

Critical Race Theory and Africana Studies: Making Connections to Education

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Introduction

This paper is intended to be an initial exploration into the connection and possible links between critical race theory (CRT) and Africana studies. My intent is to raise (and invite) issues and questions of possibility and caution when exploring the links between these two frameworks in relation to the schooling experiences of black students in the U.S. and elsewhere. This is also part of a larger project that I am working on with colleagues such as Marvin Lynn and David Stovall at the University of Illinois-Chicago, and Lorna Roberts at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK (we will present on this theme on a panel at the American Educational Research Association March 24-28, 2008 in New York City). My central point in this paper for the Cave Hill conference is that critical race theory is a useful tool of critical inquiry from the field of law that places the study and critique of race and racism at the center of analysis with respect to how legal policies have a disparate impact on persons of color. Critical race theory has been helpful in terms of legitimizing the theoretical discourse on racism, and formally naming and linking the concept of white supremacy to the law and how it is administered and adjudicated against persons of color. However, CRT has its shortcomings in terms of examining the day-to-day choices that persons and groups make in organizations such as educational institutions (Carbado and Gutali, 2003). Furthermore, I argue that CRT was never intended to provide explanations of all seemingly racist actions of persons of color against one another or struggles over power and identity politics.¹ For the other issues that emerge from the criticisms of critical race theory, a different lens(s) maybe better to use to provide us with ways to concretely deal with the education of black youth from a critical perspective. This is where Africana studies can be linked to education. So the central theme of this position paper is to argue that critical race theory can be useful to analyze the racial impact of laws and policies, but it can be linked to Africana studies as a way to push for tangible actions for change rooted in the race-based experiences of black populations.

The first part of the paper will provide readers with an overview of critical race legal theory and

¹ This was a criticism leveled at CRT panel participants at the 2007 British Educational Research Association annual meeting at the University of London. The critics argued that not enough was done to deal with social class power inequality in CRT and that other acts of person of color violence and discrimination were left unexplained by CRT which in the critics view invalidated the critical perspective. First, CRT is moving in a new direction in terms of dealing more with how racism combined with social class discrimination deeply impacts the material conditions in which persons of color live. Second, I argue that CRT was never intended to explain all actions of violence and prejudice against persons of color against each other except in terms of a divide and conquer strategy that has been used before in terms of enforcing white supremacy against potential persons of color coalitions in certain situations related to the law and school resource inequality for example. Some of the work on critical race praxis (Yamamoto, 1997) comes close to addressing how this can be changed in a positive direction toward coalition building among different racial groups of color across the social class spectrum and how lawyers can link with community activists on common interest.

its criticisms of traditional legal perspective. This section will highlight the position of the "color-blind" view of U.S. Constitutional and statutory law that views concepts such as critical race theory as an unwarranted extension of the law to overprotect minorities at the expense of White European Americans in regards to legal and political rights in institutions such as schools (Gotanda, 1991; Lopez, 2003). This part will also connect critical race theory to educational policy analysis in the attempt to provide a useful lens with which to link and trace the historical origins and racialized effects of policy decisions. The remainder of the paper will explore reasons for a comparative view of race and black education is warranted in the 21st century and this comparison can be done through Africana studies in combination with CRT. I posit that the next generation of critical race theory research and action education needs to focus on: 1) theoretical attention to how race-related resources (social and cultural capital and material resources in terms of funding, teacher quality, etc.) shape educational outcomes; 2) looking at how race is a part of educational settings and institutional practice and policies as much as it is what students bring with them to schools; 3) an examination of how everyday practices impact educational outcomes and choices made by teachers, students, parents and administrators; and 4) investigate how students view and come to grips with their racialized social locations vis-a-vis their schooling experience (Carbado and Gutali, 2003; O'Connor, Lewis, and Mueller, 2007).

Overview of critical race theory: Its inception and evolution:

Critical race theory begins with a number of basic insights. One is that racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society. Because racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. Formal equal opportunity rules and laws that insist on treating blacks and whites (for example) alike, can thus remedy only the more extreme and shocking sorts of injustice, the ones that do not stand out. Formal equality can do little about the business-as-usual forms of racism that people of color confront every day and that account for much misery, alienation, and despair (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv).

