retrieved December 20, 2022, from https://www.naseemrdz.com/resources/asian-american-history-curriculum/

propaganda. The prospects for evolution are gradual but meaningful, focused on fostering new civic possibilities in the place of ignorance and passivity. Social studies teachers and curriculum producers, while not limitlessly equipped to transform teaching practices, can recognize the unique position they hold in delivering messages about our national past to those who will go on to make its future. The ultimate goal in approaching difficult histories is to represent that past in a way that does not preclude justice and peace in the present. You can't inspire students to make different choices for society if they aren't ever exposed to these possibilities. Not only is this a civic responsibility, but it's invaluable to honoring the experiences of all students, including those affected by conflict directly. As war making is and has been such an integral part of American national memory, it's especially important that those entrusted with conveying this legacy disrupt cycles of violence and complicity.

To provide a vision of the possibilities that emerge when these cycles are disrupted, I want to touch on the international anti-nuclear movement, a phenomenon that showcases the mobilizing power of critical civics to unite communities across the globe. Reflecting on the anti-war and civil rights protests of the 20th century, Vincent Intondi (2020) describes the connections between Black communities organizing for racial justice in the United States and East Asian communities' experiences with imperialist warfare in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. He argues that diversity is the key to the nuclear disarmament movement, and education which exposes the stakes of all peoples in stopping nuclear war is one significant course to peace. Far from habituated passivity, international and transnational solidarity demonstrates the power of realizing histories excluded under the "victors" conceptions. Elevating difficult knowledge and counternarratives enables people to see commonalities in historical and contemporary struggles, engendering resistance to forms of oppression that transcend national boundaries. In this sense,

critical civil literacy and critical pedagogies which challenge hegemonic histories empower not only individual learners, but strengthen society's bent toward justice (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Liu, 2020).

V. Conclusion

How can we recall the past in a way that does justice to the forgotten, the excluded, the oppressed, the dead, the ghosts?[6]

In articulating my concerns about the ways violent warfare is justified through education, I began this account by tracing the xenophobia that underlies multiple modern conflicts, particularly the suffering incurred by American military operations in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. I then discussed some emerging perspectives that offer constructive insights for disrupting existing narratives surrounding the teaching of war, emphasizing the potential of counter-stories and difficult knowledge in broadening students' civic literacy. The purpose of deconstructing official narratives is not to suggest the existence of some propagandist conspiracy, but to invite new possibilities for examining conflicts critically. General concern for "truth-telling" is evident but tempered by the acknowledgement that practical considerations will always impose limitations on what can and cannot be afforded time in curricula, and that a truly objective historical account is impossible. However, as Apple (2004) emphasizes, "the knowledge that got into schools in the past and gets into schools now is not random," but rather selected by individuals and institutions making value judgements that cannot be divorced from " the economic and social interests of those in power" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 3,111). Bringing these interests and their influences to light is a significant civic mission owed to current and future generations of learners. When indiscriminate butchery of national "enemies" is sanctioned not

[6] Nguyen, 2013, p. 150

only by leaders in war rooms, but instructors in classrooms, students are culturally conscripted into cycles of violence.

Difficult history need not always be off the table, as the difficulty is informed by the contextual culture that embraces some knowledges – rendering them "safer" – while silencing or distorting others (Gibbs, 2019, p. 110). Educators and non-educators alike can benefit from understanding gaps and distortions in popular histories, as well as the dismantling of environments that stifle critical discussion. Given that violent conflict is a frequent – arguably emblematic – feature of American history and given our continued involvement in the Indo-Pacific, the representation of warfare through education should be of urgent interest to anyone organizing for peace – not to mention the millions of victims, refugees, and descendants of these conflicts across the world. In the Western world of the 21st century, echoes of Yellow Peril live on in renewed Sinophobia provoked by the global eminence of the People's Republic of China (Liu, 2020). This is one contemporary area where cultural narratives may well make a significant difference in foreign policymaking, should they be recognized and confronted. Learning from history so as not to repeat it is one thing; but understanding whose history, precisely, one is learning from is perhaps the more pivotal first step.

Future authorship may seek to identify dominant curricular narratives pertaining to other conflicts, geographical regions, and time periods. This line of inquiry holds particular salience for more recent military involvements, such as those initiated in the wake of September 11, 2001. The messaging about these events through education might be examined alongside narratives delivered through other cultural channels – media, national policy, and leadership, for instance – to assemble a more comprehensive view of our collective remembering of war. This work is

essential because it contributes a novel angle to the body of scholarship investigating the manifold causes of conflict, the prevention of which is of fundamental consequence to humanity.

***Interviewer**: General, let me ask you. Are you proud of what you did?*

***Paul Tibbets**: Yes, I am.*

References

Alperovitz, G. (1995). *The decision to use the atomic bomb and the architecture of the American myth*. Vintage Press.

An, S. (2021). Selective (un)telling of difficult knowledge of U.S. wars in children's literature: The Korean War as a case study. *The Social Studies, 113(2),* 68–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2021.1960256

An, S. (2021b). Teaching difficult knowledge of World War II in the Philippines with children's literature and inquiry. *Social Studies and the Young Learner, 34*(1), 10–15

Ang, I. (2001). *On not speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West*. Routledge.

Aoki, T. (2005). *Curriculum in a new key.* Routledge.

Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*. CRC Press.

Atomic Heritage Foundation. (n.d.). *General Paul Tibbets – Reflections on Hiroshima*. General Paul Tibbets – Reflections on Hiroshima | Manhattan Project Voices. Retrieved May 14, 2022, from https://www.manhattanprojectvoices.org/oral-histories/general-paul-tibbets-%E2%80%93-reflections-hiroshima

Au, W., Brown, A. L., Calderón, A. D., & Dumas, M. (2016). *Reclaiming the multicultural roots of U.S. curriculum: Communities of color and official knowledge and education.* Teachers College Press.

Bell, D. S. (2003). Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity. *British Journal of Sociology, 54*(1), 63-81.

Britzman, D. P. (1998). Lost subjects, contested objects: Toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning. State University of New York Press.

Brown, A. L., & Au, W. (2014). Race, memory, and master narratives: A critical essay on U.S. curriculum history. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *44*(3), 358–389. https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12049

Brunton, B. G. (1988). Institutional Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex. *Journal of Economic Issues*, *22*(2), 599–606. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4226018

Chamberlin, P. T. (2018). *The Cold War's killing fields: Rethinking the long peace*. Harper.

Chong, K. L. (2021). Exploring Curricular Ambiguity, Erasure, and Political Invisibility of the Asian Americans in the Secondary Social Studies Curriculum. *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies*, *29*, 30-57.

Chuck, H. & Chuck, J. (Directors). (2019). *Chinatown Rising* [Film]. Chuckwow Productions.

Commeyras, M., & Alvermann, D. E. (1994). Messages that high school world history textbooks convey: Challenges for multicultural literacy. *The Social Studies*, *85*(6), 268–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.1994.9956317

Gibbs, B. (2019). Patriotism, pressure, and place: Civic agency in base country. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *94*(1), 97–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956x.2019.1553584

Goodwin, A. L. (2010). Curriculum as Colonizer: (Asian) American education in the current U.S. context. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, *112*(12), 3102–3138. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811011201201

Griffen, W. L. (1974). Telling It like It Was: Vietnam History in the Schools. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, *55*(9), 616–618.

Harrison-Wong, C. (2003). *Educational significance of how U.S. history textbooks treat Hiroshima* (dissertation). ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

Intondi, V. (2020). Reflections on injustice, racism, and the bomb. *Arms Control Today*, *50*(6), 12–15.

Jones, M. (2010). *After Hiroshima: The United States, race and nuclear weapons in Asia, 1945-1965*. Cambridge University Press.

Kolakowski, C.L. (2018). A short history of US involvement in the Indo-Pacific. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, *1*(1), 14-20.

Kolano, L. (2016) Smartness as cultural wealth: an AsianCrit counterstory. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *19*(6), 1149-1163., DOI: 10.1080/13613324.2016.1168538

Lee, E. (2015). *The Making of Asian America: A History*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. EBSCO Publishing: eBook Collection.

Lee, S. J., Park E., & Wong, S. J. (2017). Racialization, schooling, and becoming American: Asian American experiences. *Educational Studies*, *53*(5), 492-510. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2016.1258360

Lin, L., Zhao, Y., Ogawa, M., Hoge, J., & Kim, B. Y. (2009). Whose history? An analysis of the Korean War in history textbooks from the United States, South Korea, Japan, and China. *The Social Studies*, *100*(5), 222–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/00377990903221905

Liu, W. (2020). Internationalism beyond the “Yellow peril”: On the possibility of Transnational Asian American Solidarity. *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, *11*(2),13-16.

Lo, J. C. (2019) The role of civic debt in democratic education. *Multicultural Perspectives, 21*(2), 112-118. DOI: 10.1080/15210960.2019.1606633.

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.* Beacon Press.

Miles, R. E. (1985). Hiroshima: The strange myth of half a million American lives saved. *International Security*, *10*(2), 121–140.

Nguyen, V. T. (2013). Just memory: War and the ethics of remembrance. *American Literary History, 25*(1), 144–163. https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajs069

Nguyen, V. T. (2016). *Nothing ever dies: Vietnam and the memory of war*. Harvard University Press.

Pearcy, M. (2011). "We Have Never Known What Death Was Before" — A Just War Doctrine Critique of U.S. History Textbooks. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, *38*(1), 45-60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2013.12.004

Pitt, A., & Britzman, D. (2003). Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: An experiment in psychoanalytic research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *16*(6), 755–776. https:// doi.org/10.1080/0951839031000163213 5

Rodríguez, N. N. (2018). From margins to center: Developing cultural citizenship education through the teaching of Asian American history. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 46*(4), 528–573. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2018.1432432

Rodríguez, N. N. (2020). “invisibility is not a natural state for anyone”: (Re)constructing narratives of Japanese American incarceration in elementary classrooms. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *50*(4), 309–329. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2020.1831369

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Seto, B. P. (2015). Paternalism and peril: Shifting U.S. racial perceptions of the Japanese and Chinese peoples from World War II to the early Cold War. *Asia Pacific Perspectives*, *13*(1), 57–78.