The aforementioned description of CRT as a critique of racism in the law and society emerged as an outgrowth of the from the critical legal studies movement that took place at the UC-Berkeley and Harvard Law Schools in the early to mid 1980s (Crenshaw, et. al., 1995). This group of law professors and students began to question the objective rationalist nature of the law and the process of adjudication in U.S. courts. CRT scholars criticized the way in which the real effects of the law served to privilege the wealthy and powerful in U.S. society while having a deleterious impact on the rights of the poor to use the courts as a means of redress. Out of this growing critique of the role of law in society, a second strand of critical scholarship emerged through the writings Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, Angela Harris, and Kimberlie Crenshaw (Tate, 1997). They argued that the critical legal studies movement did not go far enough in challenging the specific racialized nature of the law and its impact on persons of color. Bell, Delgado (1989, 2003). Delgado and Stefancic (2000) and Crenshaw, et. al., (1995) along with other critical race theorists made several distinct claims that gave shape and emphasis to their arguments which were: 1) racism has been a normal daily fact of life in society and the ideology and assumptions of racism are ingrained in the political and legal structures as to be almost unrecognizable. Legal racial designations have complex, historical and socially constructed meanings that insure the location of political superiority of racially marginalized groups; 2) as a form of oppositional scholarship, CRT challenges the experience of White

European Americans as the normative standard; rather, CRT grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive contextual experiences of people of color and racial oppression through the use of literary narrative knowledge and story-telling to challenge the existing social construction of race; and 3) CRT attacks liberalism and the inherent belief in the law to create an equitable just society. CRT advocates have pointed out the legal racial irony and liberal contradiction of the frustrating legal pace of meaningful reform that has eliminated blatant hateful expressions of racism, yet, has kept intact exclusionary relations of power as exemplified by the legal conservative backlash of the courts, legislative bodies, voters, etc., against special rights for racially marginalized groups. Critical race theorist argued that the law, particularly civil rights law of the 1960s was targeted to combat a type of racism, which was characterized as acts such as grossly offensive behavior toward others because of their race, legal segregation and discrimination by public bodies, and overt acts of racial violence. The moral authority of the civil rights movement served to weaken this form of racism in the U.S. and the power of the law was a vital tool in helping to eliminate classical racism so most white European Americans abhor these actions against any racial group. However, one of the main tenets of CRT has been that while classical racism has subsided, everyday racism has risen in its intensity and scope (Bell, 1980, 1992, 2004). This type of racism can be characterized as those mundane practices and events that are infused with some degree of racism (Essed, 1991). The actions associated with everyday racism are subtle, automatic, non-verbal exchanges that are seen as derogatory slights by African Americans. Furthermore, everyday racism, in the form of microaggressions, is incessant and cumulative as practiced in everyday actions by individuals, groups, and institutional policy rules and administrative procedures (Solórzano, 1998). Critical race theory sought to expose the flaws in the color-blind view of everyday social relations and the administering of law, by positing that the legal hope of ending discrimination and racism has not made a difference because of the contradiction in a professed belief in equality and justice, but a societal willingness to tolerate and accept racial inequality and inequity.

Critical race theory's roots can also be traced to previous social science race-based critiques related to the history, philosophy, politics, the social construction of race and racialism within modernity. The legal theories related to race share commonalities with other critical theoretical positions on race in the social sciences (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; 2003). For example, Goldberg (1995) argued that in order to understand modernity and its evolution, one has to understand race, racialism and how race played a fundamental role in shaping philosophical, political and later scientific thought. Smedley (1999) examined the development of the ideology of race as a world view in the North American continent. She traced the origins of racial ideology in the U.S. to British conflicts with other national groups such as the Irish, in order to fully examine how these opposition groups to the British colonialist expansion became racialized and justified for attempted domination and exploitation. Stanfield (1999) asserted that in race-centred nation states (e.g., the U.S., United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil) the sociological myth of racial categories is a powerful primary socialization tool that has a tremendous impact on social perceptions, social status, and social identity of all societal members (p. 422). Racial categorization is a part of cognitive psychological thinking in that it refers to the ways people think about humans defined in terms of races. It links social and cultural attributes to physical attributes seen. Therefore, reasoning is based on racial categories and it is more or less commonly accepted along with the rhetoric of progressive social justice through color-blindness and acceptance of all that is used a pretext to continue to justify hierarchical racial categories.

Feagin (1992, 2000), also discussed the role that microaggressions played on traditionally white college campuses by creating a hostile environment for African Americans that resulted in what he termed cumulative racism, or a convergence of all the of the subtle yet still prejudicial “put-downs” or actions that African Americans experience on these campuses because of their race. These examples point to the ways that previous race-based critiques are currently connected to CRT and make it powerful and encompassing framework of racial theory and critical analysis.