Skates, J. R. (1994). *The invasion of Japan: Alternative to the bomb*. University of South Carolina Press.

Stinson, H. L. (1947.). *"The decision to use the atomic bomb" (February 1947)*. Education About Asia. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/stimson_harpers.pdf

Takaki, R. T. (1996). *Hiroshima: Why America dropped the atomic bomb*. Back Bay Books.

Truman, Harry S. (August 11, 1945). [A letter from President Truman to Samuel McCrea Cavert discussing the use of atomic weapons.]. Retrieved from http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/library/correspondence/truman-harry/corr_truman_1945-08-

11.htm#:~:text=When%20you%20have%20to%20deal,most%20regrettable%20but%20nevertheless%20true

Wake, N. (2021). *American survivors: Trans-Pacific memories of Hiroshima & Nagasaki*. Cambridge University Press.

Westheimer, J. (2007). *Pledging allegiance: The politics of patriotism in America's schools*. Teachers College.

Yui, D. (1992). From exclusion to integration: Asian Americans' experiences in World War II. *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, *24*(2), 55–67.

Author Biography: Kaylie A. Ayres (she/her) is a fourth-year undergraduate student at Michigan State University, which forcibly occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg — Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. Upon graduating in May 2023, Kaylie plans to start her career as a social studies educator at the secondary level. Kaylie would like to thank her professors and advisors in MSU's James Madison College and College of Education for their unending academic, professional, and personal support.

This Ain't No Work For Hire:

A Testimonio of Our Experiences Building Liberatory Curriculum

Chosen Kin – A collective of liberatory educators and curriculum writers

Abstract: Liberatory educators, creating and maintaining learning conditions in and out of schools, are continuously in search of curricular tools to support their pedagogies. Yet, with states and school districts adopting mandates for more culturally inclusive curriculum (if that), corporations (and nonprofits that exist through corporate models) have moved in, placing ethnic studies within a consumer market. We[1], a group of liberatory curriculum developers, are here to tell our story. One that illuminates liberatory curriculum development within a context of subjugation where our bodies and minds were used for the production of labor, not the advancement of a more just, caring, and honest society.

Author's Note: Chosen Kin (we/us) are a collective of seven liberatory educators and curriculum developers (Lizette Ortega Dolan, Eunice Shih-Yu Ho, Betina Yuan-Cheng Hsieh 謝原真, Katie Yue-Sum Li, Estella Tavita Owoimaha-Church, Aldrich Limpin Sabac, and Asif Wilson) from the occupied lands of Turtle Island. We reject western hierarchical forms of knowledge production and note that we each contributed to the content of this article equally. Correspondence regarding this article should be directed to Asif Wilson, ajwilso1@illinois.edu.

[1] We write in the first person plural throughout this testimonio as a political term of collectivity and solidarity. While we are individuals, from different contexts with differing socially constructed identities, we write as a one voice, representing our unified identity and aspiration for justice-centered, and decolonial, pedagogical experiences in and out of schools.

From September 2019 through roughly May 2021 we were hired by a national curriculum developer to create lesson plans for a K-12 curriculum on Asian Americans. Our attempts to create lessons that illuminated structures of oppression and community resistance over time were censored. Content was removed and words were modified to be "less political". We were told by the curriculum developer that "this is part of the game. This is work for hire".

In retelling the story of our struggle here--creating liberatory curriculum for our people within the confines of what our people have access to--we invite readers to dialogue with us, to imagine with us, to dismantle with us, and to build with us. We are not attempting to present an alternative curriculum here. Rather, we are telling our story for others to learn from. This piece, titled *This Ain't No Work for Hire,* is our counter-narrative. One that speaks truth to power. We don't build curriculum for money. This work is about the liberation of our people and our communities.

While we are supportive of the places and spaces responding to years of organizing from communities across the U.S., adopting standards and graduation mandates that require the study of people of Color[2], we know, first-hand, how these aspirations can be co-opted to fit within tropes of meritocracy and falsehoods. *This Ain't No Work for Hire* is our attempt to retell our experiences within these hyphens. Creating and resisting. Navigating and refusing. Building and dismantling. After re-telling the story of our experience together, we conclude by offering four

[2] We specifically choose to use this term in reference to the term that it originates from, "women of color," which was a self-named political term created in 1977 at the National Women's Conference meant to unite non-white racialized people and form a commitment to collectively fight white supremacy and racism in solidarity and in coalition with one another. Additionally, we capitalize Color as a recognition of the power and agency of the identities reflected in the term.

insights to other curriculum developers and educators that we hope offer some guidance as we continue to build tools for liberatory education.

We are descendants of resistors
and the global majority.
People of the diaspora
The United Farm Workers
Indigenous
Asian
American
Chinese
Central
American
Latina
Black
Taiwanese
Samoan
Pakistani
Filipinx

We are conscious educators
Constantly in process
Creating transformation we were denied in our youth
Loving actively and unconditionally

Navigating spaces that seek to ravage our identities

We do the work to remain rooted in all of the above

Arms stretched wide across time and space

Trying to build bridges that connect

Our ancestors, ourselves, our descendants

Gleaning from and leaving legacies of critical hope

Fighting to ensure we are never erased again

We seek to humanize one another

Through story

Through resistance

As our chosen family

As Kin

From September 2019 through May 2021, we—co-authors of this paper and P-20 educators—were hired by a national curriculum developer to create K-12 lessons based on an Asian American documentary series. Our charge was to develop lesson plans on Asian American social movements of the 1960's and 1970's, one of the film's topics. Despite our varied ethnic and geographic backgrounds, we united in the understanding that the term "Asian American" (a term popularized in 1968) is not a monolithic cultural experience, but rather a socio-political term. We embodied the term Asian American as a purposeful reclamation of a racialized collective identity and in turn, a collective resistance against colonial oppression, historical erasure and othering. Via the interview process and onboarding conversations, we expected that those who hired us shared similar political commitments and understandings. Throughout the

course of the project, however, we came to realize that we were only valued as "work for hire:" people expected to fall in line, create lesson plans deemed "acceptable" to the mainstream masses, fulfill an unspoken requirement to legitimize these lessons through our reputations, take the money, and leave. In between group meetings or planning sessions, we were individually approached with edits, revisions, full censorship, and in some cases, entirely unrecognizable lessons or curriculum. The seven of us offered our whole selves through thoughtfully researched lesson plans, and when major portions of these lesson plans were subsequently rejected, it was clear that our expertise as transformational educators and critical race theorists was actually unwelcomed. Our contributions were rendered expendable. We were rendered expendable.

Yet what our project overseer - and we, frankly - had not realized, was that through this process, a beloved community had already taken root. Attempting to silence any one of us had an unintended effect.

We had come to see one another as chosen kin.

We chose to stand together, to tell our story.

This story is for educators, our kinfolk in diaspora, working towards a liberatory future who experience feeling silenced, alone, or hopeless. You are not alone and your humanity matters.

We invite you first into our processes of creating and designing lessons that were extensions of our commitment to confronting dominant narratives about Asian Americans. We move through the tensions faced in the creation and editing process, highlighting the ways we were positioned as too much (too radical, too biased, too political) and how we-resisted divisive tactics that attempted to silence us individually, by pushing back in coalition. We offer reflections to highlight how what happened connected with such oppression and resistance.

Finally, we offer insights into our collective learnings through this process in the hopes that our experiences can contribute to communities of educators continuing to move towards liberatory curriculum and educational practices.

Writing the lessons

Each of us was tasked with creating a lesson to parallel an excerpt of an episode from a documentary series on Asian Americans. In one of our first planning meetings, we noticed that the documentary centered and validated the "American Dream," "model minority myth," and the narrative of the "good American." We knew that these narratives were meant to discipline any critique of the U.S. empire or systemic oppression. We took note that the documentary did not ever mention the terms: "systemic oppression," "white supremacy," or "institutional racism." As a team we wanted to develop lessons explicit about naming these structural forms of oppression. The response from the curriculum developer was "we don't have time to critique this right now." Perhaps this was a harbinger of the container in which we would be expected to function and produce the product we were paid to do.

In hindsight we should have known better. But then acts of remembering and revelation are sometimes akin. We continued on. For our people.

Our lessons explored a range of topics including solidarity between Filipino migrant workers and Mexican-American farmworkers, the Vietnam War and Vietnamese refugees in the U.S., the West Coast Civil Rights Movement, the Third World Liberation Front, and the role of the arts and story-telling in the Asian American movement for liberation. With our seven lessons, we created liberatory content that disrupted the Black-White racialized binary and challenged the meritocratic model minority myth. We saw the implicit reinforcement of the model minority myth as reality throughout the documentary, but we refused this stereotype in our lessons by

offering counter-narratives. We refused to depict Asian Americans as robotic, naturally smart, "good" immigrants excelling because of individual hard work. We also refused the "good American" sub-narrative of the model minority myth which portrays Asian Americans as willing to silence themselves and follow the rules of being "good Americans," never critiquing the U.S. empire or capitalism and being forever indebted to this country. Instead, we sought to disrupt that myth.

Instead of replicating the documentary's validation of the model minority myth as the reason for Asian American social mobility, we critiqued it. We constructed lessons bound in transnational contexts and provided powerful examples of histories of resistance and their extension into the present day. We knew it was Western greed and pursuit of resources (imperialism) that explained Asian American existence in the U.S., and we had a responsibility to highlight Asian American resistance to harmful narratives of compliance.

We wanted to set the record straight. After all, the reasons Asian Americans have survived weren't because they individually pulled up their bootstraps. When U.S. society was hostile to Asian Americans, communities formed--be it bachelor societies, family or mutual aid associations, unions, cooperatives, or lending circles. We designed lessons where Asian Americans were shown as activists, organizers, resisters, refusers of the status quo, and comrades with other communities of Color steeped in a grounded understanding of white supremacy's devastating effects on the Asian American community. We exposed the way that the model minority myth works in conjunction with the image of the Perpetual Foreigner/Enemy Alien--how these controlling images governed not only the way ancestors moved through space and time but also how we experience daily life.