The critical race legal position challenges the dominant racial ideology through law, and seeks to use the power of the courts to "further the goal of eradicating the effects of racial oppression (Crenshaw, 1988, p.134). The critical race legal position argues that white European American as a racial classification has enjoyed a tremendous legal advantage over people of color. Such power has been effectively wielded in U.S. society because it has been legitimized through law with whiteness being legally protected and equated with property rights over African and Native Americans (Harris, 1993).

Critical race theory (critical race studies, see Harris, 2002) has developed and evolved through different generational interpretations that have had an impact on shaping it in connections with other fields of study. The coupling of CRT with other critical lens of analysis (such as social class and the rise of global wealth disparities under capitalism) has given the theory expanding explanatory power to address the myriad elements of race, its role in shaping law and the nation state, personal and group identity, gender, distribution of goods and services, and institutional practices and policies (Matsuda, 1987; Montoya, 1994). Since its inception, CRT has tried not locked itself into a singular line of criticism against the law and society regarding race (Hayman, 1995). CRT has evolved from its early focus on African Americans and the impact of the law on Black-white European American relations, to examining how issues related to the law and immigration, national origin, language, globalization, and colonization related to race. From this line of critique formed the LatCrit and critical Asian American legal studies movement that called for a type of critical race theory specific to these groups of color (California Law Review, 1997). For example, LatCrit has drawn similarities with CRT regarding the racism within U.S. law. Yet, the LatCrit movement sees itself grounded more in documenting through narrative-storytelling, how other aspects of race, ethnicity, language, and national origin converge to make it so that Latino-Latinas are seen as other within their own country. Asian American critical race theory borrows not only from poststructuralism in terms of discussing the changing nature and fluidity of racial categories, but also the true stories of Asian American discrimination and how this has to be seen as legitimate regarding the documentation of its effects This, for example calls for a critical reading and tracing of the use of language and the law to create Asian Americans as “honorary whites” whose fears can be played against other racial groups regarding affirmative action and admissions to elite public universities in California, yet this group can also have the law used against them, as it was in the Japanese internment camps during WWII and in current immigration law. CRT has served as an evolving theoretical framework that has been useful to think about research, policy, and race. Critical race feminism has also emerged as an area of study with respect to women of color and their connection to the law and public policy’s impact on their lives as women, both in the U.S. and in other parts of the world (Wing, 1996). Queer theory, Marxism and post-colonial theory have also seen connections and conflict with CRT in terms of identity and multiple groups that racialized individuals belong to (see for example Igleias and Valdes, 1998 for example on specific works on CRT and its intersections and

conflicts with gay lesbian transgendered identity). CRT has evolved toward the direction of critical positions taken related to theories of race and the law. This theoretical work, coupled with the experiential and situated knowledge of people of color, makes CRT an appropriate research lens in education for analyzing racial inequality in the law and society.

The connection between CRT and education serves the dual purpose of providing a race-based interdisciplinary theoretical framework of analysis to the study of education laws, policies and administrative procedures that have a deleterious impact on racial minorities in K-12 and higher education settings. CRT (and LatCrit, Asian American critical race theory positions) can also benefit from the qualitative and quantitative research process by adding methodological enhancement of the data collected as evidence and the questions asked related to demonstrating racial discrimination. This builds on other critical perspectives on race and education because they too provide more detailed analysis and theoretical perspectives on issues related to representation, identity, discrimination and positive racial struggle for social justice by minority students and communities (see for example, McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993). The importance of linking CRT to education in general and ethnographic research and detailed quantitative studies of educational inequality is its potential for activism and critical race praxis. The questions for education and its utility for CRT calls for us to raise key policy issues such as, how do race, gender, and social class interact and impact the educational conditions and outcomes of students of color?; why, how and for what purposes do schools and teachers reinforce racial, class and gender inequality in relation to students of color?; and, how do students of color and their parents/community respond to race, class, and gender inequality?

Much of the literature in education related to CRT addresses its origins and links to specific educational issues and policies. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) pushed for using CRT in education to deconstruct fundamental assumptions behind seemingly race-neutral policies and ideology about the education of African American children and other students of color. Tate (1997) traced the origins of CRT and elaborated on the positions of key thinkers who were integral to the formation of the CRT movement. Tate also suggested ways in which CRT could be linked to educational research; on this point, Tate called for specificity in using CRT and pinpointing it as the tool used to unmask the effects of racism and how it is operationalized in educational institutions. Solóranzo (1997; 1998), has looked at using CRT in higher education settings, first as a theoretical framework to examine teacher education racial discourse about the abilities of children of color, and then to look at the impact of microaggressions in the graduate school setting and its cumulative impact on Chicano-Chicana fellowship students. Solóranzo used CRT to analyze the seemingly race-neutral policy language of equal educational opportunity and providing quality education for meritorious minority graduate students, yet the counter-narratives of the students illustrated how they endured the everyday racism of graduate school as professors and white European American students made these Chicano-Chicana students feel as if they did not deserve to be at elite institutions of graduate study. Building on this theme, Villipando (2000) used CRT and LatCrit to identify institutional climates related to race in higher education settings and found that at the specific institutions of his case study, they were not hospitable to Chicano-Chicana students. However, he also used CRT, LatCrit, and critical race praxis to analyze how these students forged racial-ethnic support networks to combat the racism on campus, take advantage of the educational opportunities despite the racism, and serve the Chicano local community. Parker, Deyhle, and Villenas, (1999) used CRT