Ultimately what we wanted to include in the curriculum didn't matter.

Edits, edits, and more edits

In the lesson about Filipino migrant Farm Workers and the United Farm Workers union, the *unity clap* activity and an activity on self-determination were removed as they were deemed "too political." We found this ironic given that the alliance initiated by Filipino Farmworkers with Mexican Farmworkers was specifically formed *to be* political--to shift the power of the farm bosses and growers to Farm Workers. The means for that power shift was solidarity, which was exemplified by the *unity clap*, in which Farm Workers symbolically united across cultures and languages at the end of each day to express collective understanding of their shared struggles and lived experiences.

The word "dehumanization" was deleted from our lesson on the Vietnam War. For this lesson, we were asked to "make the lessons/ activities more positive" and to write lessons that weren't "so biased" (given their portrayal of U.S. imperialism in the context of Asian American history). This request, of course, was bewildering to us, especially since the lesson was about war. Without mentioning the normalization of the death and destruction of Vietnam and its people for the purpose of the expansion of the U.S. empire, the lesson amounted to "people were equally mean to each other."

Our mention of the arts as "giv[ing] voice to the politics" and supporting a crafting of an Asian American identity, was replaced with a focus on science as a blatant nod to the model minority myth. When we pushed back, explaining that this would perpetuate a myth we ultimately wanted to dismantle, we were met with repudiation. We felt history repeating itself. In the same way that the model minority myth was created to silence generations of Asian American activists and organizers, this dominant narrative was again used to suppress our voice in this moment.

The lesson focused on a nonprofit that provides Asian American studies to incarcerated Southeast Asian refugees included a background contextual reading that introduced the Prison Industrial Complex. A proposed reading within the lesson argued that it would be remiss to discuss incarceration of Southeast Asian refugees without foregrounding the rise of mass incarceration as a form of institutionalized racism that disproportionately affects Black and Brown communities. The reading was meant to encourage students to draw conclusions about how communities 'oppressions are intertwined--just as our liberation is also intertwined. This background reading was completely taken out and deemed irrelevant.

Every time we pushed back to their omissions and erasures, their response was: "If you don't want to make the edit, I can have someone else do it."

We all had significant portions of our lesson plans modified until they were almost unrecognizable, and then were asked to sign off on the final drafts or given the option of either keeping or removing our names from the work in the final published draft.

And that is what happened.

You're too radical

Ultimately it was communicated to us that we were "too radical." We realized that we weren't hired for liberatory work, as we were told in our early team meetings and as we had hoped. We were hired to reproduce the white supremacist project of racial hierarchy and reinforce a narrative of meritocracy.

As we reflected on our shared experiences through the lens of racial capitalism, what Nancy Leong (2012) defines as the process of extracting capital "through the commodification of racial identity" (p. 2152). We acknowledged we were being exploited for our labor by our contractor. Our ancestors 'stories, our communities, and even our names were being

commodified. We were dehumanized. We were othered by the check-signers and then used as tools for their profit, to fulfill a predetermined agenda. This analysis didn't lead to us pointing the finger at other people, but rather we identified the interdependent structures of racism and capitalism that created the conditions in which we found ourselves.

Liberatory educators aren't interested in reproducing the conditions of the world that harm people. We are interested in transforming these oppressive structures within educational settings, creating space for young people to make sense of the past as a roadmap to both analyze and transform the present conditions of their lives. This is why it was important for us to teach about the histories of criminalization and colonization of Black, Brown, and Asian and Asian American groups, the ways racism and sexism intersected during the Vietnam War, and the ways that Asian Americans in the 1960s-1970s, alongside other communities of color, used art as a powerful form of resistance and activism. These are important narratives that challenge and destabilize the meritocratic racial hierarchy that the model minority myth props up in service of white supremacy.

Our work was censored and labeled "too biased", "radical", "political", and "leftist" because it threatened to create a fracture. Our work was too dangerous for those in charge, yet, we ask what is at stake if we do not confront these narratives. We have already seen consequences of a failure to challenge these narratives in dangerous right-wing conservative movements such as the "1776 Project,", in dangerous narratives which lead to violence as seen in the January 6, 2021 United States Capitol insurrection, and in emergent state legislation banning the teaching of these important historical movements. These dangers also exist in the action of our people, folks of Color that advance tropes of American meritocracy, like the model minority myth that portray our histories and futures as ones of inclusion and participation. These dominant

portrayals of our legacies remove any notions or memories of our historical resistance to oppression in our lives.

We resisted

We resisted the censorship and the rewriting of our words because we understood what our work represented *to us* (liberatory narratives that may help youth build historical analysis of oppression) and what our work represented *to them* (a threat to status quo, a threat to their vested interest in racial capitalism, and a threat to their self-proclaimed commitment to diversity by virtue of supporting this film about Asian Americans). We resisted by insisting on **telling this story**, revealing our deep commitment to each other as humans. When one of our chosen kin first came forward with concerns about their lesson plan being censored, as a team, we of course were concerned with the political implications of these edits as enumerated above. Perhaps more infuriating, however, was that one of our chosen kin felt silenced and harmed. We were unwilling to produce lessons for a project that reproduced harm, but we were also unwilling to let one of our chosen kin be singled out and criticized. When one was attacked, we were all attacked.

When we collectively realized that all of our lessons were being censored, we could have individually accepted the lesson edits, gathered our checks, and parted ways. Instead, from those crucial moments of collective reflection, we coalesced not just as a team of assigned curriculum writers to create work for hire -- but as a group of chosen kin. Chosen kin committed to the larger project of liberatory curriculum and each other. Although it was removed from our lessons we hold fast to the message of the United Farm Workers movement unity clap, “Isang Bagsak,” translated as “one down” or “one fall” in Tagalog, generally meaning we rise together, and we fall together.

Our commitment to liberatory curriculum development necessitated and depended upon commitment to each other. We continued to meet about once a month to check in with each other and to write our story together. We met far more often than the expectation of the initial work for hire; we met to ensure that our story of solidarity beyond "work for hire" would be known and understood, so as to not be replicated on the backs of others. At the end of the project, the only thing we knew we owned were our truths. Drawing from the words of Anne Cheng (2021), "Asian-Americans are tired of insisting that others care. The truth is that few are listening. All we can do is to continue to tell our truths, to know even just for ourselves, that we are here" (n.p.). To not say our truth publicly would be to contribute to our continued erasure.

Insights

In 1964 Malcolm X (1965) said, "I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare". This documentary project centered the narrative on the "American Dream", a dream supposedly available to all who work hard, honestly, and dutifully.

We challenged this notion by aiming to develop original liberatory curricula that provided young people with the spaces to build their historical analysis of oppression in their world. We attempted to draw critique of the "American Dream," but because of the forced edits, became complicit in perpetuating the myth of the "American Dream", assimilation, and meritocracy. Our thirst for a more just future brought us to this work, but we found ourselves intertwined within the very systems we were seeking to dismantle. Our experiences illuminate how liberatory curriculum development is obstructed by white supremacist, capitalist, and patriarchal values. Curriculum writers, whether new or experienced, should be mindful (as we have grown to be) of the conditions that enclose (Sojoyner, 2016) our work. These reproductive

forces can violently censor the work of liberatory curriculum developers and educators alike by prioritizing products, profits, and corporatization over process, humanity, and transformation.

We call in our comrades, other liberatory curriculum writers, to reclaim our narratives. Author bell hooks (1996) reminds us that beloved community is "formed not by the eradication of difference but by its affirmation, by each of us claiming the identities and cultural legacies that shape who we are and how we live in the world*"* (p. 265). In celebrating struggle we can move towards a reclamation of our authentic selves and our agency in creating a different tomorrow.

We offer the following suggestions as lessons from our experience doing the work for hire, knowing that **our work ain't no work for hire**. These four insights, listed only by number for display and not hierarchy, are offered for others to learn from, and to contextualize in their own spaces and places in time. Please don't simply transport them to your space, make them your own.

Insight 1: Do your homework

Do your homework on the holders of power in any situation. Ask enough questions. We did not ask the questions that would have allowed us to better understand the limitations of this project from the start. Perhaps we felt there was no need to do so since the organization(s) associated with the project had established reputations. Perhaps it was because we found the work for hire posted in progressive, left-leaning educational sites. Or perhaps it was because we knew community members already associated with the project. If we had done our homework, looking at labor practices and previous curriculum sponsored by the partner organizations, we likely would have realized the project wasn't a fit for us and didn't correspond with our beliefs. Many of us simply wouldn't have taken the job.

Insight 2: Know your squad, know yourself

Trust your team--trust yourself. Revolutionary work can only happen at the speed of trust (Brown, 2017). The cross-country solidarity established during a global pandemic by our team did not happen overnight, but it happened organically because we intentionally made space to build relationships, kinship, and trust. We slowed down the production process. At the beginning of each meeting we invited each team member to check-in, to come as they were, inviting vulnerability, frustration, joy, and healing. And with the time left over, we focused on the work, the writing, the collaboration. Though it would seem the writing process would be elongated in this way and would require more meetings via Zoom, we found more cohesion as a group--resulting in a smoother, more purposeful writing process. We found ourselves moving forward with consensus and deep mutual understanding.

We valued and continue to value our interconnectedness, understanding that we are still individuals. As we formed a community through each and every work session, we became aware of our individual contributions and limitations. While working together we learned how to adapt and to support one another throughout our ongoing process.

Insight 3: Know your labor and its value

Be mindful of the ways that your labor, much like your ancestors', holds value. We came into this project with hoped to create liberatory curriculum that filled our souls, not just our wallets. As a result, we bound the curriculum we developed to an emergent and generative liberatory process that embodied the values of the stories we saught to retell. The curriculum developer was only interested in extracting value from us. Asone of our chosen kin stated, "They wanted our names."

We came to understand, through collective reflection and story-telling, this project's

relationship to the long history of exploitation of people of Color by way of dispossession, bondage, and indentured servitude in the U.S. and elsewhere--a long history of devaluing people's worth. As a collective, we reflected deeply with each other to understand our labor, and thus the curriculum we were occurring, within a neoliberal system that was more interested in reproduction than transformation. We were attempting to build tools for others, particularly young folks to critically read and rewrite the world, but it was coming at the expense of our well-being. To protect ourselves and the intentions of our curriculum development, we resisted exploitation, censorship, and the "whitewashing" of our stories and refused to reproduce the status quo in society, something the liberatory legacies of our people seek to contest.

Insight 4: Practice collective refusal and fugitivity

Stay together and stand together. White supremacist capitalist society separates and divides us from one another as a tool to maintain institutional power. Within our collective, we used our strength to support and uplift one another, refusing to communicate separately without bcc'ing or forwarding messages to one another or relaying the experience of calls so that our kin would know and be prepared for conversations. These acts of fugitive communication to prepare one another for forthcoming conversations with the larger organization were examples of ways we, as a collective, covertly supported one another. Without the knowledge of the larger organization, we examined contracts for the collective, sharing the changes requested of us, and agreeing upon a strategy to keep or cut what we felt still honored our vision. We supported each other through the eventual cuts and revisions made beyond our consent. Collective resistance allowed us to push back, both overtly and covertly during the process, and allowed us to maintain our humanity despite the reductionist dehumanization we experienced.

Move and work together towards the collective good. Our commitment to one another

sustained our integrity throughout a process in which our collective genius was reduced to a collection of sanitized products. As legendary activist Grace Lee Boggs (Boggs & Goodman, 2010) said, "The only way to survive is by taking care of one another" (n.p.). In the same tradition that our ancestors followed, when faced with a hostile environment, we took care of each other. Isolation is so often real in our day-to-day spaces, especially during the days of this project when we were practicing social distancing during a pandemic. But engaging in this work as a collective at each step--from the inception of our project work, to the curriculum design, to submitting our work, to continuing through this written piece--allowed us to never feel alone. The work (and Zoom) connected us across cities, states and time zones. In keeping each other constantly in the know about what was happening to each of us individually (e.g. e-mails with updates when we received communications from the institutional liaison, regularly meeting, and reviewing one another's work), we strategized and buoyed one another.

Closing

Sharing our cautionary narrative is a way of processing how we were duped, pitted against each other, and exploited for our labor. Our story is for those of us who will continue to navigate and endure the "commodification of racial identity" (Leong, 2012, p. 2152),

Because we know this work matters.

Because we seek a future where our liberation is just as our ancestors intended and we are no longer waiting or asking for someone else to grant it.

Because we want to reach back into our pasts and forward into our futures,

simultaneously, acting as a bridge between our elders and youth.

Because we recognize our silence will not protect us (Lorde, 1977).

Because we are determined and powerful.

Because we can lean in and lean on one another to get through and by.

Because our families

Chosen

And by blood

Still

Need

To

Eat

To be nourished.

You are not alone.

Your humanity is greater than your labor.

References

Brown, A. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds.* AK Press.

Cheng, A. (2021, February 21). What this wave of anti-Asian violence reveals about American. *The New York Times.*

Lee Boggs, G. (Guest Expert), & Goodman, A. (Host). (2010). Detroit activist, philosopher Grace Lee Boggs: "The only way to survive is by taking care of one another" [News report]. *Democracy Now.* https://www.democracynow.org/2010/4/2/grace_lee_boggs

hooks, b. (1996). *The killing rage: Ending Racism.* Holt and Company

Leong, N. (2012). Racial capitalism. *Harv. L. Rev.*, *126*, 2151-2226

Lorde, A. (2017). *Your silence will not protect you*. Silver Press.

Melamed, J. (2015). Racial capitalism. *Critical Ethnic Studies*, *1*(1), 76-85.

Robinson, C. J. (2020). *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (3rd Rev. ed). UNC Press Books.

Sojoyner, D. (2016). *First Strike: Educational enclosures in Black Los Angeles.* University of Minnesota Press.

X, M. (1965). *The ballot or the bullet*. Pacifica Tape Library.

Authors Biography:

Chosen Kin (we/us) are a collective of seven liberatory educators and curriculum developers (Lizette Ortega Dolan, Eunice Shih-Yu Ho, Betina Yuan-Cheng Hsieh 謝原真, Katie Yue-Sum Li, Estella Tavita Owoimaha-Church, Aldrich Limpin Sabac, and Asif Wilson) from the occupied lands of Turtle Island. We reject western hierarchical forms of knowledge production and note that we each contributed to the content of this article equally.

Abstract: Why is Korea forgotten in the U.S. imagination? Does curriculum contribute to this narrative? Research has been conducted on Asia's overall representation, as well as China and Japan's narrative in social studies curriculum. However, there has not been a large focus on Korea's representation. This study used mixed methods to examine the top U.S. high school world history textbooks and analyze Korea's place in the curriculum. In relationship to Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism, findings revealed that Korea is marginalized and misrepresented to promote U.S. national interests in East Asia. Korea was characterized with the following themes in textbooks: Korea without a distinct society, Korean War as U.S. event, nuclear North Korea, and Korean innovations relating to U.S. cultural norms. This misses opportunities for students to learn the stories of South Korea's success and the perspectives of Koreans in shaping their own history.

***Keywords*:** World History, Textbooks, Korea, Orientalism

Road to Forgotten: Korea in U.S. World History Textbooks

What is the United States attitude towards the Korean Peninsula? Why is Korea often overlooked and forgotten in the United States memory?[1] The United States has played a significant role in Korean history, such as in the Korean War, and its impact on democratization in South Korea, and unmitigated antagonistic attitudes of North Korea with its provocations of nuclear and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile technologies. Yet, many U.S. citizens cannot tell you anything about Korea's development. Among U.S. adolescents, there is a growing fondness towards Korean pop culture. However, many U.S. citizens have misunderstandings of Korea and Asia in general, which has led to a rise in Asian American hatred in the United States. Why are U.S. citizens missing the mark? Is education contributing to this? This mixed methods study aims to show that the answers to these questions can be found by examining U.S. high school world history textbooks and how they depict Korea. Textbooks are a fundamental part of education as teachers use them to assist in guiding instruction. However, textbooks in the United States follow the curriculum and standard guidelines set up by various states' governments, which are more influenced by political agendas rather than by scholars in the discipline (Erekson, 2012). Many teachers resort to solely using the textbook as well because they fear parental and public backlash in polarizing political times (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). Due to this, textbooks are great resources to reveal the U.S. attitude towards Korea. Especially since U.S. students' perceptions and knowledge of Korea and Asia are shaped by them.

Through conducting an online teacher survey on the most widely used textbook companies in U.S. high school social studies classes, this study examines the coverage of Korea in the top U.S. high school world history textbooks. An (2022) has investigated Asian

[1] Throughout this manuscript, my usage of the term "Korea" refers to the entire Korean Peninsula. I am investigating both North Korea and South Korea's representation in U.S. high school world history textbooks.

representation in the K-12 U.S. history standards of all 50 states. This study differs because it specifically examines Korea and world history curriculum. World history courses in the United States are typically taught in tenth grade. This study examines world history textbooks used in a regular tracked classroom and does not include advanced placement textbooks.

When examining these textbooks, I studied Korea's place in U.S. world history curriculum. Korea was represented with the following themes: Korea without its own distinct society (from China and Japan), the Korean War as solely a U.S. event, Korea represented as only nuclear North Korea, and Korean innovations relating to U.S. cultural norms. My research questions in this study were: (1) Why is Korea framed in relation to these themes in U.S. high school world history textbooks? (2) How can this framing be improved in relation to the greater purpose of world history curriculum? I do so by quantifying page counts and topics and recording data of intensities and multimedia extras. I have also coded the quantitative data to see qualitative trends using comparative content analysis in Korea's coverage.

The findings to my research questions will be compared in a literature review to prior studies of textbook content analysis and representations of Asia. Ultimately, using Said's (1979) theoretical framework of Orientalism, I will showcase the different ways Korea is framed as forgotten and misunderstood in the modern U.S. memory. I argue that Korea's dominant themes and its marginality in U.S. high school world history textbooks fit into the long tradition of constructing Asia as an oppositional other, in comparison to the supposed belief of superior power and dominance of the West (Europe and the United States). Textbook's curriculum purposefully assimilates this with U.S. ideals of progress. Doing so, creates distortions and misrepresentations of Korea as forgotten, further perpetuating problematic understandings of Asia. U.S. world history textbooks need to guide teachers and students to challenge this norm to

promote future peace interactions, understand the agency of the Korean people, and for better cultural understanding with Asia, particularly Korea.

Theoretical Framework: Said's Orientalism

Said (1979) defines Orientalism as a systemic and collective manipulation of "the East" by the West and for the West. Orientalism refers to the epistemological and material separation of the West and Other (East, in Said's case). The idea of othering the East manifests in scholarship, ideology, and/or statecraft. Said (1979) critiques that knowledge is not innocent. Orientalism depicts "the East" such as Asian nations, as having essential characteristics that are fundamentally opposite to the Western world (such as European nations and the United States). The Western world is represented as civilized, rational, democratic, changing, active, humanitarian, and advanced. Asian contexts lumped into a singular notion of "the Eastern world" are represented as uncivilized, irrational, undemocratic, stagnated, passive, violent, and backwards (Said, 1979). This enables continued imperialist and colonist attitudes by the United States.

Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism was originally applied to literature. However, Leonardo (2020) draws connections to educational contexts, with the production of system of thought. Leonardo (2020) argues that Said's methodology can engage new epistemological questions in the history of curriculum scholarship and the process of decolonizing curriculum. It specifically examines the "canon" of the Western world in its knowledge construction and maintenance of White supremacy and power. New opportunities of academic freedom can be invited questioning privilege, knowledge, power. This questioning can allow introspection into the ongoing coloniality of curriculum with maintenance of patriotic sentiments and avoidance of multiple perspectives and difficult knowledge (Britzman & Pitt, 1996; Leonardo, 2020).

History textbooks in the United States are purposely designed to assimilate to U.S. colonial ideals of national progress (Erekson, 2012; Noboa, 2012; VanSledright, 2008). Prior literature of U.S history textbooks' representations of East Asia, as will be discussed in the next section, suggests that textbook narratives of the region align with Orientalism's narrative (Fleming, 1985; Goodman, 1986; Hart, 1946; Hong, 2009; Kang, 2020; Shaffer, 2001; Suh et al., 2008; Ward, 2007; Zhao & Hoge, 2006). Orientalism helps to shed light on this subordinated and othered portrayal of Korea, in textbooks, relying on a linear and Western understanding of progress. Anything that does not align with U.S. understandings of progress is seen as backwards, insignificant, or only successful if it aligns between the narrative of Western progress. Entrenched immensely in Orientalism, textbooks make it hard for future generations of students to think outside of this system.

Literature Review

Conceptions of Asia in content analyses of textbooks in the United States

Prior textbook content analysis research has been more devoted to Asia as a whole, or China and Japan's representations in U.S. world history textbooks (Fleming, 1985; Goodman, 1986; Hart, 1946; Hong, 2009; Kang, 2020; Shaffer, 2001; Ward, 2007; Zhao & Hoge, 2006). There have not been many studies on Korea's representation in U.S. world history textbooks (Kim, 1991; Suh et al., 2008). The findings of these studies suggest that Asian countries, historically and contemporarily, are often positioned to assimilate with U.S. ideals of progress in the region, with the themes of promoting U.S. diplomatic relations in Asia, defending U.S. military decisions in Asia, and depicting the United States as a savior in Asia (Fleming, 1985; Hong, 2009). I will elaborate on these themes below.

Promoting U.S. diplomatic relations in Asia

In relation to U.S. ideals of progress with content analysis representations of Asia, one aspect of this is the promotion of U.S. diplomatic relations in the region. In the 1940's, content analysis of U.S. textbooks found that they had positive outlooks of colonialism in Asia due to their colonizers being U.S. allies in World War I. No critiques of Western imperialism in Asia were found in textbooks (Hart, 1946; Shaffer, 2001). The evidence suggests that those textbooks were supportive of its European allies and justified their oppressive actions in the region. Content analyses also observed China's preferential treatment due to it being a U.S. strategic ally against Japan in World War II at the time. Textbooks were beginning to discuss Confucius, Chinese achievements such as manufacturing silk, porcelain, jade, ink, paper, books, printing and the development of tea drinking and its influence on England (Hart, 1946; Shaffer, 2001). Studies also show that beginning in the 1980s, Japan has been mentioned in a positive light with Japanese educators giving high reviews of U.S. textbook passages (Goodman, 1986). Atrocities committed by Imperial Japan during World War II are often covered up such as the Nanjing Massacre, "comfort women" (victims of sexual slavery during World War II), and biological warfare experiments (Zhao & Hoge, 2006). Supporting U.S. allies, demonstrates the ways textbooks have historically represented Asia to assimilate into U.S. diplomatic relationships and is insightful to the ways Korea has been as well with representations of its history and culture.

Defending U.S. military decisions in Asia

Prior textbook content analysis of Asia also has promoted U.S. ideas of progress with defending U.S. decisions in the region. In the 1940's, Wilson's Committee also found that Japan was portrayed as the villain in World War II, due to the context of the war (Hart, 1946; Shaffer, 2001). Later textbook content analysis studies found this narrative continuing with Japan represented only with Pearl Harbor and the Atomic Bomb, and the U.S. perspective with

President Truman's decision to drop the bomb. Textbooks lacked any alternative narrative of the Atomic Bomb's effects on the Japanese population and its radiation (Fleming, 1985; Ward, 2007). U.S. decisions in the region are also defended in the context of the Korean War as solely a U.S. event. Suh and colleagues (2008) compared international textbook coverage of the Korean War. They found that the U.S. textbooks sampled in their study only mentioned military strategy rather than geopolitical realignment in the Korean War. There was nothing about soldiers' experiences, leaders, or the war's impact. More significantly, nothing was mentioned about Koreans involvement. Textbooks only narrated the Korean War simply as a part of the Cold War with the United States trying to contain communism. This narrative suggests defense of U.S. actions in Korea at that time, not providing any alternative perspective to how the war affected the Korean people. This can also be seen in representations of Korea as only North Korea. Hong's study (2009) revealed that most imagery in textbooks of Korea were modern with depictions of North Korea. Many of these images were North Korea's dictator Kim Jong Il. Hong (2009) points out that Korea's limited representation support's U.S. hardliner policy toward North Korea. No regard is given to how this policy impacts North Korea civilians. Together, these findings from prior textbook content analysis of Asia showcase that defending U.S. actions in the region leads to missed opportunities of providing alternative accounts to how these events impacted the people who live there.

Depicting the United States as a savior in Asia

U.S. ideals of progress have also been represented in textbooks with the United States being depicted as a savior in Asia. Hong (2009) found that Japan is typically represented with positive and modern imagery in textbooks. These images are accompanied with descriptions with how the United States reconstructed Japan after World War II. Perhaps, Japan may only be

receiving good representations due to its close growing relationship with the United States (Fleming, 1985; Hong, 2009). This evidence suggests that Asian countries, such as Japan, are only successful due to U.S. involvement in the region. This can lead students to think that people in Japan or other Asian countries do not have agency or need U.S. salvation. This conforms to the idea that the United States is better than the rest of the world, which can lead to nationalistic and intolerant treatment towards other nations and cultures.

Overall, in prior textbook content analysis of Asia, narratives are positioned to integrate into the construction of U.S. ideals of progress in the region. This can be seen with promoting nations that the United States has positive diplomatic relations with, defending U.S. military decisions, and depicting the United States as a savior in Asia. Together, these findings leave a legacy in U.S world history curriculum that do not leave room for students to learn alternative narratives of the greater complexities of Asia or the consequences of U.S. decisions. Students simply learn a nationalistic U.S. narrative that can perpetuate further misunderstandings and tensions in the future. This is important to address because Korea's place is marginal in U.S. world history textbooks and in my literature review. The findings in my study correlate that Korea's representation in the textbooks fit into these previous constructions of Asia in prior textbook content analysis studies.

Conceptions of the United States in content analyses of textbooks

Apple (1996) argues that school curriculum "is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge" (p. 22). The way that topics are presented in curriculum sends a message to students about whose knowledge counts and whose does not (An, 2016; Apple, 1996; Apple, 2004). Since the Civil Rights Movement, there is a long history of research of U.S. curriculum's inclusion, exclusion, and representation of marginalized groups (An, 2016). It has been found that U.S.

curriculum, picks and chooses experiences and perspectives that maintain a positive image of national identity (Ladson-Billings, 2003). The occurrences when multiple perspectives of marginalized groups are included in the curriculum, they often are done in a way that are avoidant of direct conversations about difficult histories such as racism and oppression and exclude the United States from any negative implications (An, 2022; Rodríguez, 2018; Rodríguez, 2020).

History textbooks in the United States are no exception and are purposely designed to assimilate to ideals of national progress (Erekson, 2012; Noboa, 2012; VanSledright, 2008). As seen in the previous section of this literature review, perspectives on Asia in U.S. textbooks were conformed to promoting U.S. diplomatic relations, defending U.S. military decisions, and depicting the United States as a savior. Researchers have found this positive sentiment with Black Americans' experiences on past events like slavery and the Civil Rights Movement (Wills, 1996). In those topics, only positive one-dimensional heroic figures are showcased, and relevant discussions of structural and institutional racism are ignored (Anderson & Metzger, 2011; Brown & Brown, 2010; King 2020). Native Americans experiences have been improved, but there still is a lack of attention to their ways of knowing and being, their agency, and problems they still face at the hands of the U.S. government (Sabzalian, 2019). Lessons on Latinés is still largely ignored, dismissive of the diversity of the Latiné population, and the role of the U.S. government in their migration histories (Busey & Silva, 2021; Santiago, 2018). Women's narratives in the curriculum are also reduced to heroes, rather than pushing feminist post-structural changes in society for gender equality (Schmeichel, 2015). Discussions of gender and LGBTQ+ issues remained overlooked as well (Mayo, 2017).

Textbook contents and other pedagogical materials are directly impacted by state standards (An, 2016; Erekson, 2012; Noboa, 2012). State standards define what students should be able to know and be able to do on standardized assessments (An, 2016). Textbooks purposely align their materials to state standards for their school districts as an investment to support student achievement (Erekson, 2012; Noboa, 2012). Researchers have found that there is also an omission of Asian and Asian American perspectives in state standards (An, 2016; Noboa, 2012). Noboa (2012) notes that in the Texas social studies curriculum, Asian perspectives are largely ignored like many other minority groups. When investigating all high school Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies (2020) standards, Korea is only mentioned once within U.S. History, in relation to the Korean War and the containment policy of the Cold War. Noboa (2012) points out that Asians are only mentioned regarding the context of U.S. economics and foreign policy, not giving any agency or voice to Asia's rich cultural heritage, particularly Korea's. An's (2022) investigation of 50 states U.S. history standards found that Asian and Asian American counternarratives were invisible and if present were treated merely as victims of nativist immigration policies. In such standards, it can easily be seen how fundamental misconceptions towards Korea can persist in textbooks leading to being forgotten and misunderstood in the U.S. memory.

The narrative of U.S. progress persists due to the idea of the origin myth and nativist sentiments. Dunbar Ortiz (1995) explains that the origin myth focuses solely on an exclusive idea of heroism. VanSledright (2008) describes that in U.S. history curriculum, with the idea of nation building, narratives must align to the first Anglo settlers, and that anti-immigration sentiments still have a legacy in our curriculum to silencing other diverse perspectives. In U.S. textbooks, it is Western history, making the reality of other histories hard for students to see. The

emphasis of an origin myth forms the basis identity of other groups as lesser than or as merely others (Dunbar Ortiz, 1995; VanSledright, 2008). With assimilating to U.S. ideals of progress, textbooks do not allow one to contemplate other cultural narratives, further implicating manifest destiny. Dunbar Ortiz (1995) articulates this U.S. origin myth in textbooks allows for the elite to hold control. The multiple perspectives of marginalized groups are demeaned to merely victims, rather than actors, diminishing their agency. If only U.S. cultural narratives matter, then other cultural narratives including Korea's, will remain silent. The purpose of the origin myth matches the purpose of Orientalist sentiments. This narrative is dangerous because it reinforces stereotypes, fear, and hatred in the American imagination and character rather than appreciation for the diversity and inspiration to improve the status of the world.

There has been a call to reform the purposes of world history curriculum in the United States by historians and social studies educators (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Bender, 2006; Bentley, 2007; Gaudelli, 2003; Marino, 2010; Myers, 2006). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) advocates that social studies programs include experiences highlighting cultural diversity. NCSS acknowledges that the world is multicultural and globally connected, needing students to understand multiple perspectives deriving from different cultural vantage points. Myers (2006) advocates that world history should help students to become global citizens due to global interconnectedness. Other scholars advocate that world history must prepare students for constructive engagement with various people and societies (Bentley, 2007; Gaudelli, 2003). To achieve this, students must become tolerant of different ways of living and values. Scholars suggest that world history curriculum provide rich material for students to analyze and evaluate (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Bentley, 2007; Gaudelli, 2003, Kim, 2018). World history curriculum

reform in the United States desires students to appreciate differences that exist in the world, to help facilitate dialogue with those outside their sociocultural lens.

Although world history tends to be assimilated with a nationalistic agenda, scholars argue the purpose of this can be adjusted to have students interpret national affairs in a broader global context (Bender, 2006; Bentley, 2007; Gaudelli, 2003; Kim, 2018; Marino, 2010; Myers, 2006). Rather than assimilate world history to a self-justifying narrative of national history, it can become an opportunity to understand national history from multiple perspectives. Students will accommodate new knowledge using history to understand historical roots and misunderstandings (Stearns, 2006). This disequilibrium can help students contextualize modern complex issues nations faces today (Bentley, 2007).

World history curriculum has a legacy of conforming to U.S. ideals of progress. This can be problematic because it silences opportunities to include multiple perspectives from a variety of cultural vantage points. Historians and social studies educators argue that world history curriculum should provide an opportunity to allow students to disrupt the status quo, having to accommodate to different interpretations of history, outside hegemonic national interests. World history curriculum can grant students to critically think about contextualizing differences, expanding outside their sociocultural lens, to communicate and have empathy, appreciating diversity, in an interconnected world. In turn, world history curriculum can have students critically think about Korea's history and culture.

Methodology and Methods

I developed an online survey to methodically consider which U.S. high school world history textbooks would be the best to examine. During September 2018, this survey was shared with social studies teachers across the United States. The survey was open for one month. The

survey was shared with teachers by various state level council for the social studies email networks and social media accounts, including teacher fellowship Facebook groups, the Korean War Legacy Foundation email network and social media, and social studies educators Facebook groups "Scholarships, Grants, and Summer Institutes for Teachers" and "Social Studies Network."

While the survey was open, it was completed by 142 social studies teachers across the United States, with 36 states represented. The top five textbook publishers mentioned by social studies educators were: Pearson, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, McGraw-Hill, Teachers Curriculum Institute, and Cengage. I chose to analyze the most recent high school world history textbooks produced by these five publishers (see Appendix A).

Data Collection

First, when I examined through the five high school world history textbooks, I examined the index. On a spreadsheet for each textbook, I counted the number of pages and topics mentioned for Korea. I also recorded the names of topics mentioned for Korea. Next, I examined what was specifically stated for Korea on each of those pages and made notes on the intensities of the passages, what was stated or not stated about the topics, themes I saw, and documented multimedia extras such as pictures, maps, charts, questions for understanding, and vocabulary. Multimedia extras were both quantified and notes were taken on the specific content.

Data Analysis

I used content analysis and constant comparative analysis to interpret the data. Using Habtai's (1984) definition: content analysis refers to a "research technique for objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content communication." I used Zhang and Wildemuth's (2009) definition of constant comparative analysis as "the systematic comparison

of texts, developing categories or themes, and the integration of categories/themes by the comparison of items assigned to a category to fully develop the theoretical properties of the category/theme" (p. 312). To achieve this, after collecting the data, I created a spreadsheet coding the common themes seen for Korea in the index across the textbooks. I wrote the list of topics from each textbook side by side into columns and then highlighted the common themes I saw mentioned. This idea was acquired from the Kim (1991) study of categorizing content analysis based on topics/themes of what is included and omitted. This is also like Nolen's (2021) study coding coverage of the Korean War in U.S. History textbooks based on themes from major events in the war. Afterwards, I compared these findings to Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism, looking for narratives that supported the United States as civilized, rational, democratic, changing, active, humanitarian, and advanced or narratives that represented Korea as uncivilized, irrational, undemocratic, stagnated, passive, violent, and backwards (Said, 1979).

Regarding quantitative data analysis, I averaged the total number of pages in each textbook; the number of pages from all textbooks that "mention" Korea, the average use of multimedia extras, and passage intensities. I use the term intensity to refer to the strength of the passage. A mention received a score of a 1 if it was only in one-three sentences. It received a score of a 2 if the mention was a paragraph long about the country. It received a score of 3 if the mention was elaborated in a page or more. With investigating previous literature review, the research shows that no other textbook analysis has coded a mention's intensity with such a scale.

As I looked at the averages of the textbook intensity scores, I also used additional notes to supplement the quality of word choices and imagery used to describe Korea, and how this specifically related to Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism. This was correlated to research questions borrowed from Kim's (1991) study (see Appendix B).

Researcher Positionality

As the data collection instrument, I must be aware of how my identity can influence data collection and analysis (Wolcott, 1994). Wolcott (1994) reminds us to take note of multiple ways of looking and understanding the truth when analyzing data to assess validity. Dangers can emerge if researchers do not reflect upon their own ways of "coming to know, knowing, and experiencing the world" (Milner, 2007, p. 388). To counteract this, I must make sure I remain self-aware of positionality, critically remaining conscientious of the codes I assign during analysis. In the vein of practicing reflexivity in my role in this research project, I am not Asian or Asian American. However, through my own experiences as a Latina, I understand the detriment effects of not seeing representations of oneself in the official curriculum. I understand how one can lose sight of their background being forced to conform to hegemonic structures. This positionality has invigorated me to be a part of disrupting the nationalistic and patriotic tone of U.S. social studies curriculum for all marginalized groups, not just my own, in society. It is my passion to bring awareness to these issues and do this work.

Findings

My findings how that Korea was depicted without its own distinct society (in relationship to China and Japan), the Korean War as solely a U.S. event, as only nuclear North Korea, and Korean innovations relating to U.S. cultural norms. These dominant findings of Korea in U.S. high school world history textbooks fit into assimilating with U.S. ideals of progress. Distortions and misrepresentations of Korea are created, furthering problematic understandings of Asia. U.S. world history curriculum needs to challenge this hegemonic construction to promote future peace interactions with Asia during contentious times, to recognize the agency of the Korean people, and to have cultural understanding.

Korea without a distinct society

As found in previous studies (e.g., Kim, 1991), Korea was represented as an extension of China and Japan. For example, the textbooks omitted unique aspects of Korean religion. There were no references to Korean shamanistic practices, nor of *Juche* (in which the North Korean government promotes a god-like reverence for the Kim family). In discussing Buddhism and Confucianism, meanwhile, textbooks mentioned these in the sections of China and Japan and mentioned that it spread into Korea with a Score 1 intensity. This implied that the history and practice of these religions has no unique cultural identity in Korea.

Textbooks portray Korean dynasties as dependent on Chinese dynasties having no agency of their own. For example, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2018) map of three ancient Korean dynasties (Silla, Koguryo, Paekche) focuses on Korean invasions from China and the Mongols with arrows showing the invasions. The corresponding interpret map questions ask: "1. What physical features help separate Korea from China? 2. Did the Tang Chinese invade Korea by land or by water during the 600s?" (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, p. 331). McGraw Hill (2018) Score 3 intensity mention of Korean dynasties appears fruitful until reading that the section that begins with the question: How was Korea influenced by China and Japan? (McGraw Hill, 2018, p. 264). This question guides students' understanding through the entire passage. The passage describes the Silla and Koryo Dynasties with:

> "As the Silla kingdom became more allied with the Chinese, the monarchy turned to Confucian ideals to run the country. Gradually, with the support of the Tang Dynasty of China, the kingdom of Silla gained control of the peninsula… Finally, in the early tenth century, a new dynasty called Koryo (the root of the modern word *Korea*) arose in the north. This kingdom adopted Chinese political institutions in order to unify its territory

> and remained in power for four hundred years. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols seized the northern part of Korea. By accepting Mongol authority, the Koryo dynasty managed to remain in power… After the collapse of the Mongol dynasty in China, the Koryo dynasty broke down." (McGraw Hill, 2018, p. 264)

This passage is accompanied by photo of a Silla Dragon, looking familiarly like a Chinese dragon. Pearson (2016) displays a photo of celadon pottery and the text in the corresponding paragraph states: "They learned to make porcelain from China, and perfected the technique for making celadon…" (p. 330). Collectively, Korea's dynasties are only seen as successful with the help of Chinese dynasties and institutions.

Korea is also seen without agency in relation to Japan to justify U.S. foreign policy in the region. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2018) describes the Russo-Japanese War as the Japanese pushing the Russians out of Korea. It then gives a Score 3 intensity description of the brutality the Japanese inflicted upon the Koreans and the lack of interests of the United States. This passage implies that Koreans were passive as they were passed around by other countries. Textbooks could have described at this time the growing Korean Nationalist Movement and how the Korean people were fighting for the right to rule their homeland. As prior studies suggest, Korea in these textbooks is used as a tool to villainize warlike Japan (Hart, 1946; Nozaki, 2001; Shaffer, 2001). Students' attentions are not focused on Korea's agency in this passage, but rather seeing Asians overall as a threatening "other" justifying U.S. military endeavors in World War II.

Relating back to Orientalism, Korea is seen as passive and as a violent "other" in these passages. With passivity, it is seen as not having agency of it's with religious practices and the development of ancient Korean dynasties. Asia overall it portrayed as a violent

other with focus on Japan's inflictions upon Korea in World War II, and Korean agency passively fades in the background. This assimilates to textbook's U.S. ideals of progress with either the legacy of China's importance in texts since WWI (Hart, 1946; Shaffer, 2001) or justifying World War II policy villainizing Japan (Hart, 1946; Hong, 2009; Nozaki, 2001; Shaffer, 2001) to benefit and justify U.S. national interests in East Asia. Korea's history is regarded as passive and lacking agency.

Korean War as U.S. event

The Korean War is a major theme across all the textbooks, but it is described only as a U.S. event, rather than including how the Korean War impacted Korea. In all the textbooks, it is referenced with a Score 3 intensity. For example, Pearson (2016) spends two pages describing the Korean War. However, most of the vocabulary words in the section relate to the United States with the 38th parallel, Pusan Perimeter, and demilitarized zone (DMZ). Three paragraphs are devoted to describing the leadership of U.S. General Douglas MacArthur and his military strategies. Much of the passage is spent describing how the United States was also fighting Communist China during this cause too (Pearson, 2016, p. 794). Another example is in Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's (2018) three pages describing the Korean War with a Score 3 intensity. Again, all the vocabulary was related to the United States with the 38th parallel, Douglas MacArthur, and the Domino Theory. Pictures in the passage included U.N. forces at Inchon Landing and a map of the war comparing advances of the United Nations versus North Koreans and Chinese. Teachers Curriculum Institute (2013) devote a full page to the Korean War but also only describe MacArthur and the American desire to contain communism. There is also an accompanying image of North Korean prisoners of war. It is captioned "The United States sent troops to defend South Korea after communist North Korea invaded the South in June

1950." (p. 397). McGraw Hill (2018), only describes the Korean War in one paragraph related to American desires to contain communism.

The experiences and perspectives of U.S. troops, U.N. troops, and Koreans are absent in these narratives. As indicated in prior studies, the Korean War passages do not give insight to how this event has contributed to Modern Korea today or the experiences of the Korean people (Hong, 2009; Suh et al., 2008). Regarding Orientalism, the absences of these perspectives make Korea appear as passive rather active once more. Koreans are depicted without their own agency. With using the Korean War as another case study to promote U.S. patriotism in the region, the opportunity for students to understand Koreans agency in this event is lost (Fleming, 1985; Ward, 2007).

Nuclear North Korea

Modern Korea in these textbooks is portrayed mostly as nuclear North Korea to assimilate to U.S. hardline policy against North Korea. There is often omission of modern democratic South Korea with its booming economy and reasons why North Korea is communist today. For example, only one textbook showcased modern South Korea with a large photo of Seoul and a Score 3 intensity describing South Korea's struggles to build its successful democracy and economic development since the Korean War (Teachers Curriculum Institute, 2013, p. 423). Other textbooks such as McGraw Hill (2018) had five paragraphs devoted to North Korea describing its nuclear arsenal and communist government and only three paragraphs in comparison describing South Korea (p. 847). Photos on this page were also devoted to making Korea appear threatening with soldiers at a face-off at the DMZ. There was no imagery of South Korea's modernization success. Pearson (2018) textbook only had one paragraph about South Korea and three paragraphs about North Korea. Majority of the textbooks did not have

information about life in North Korea or life in South Korea. In relation to the theory or Orientalism, ultimately, the textbooks focus on North Korea, only allow students to see Korea as a Communist "other" rather than take in consideration the democratization of South Korea as well. Focus on Nuclear North Korea sets it up as an opposite of a Western democratic nation such as the United States. As suggested by the literature review, Korea is set up as a binary against the United States to support the hard liner policy against North Korea (Chang; 2009; Fleming, 1985; Hong, 2009; Nolen, 2021).

Korean innovations relating to U.S. cultural norms

The agency of Koreans was highlighted through the inclusion of just two events, both from remote historical contexts: the development of *Hangul*, the Korean writing system, and the invention of movable type. Even in these cases, Korea's contributions are absorbed to Western achievements. Hangul was celebrated in McGraw Hill (2018) stating:

> "One distinctive Korean characteristic was its alphabet – Hangul… Unlike Chinese, which uses thousands of symbols, the Korean Hangul is phonetically based. One symbol stands for each sound, similar to the English alphabet. Hangul is still largely the standard writing system in present-day Korea" (p. 264).

Pearson (2016) also praises Hangul writing that is has "led to an extremely high literacy rate" (p. 331). It has an image comparing Korean and Chinese calligraphy. However, both passages praise Hangul due to its similarities to the English alphabet, with having 24 letters, and using consonants and vowels. This passage essentially implies that if other countries' languages are like the English languages, they are successful. However, if something is not culturally compatible it is not productive, like Chinese in the example. Textbook content analyses in the 1940s warned against this, stating celebration of Asian successes should be in their own regard,

not as comparable to the United States (Hart, 1946; Shaffer, 2001). As Apple (2004) argues, there needs to be attention to what is considered knowledge in curriculum and who is deciding it and how this contributes to hegemonic discourse that the Western way of thinking is best.

The Korean invention of moveable type was hardly mentioned perhaps because it counteracts with Western innovation supremacy. Only one of the textbooks, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2018) mentioned Korea as the first to invent movable type. It mentioned it in a Score 1 intensity. There was no accompanying pictures or review questions on the subject. Most textbooks celebrate Johannes Gutenberg with creating movable type to produce the Gutenberg Bible. They do not acknowledge that Korea invented this over 400 years beforehand. This omission is another example of Apple's (2004) considered knowledge. In the long run, innovations are only mentioned if they are similar to U.S. ideals of progress with being civilized. However, if innovations go against this sentiment by giving advanced progress to another group, it is ignored. The ignoring of Korea's achievements relates back to Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism, because the West must always appear as the source of advancements and civilized, including on standards of language and writing. However, other sources of knowledge and achievement will be silenced to prevent the West from appearing uncivilized or backwards. Appearing uncivilized or backwards is a narrative reserved for the East, and in this case, Korea.

Discussion: Countering passivity, othering, and assimilating

Regarding Korea's representation as without a distinct society, a possible way this can be corrected is having students use evidence to conceptualize change and continuity over time. Textbooks mention the ancient Korean kingdoms as an extension of Chinese dynasties. Textbooks could have students challenge the narrative that the Silk Road ended in China. They could evaluate sources of goods, techniques, and cultural beliefs that spread into Korea and from

Korea on the Silk Road. Curriculum could then use the case example of the Silk Road in Korea and how it impacted the spread of Buddhism. Students can compare images and temples from India, China, Japan, Korea and determine similarities and differences to identify unique examples of syncretism distinct in Korean Buddhism. Together, these would allow students to conceptualize Korea's unique cultural identity and agency. This challenges textbooks assimilation to U.S. ideals of progress with the legacy of China's importance in texts since WWI (Hart, 1946; Shaffer, 2001) This idea challenges the notion that Korea's history is not important historically to United States national interests, with how Korea's historical agency is important to world history. Regarding Orientalism, this would correct the passive narrative of Korea, and allow it to become active.

The Korean War's depiction as only a U.S. event can be challenged by having students analyze sources from a variety of perspectives. This could include primary and secondary sources written by U.S., Soviet, North Korean, U.N., and South Korean officials. It could include newspaper reports, political cartoons, photographs, or watching oral history videos from veterans who served on multiple sides of the conflict as well. Students can contextualize the various points of view and purposes in the situation to see the relation in the complexities of modern Korea or the experiences of the Korean people (Hong, 2009; Suh et al., 2008). This idea too would challenge the Korean War's assimilation as another case study promoting U.S. patriotism in the region, and allow Koreans to not appear as passive of a war that happened in their country (Fleming, 1985; Ward, 2007). This idea would challenge Orientalist sentiments of passivity and show Korea as active in shaping its destiny.

To help students conceptualize the notion that all modern Korea is nuclear North Korea, curriculum could have students examine South Korea's government in relation to the United

States. Before analyzing government documents, students can review Korea's tumultuous political history with oppression from Imperial Japan and the chaos of the Korean War to see how these events influenced The Constitution of the Republic of Korea. Students could be guided to look for similarities and differences to the United States Constitution and the reasons they approach provisions differently. This can allow students to understand national knowledge but then allow them to accommodate understanding from a variety of cultural vantage points. This would challenge present curriculum trends of depicting all of Korea as a Communist "other." Instead of setting Korea as a binary against the United States to support the hard liner policy against North Korea, students can also learn how the United States and South Korea work together in the region and how their democratic practices differ.

Conclusion

Korea was represented with the following themes in high school U.S. world history textbooks: Korea without a distinct society, Korean War as solely a U.S. event, Korea represented as only nuclear North Korea, and Korean innovations relating to U.S. cultural norms. The research questions in this study were: (1) Why is Korea positioned in relation to these themes in U.S. high school world history textbooks? (2) How can this positionality be improved in relation to the greater purpose of world history curriculum? These dominant themes of Korea assimilate with the narrative of U.S. ideals of progress. This correlates to the theoretical framework of Said's (1979) Orientalism in that its official knowledge is constructed (and continues to be constructed) in European/US culture to the East as a backwards, passive, or a violent other, in comparison to the West. This strict binary creates an "us versus them" mindset, silencing room for alternative narratives in curriculum to create entirely new constructions based on new understandings. World history curriculum needs to include multiple perspectives to

present students with new information that has students appreciate differences that exist in the world, helps facilitate dialogue with those outside their sociocultural lens, and contextualize modern complex issues. These concepts are important in an interconnected world. The present situation with Korea's narrative in U.S. high school world history textbooks also silences opportunities for Korean American students to learn about their own history in Asia and the context of their histories to the United States. This can create problems for feelings of belonging and engaging in citizenship. World history curriculum needs to be more that a self-justifying nationalistic agenda. To fully contextualize Korea's modern place, its past must be advocated in world history curriculum, in a way that gives the Korean people their own agency, rather than being "othered," assimilated, or dismissed to U.S. nationalistic purposes.

Author Biography: Mariah Pol is a first-generation Latina doctoral student studying Curriculum and Instruction at Indiana University. Prior to pursuing her doctoral studies, she was an award-winning social studies educator in Northwest Indiana. She was the recipient of 11 domestic and international teaching fellowships, the 2019 Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Indiana History Teacher of the Year, and the 2020 Caleb Mills Indiana History Teacher of the Year award through the Indiana Historical Society. She has previously worked as a Teacher Fellow with the Korean War Legacy Foundation developing online resources for students, teachers and the public to learn about the Korean War and modern Korea. Mariah has also created curriculum for the Indiana Historical Society to accompany the book and virtual museum exhibit *Asian American Voices in Indiana*.

References

An, S. (2016). Asian Americans in American history: An AsianCrit perspective on Asian American inclusion in state US history curriculum standards. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 44*(2), 244-276.

An, S. (2022). Re/Presentation of Asian Americans in 50 states' K–12 US history standards. *The Social Studies, 113*(4), 171-184.

Anderson, C., & Metzger, S. (2011). Slavery, the Civil War era, and African American representation in U.S. History: An analysis of four states' academic standards. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 39,* 393–415.

Apple, M. (1996). *Cultural politics and education*. Teachers College Press.

Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*. Routledge.

Barton, K. C. (2001). History education and national identity in Northern Ireland and the United States: Differing priorities. *Theory into Practice, 40,* 48-54.

Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2004). *Teaching history for the common good*. L. Erlbaum Associates.

Brown, K. D., & Brown, A. L. (2010). Silenced memories: An examination of the sociocultural knowledge on race and racial violence in official school curriculum. *Equity & Excellent in Education, 43,* 139-154.

Britzman, D. P., & Pitt, A. J. (1996). Pedagogy and transference: Casting the past of learning into the presence of teaching. *Theory into practice, 35*(2), 117-123.

Curtis, K. R. (2021). *National geographic world history voyages of exploration*. Cengage.

Bender, T. (2006). *A nation among nations: America's place in world history*. Hill and Wang.

Bentley, J. H. (2007). Why study world history? World history connected, *5*(1). http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/5.1/bentley.html.

Busey, C. L., & Silva, C. (2021). Troubling the essentialist discourse of brown in education: The anti-Black sociopolitical and sociohistorical etymology of Latinxs as a brown monolith. *Educational Researcher*, *50*(3), 176-186.

Chang, W. (2009). Conflicting images and lost perspectives: Narratives on the Korean War in American textbooks. *The Review of Korean Studies*. *12*(1), 9-22.

Dunbar Ortiz, R. (1995). The United States survey text: What has changed; what needs to change? *The History Teacher*, *28*(2).

Erekson, K. A. (2012). *Politics and history curriculum: The struggle over standards in Texas and the nation*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Fleming, D. B. (1985). The treatment of foreign policy issues in social studies textbooks in the United States. *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 31-40.

Gaudelli, W. (2003). *World class: Teaching and learning in global times*. Routledge.

Goodman, G. K. (1986). The Japan/United States textbook study project. *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, *8*(2), 241–259. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43055549

Habtai, A. (1984, December 24-28) *Towards a systematic pattern for evaluating history textbooks in curriculum program of Nigeria teacher education institution*. [Conference Session]. 3rd Annual Conference of C.O.N., University of Nsukka.

Hart, D. V. (1946). A report on the treatment of Asia in American textbooks. *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, *6*(1), 44–49. https://doi.org/10.2307/2049672

Hess, D. E. & McAvoy, P. (2014). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. Taylor & Francis.

History Alive! World Connections. (2013). Teachers' Curriculum Institute.

Hong, W. (2009). Reading school textbooks as a cultural and political text: Representations of Asia in geography textbooks used in the United States. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 25*(1), 86-99.

Kang, J. (2020). Not inferior but backward: Representation of Asia in U.S. world history textbooks during the Interwar Period. *American Educational History Journal, 47*(1), 85-100.

Kim, B. Y. (1991). *A content analysis of the treatment of Korea in contemporary social studies textbooks used in Connecticut high school* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Kim, G. (2018). "Because the United States is a great melting pot": The influence of students' sociocultural backgrounds on understanding world history [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Indiana University.

King, L. J. (2020). Black history is not American history: Toward a framework of Black historical consciousness. *Social Education, 84*(6), 335-341.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2003). Lies my teacher still tells: Developing a critical perspective toward social studies. In G. Ladson-Billings (Ed.), *Critical race theory perspectives on social studies* (pp. 1–11). Information Age.

Leonardo, Z. (2020). *Edward Said and education*. Routledge.

Marino, M. (2010). World history and teacher education: Challenges and possibilities. *The Social Studies, 102*, 3-8.

Mayo, J. B., Jr. (2017). Sexuality and queer theory in the social studies. In M. M. Manfra & C. M. Bolick (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of social studies research* (pp. 254-269). John Wiley & Sons.

Milner, H. R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher, 36*, 388-400.

Myers, J. P. (2006). Rethinking the social studies curriculum in the context of globalization: Education for global citizenship in the U.S. *Theory and Research in Social Education, 32*, 370-394.

National Council for the Social Studies (2010). National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/national-curriculum-standards-social-studies

Noboa, J. (2012). *Names, numbers, and narratives: A multicultural critique of the US History standards*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Nolen, Z. (2021). *Korean War coverage in high school history textbooks* [Master's Thesis, Eastern Illinois University]. The Keep.

Nozaki, Y. (2001). Chapter 6: US discourses on Japanese education: World geography textbooks and the representation of Japan as the "other" in the Age of Educational Reform. *Counterpoints, 94*, 135-165.

Rodríguez, N. N. (2018). From margins to center: Developing cultural citizenship education through the teaching of Asian American history. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 46*(4), 528-573.

Rodríguez, N. N. (2020). "Invisibility is not a natural state for anyone": (Re) constructing narratives of Japanese American incarceration in elementary classrooms. *Curriculum Inquiry, 50*(4), 309-329.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). The tensions between Indigenous sovereignty and multicultural citizenship education: Toward an anticolonial approach to civic education. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 47*(3), 311-346.

Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage.

Santiago, M. (2018). Güeras, Indigenas y Negros: A framework for teaching Mexican American racial/ethnic histories. In M. H. Gross & L. Terra (Eds.), *Teaching and learning the difficult past: Contemporary perspectives* (pp. 137-148). Routledge.

Schmeichel, M. (2015) Skirting around critical feminist rationales for teaching women in social studies. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 43*(1), 1-27.

Shaffer, R. (2001). What to teach about Asia: Howard Wilson and the Committee on Asiatic Studies in the 1940s. *The History Teacher, 35*(1), 9-25. https://doi.org/10.2307/3054507

Spielvogel, J. J. (2018). *World history and geography*. McGraw Hill.

Stearns, P. N. (2006). World history: Curriculum and controversy, *World History Connected, 3*(3). http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/3.3/stearns.html.

Suh, Y., Yurita, M., & Metzger, S. A. (2008). What do we want students to remember about the "Forgotten War"? A comparative study of the Korean War as depicted in Korean, Japanese, and US secondary school history textbooks. *International Journal of Social Education, 23*(1), 51-75.

VanSledright, B. (2008). Narratives of nation-state, historical knowledge, and school history education. *Review of Research in Education, 32*(1), 109-146.

Ward, K. (2007). *An historiographical analysis of how United States history textbooks have portrayed the Pacific War (1941–1945)* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Indiana State University.

Wills, J. (1996). Who needs multicultural education? White students, US history and the construction of a usable past. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 27*, 365–389.

Wolcott, H. F. (1994). On seeking—and rejecting—validity in qualitative research. In H. F. Wolcott (ed.), *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Sage.

World History. (2018). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

World History. (2016). Pearson.

World History Digital Education (2021). Korea's Place in Teaching Social Studies. https://www.worldhistoryde.org/koreas-place-in-teaching-social-studies-module/

Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). Qualitative analysis of content. In B. Wildemuth (Ed.), *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science* (pp. 308-319). Libraries Unlimited.

Zhao, Y., & Hoge, J. D. (2006). Countering textbook distortion: War atrocities in Asia, 1937-1945. *Social Education*, *70*(7), 424-430.

Appendix A

World History Textbooks Reviewed

These five textbooks are the most recent editions on the market distributed by the top publishers mentioned on the online survey (via SurveyMonkey) completed by high school social studies teachers across the U.S. All textbooks were examined in this study.

Textbook Title	Publisher	Year
World History and Geography	McGraw Hill	2018
World History	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company	2018
History Alive! World Connections	Teachers' Curriculum Institute	2013
National Geographic World History Voyages of Exploration	Cengage	2020
World History	Pearson	2016

Appendix B

Research Questions from Kim's (1991) Study

These research questions were borrowed from Bok Young Kim's dissertation: *A content analysis of the treatment of Korea in contemporary social studies textbooks used in Connecticut high school.* I used these questions to help code textbook data.

Questions*:*

1. What is the substance of material, i.e., sentences and illustrations about Korea?
2. What major themes about Korea are included?
3. What major themes about Korea are omitted?
4. How accurate is the data on Korea?
5. What stereotypes, biases, distortions, and misinterpretations are there in material about Korea?

The Iowa Journal for the Social Studies

Current Call for Papers, Spring 2023:

About the Journal

The Iowa Journal for the Social Studies is a peer-reviewed, electronic journal that provides an outlet for research, best practices, curriculum work, and media reviews in social studies education.

https://iowasocialstudies.org/https/iowajournalforthesocialstudies.weebly.com

Audience

Each issue of *The Iowa Journal for the Social Studies* will include work relevant to social studies researchers and educators in K-12 and higher education.

Proposed Call for Manuscripts—Volume 31, Issue 2

The editors of the *Iowa Journal for the Social Studies*, a peer-reviewed electronic journal, issue a call to submit manuscripts for the next issue. We are especially interested in manuscripts that feature research, conceptual and theoretical work, curriculum, and lesson plans that have been implemented in the K-16 classroom, and media reviews.

We are giving special preference to articles about teaching social studies during these contentious times. We are interested in how K-16 educators are rethinking, responding to and reconsidering their social studies classrooms given the challenges presented by political tensions, systemic inequalities, and pandemic impacts.

Submissions due by: March 15, 2023
Submissions sent out for review: Upon receipt-April 1, 2023
Reviews returned: May 1, 2023
Author revisions submitted: May 25th, 2023
Publication: Spring 2023

Please send submissions to: dean.vesperman@uwrf.edu