to trace how civil rights laws were used to combat “classical racism” in the form of major constitutional and statutory violations that were perpetuated against the Navajo nation in San Juan county Utah (1995). In this case, the Federal District court found that the school district engaged in various discriminatory actions, from failure to provide bilingual education through the Federal Bilingual Education Act, to tolerating and encouraging de facto racial segregation and inequitable funding to Navajo schools. Other researchers in education have linked CRT to other epistemological standpoints to create a more holistic and intersecting framework that incorporates narratives and storytelling of personal/collective memory and experiences to existing research. Furthermore, those involved in the studies were active participants in the research process. For example, Delgado Bernal (2002), Gonzalez (1998), Pizarro (1998), and Hildago (1998) all discussed how CRT could be linked to Chicano/Latino epistemology, particularly Chicana feminist epistemology, Mexicananess and the use of storytelling to discuss race, gender and nationality related to the experiences of Mexicana young women in California high schools, and exploring the utility of a Latina family research paradigm that focuses on families as opposed to individuals in qualitative research. Ladson-Billings (1998) discussed CRT’s use in analyzing the impact of racism in school policy actions related to curriculum, instruction, and school funding, etc. Lynn (1999; 2006) built on this theme in his research by looking at how CRT can inform us on its use by African American teachers who teach within a critical race pedagogical framework to inform African American students as to the importance of their race/culture as a bridge to learning and success. To be sure, Ladson-Billings (1998) issued a caveat about jumping on CRT as the next theoretical bandwagon of leftist education scholarship. Yet, she also started her article by asking what CRT was and what was it doing in a nice field like education? Part of the answer has come from reviewing how critical race theory has been used in an analysis of schooling policies and practices. Lynn and Parker (2006) reviewed the works on critical race theory and education at the elementary and secondary level and found that critical race studies in education questions a range of assumptions and tenets upon which schooling rests such as :1) We live in a fair and just society and that schools are the great equalizer of men and women; and that 2) Race can only be used only as a descriptor in describing, analyzing and examining educational inequalities. Not only do they question these assumptions, they actively seek to create more humane discourses, structures and institutions aimed at creating a society that is free of racism. Critical race scholars in education have transformed the way race is understood and addressed in debates over the links between schooling and inequality. Race is no longer viewed as a secondary or tertiary unit of analysis that gives way to class or gender as explanatory tools of analysis. Even more important, they have relied on the legal scholarship on race in the U.S. to illustrate the important ways in which race acts as a structural phenomenon along side and sometimes in concert with other structures of domination such as class and gender to transform the way in which we understand racism’s impact on a number of areas including education policy, teaching and teacher education, qualitative research and lives of racially marginalized students of color. This is important given Ladson-Billings and Tate’s important reflection that race was “untheorized” in the field of education. Now there exist an abundance of articles, books, special journal issues that illustrate the multiple ways in which race and racism can be understood and used as tools of transformation in education.

However, CRT needs to move into the next phase of analysis as to how race and racism works in institutional settings. For example, Carbado and Gulati (2003) view CRT’s development as an

effective tool in terms of articulating the nuances of racism in a legal theoretical sense, particularly in terms of formal and informal barriers to job entry, law school admission, etc. In addition, they posit that CRT has helped to articulate a conception of race that is operationalized as a social construction at the larger level of institutional entry. Yet, CRT has not been as effective in terms of “paying attention” (p. 1760) to the interpersonal way in which race is produced and the new approaches in CRT begins to deal distinctly this issue. For example, Carbado and Gulati (2003) emphasize that:

CRT often ignores the racial productivity of the “choices” people of color make about how to present themselves as racialized persons. As a general matter, CRT’s race-as-a social construction thesis does not include an analysis of the race-producing practices that reflected in the daily negotiations people of color perform in an attempt to shape how (especially white) people interpret their not white identities (p. 1760).

Therefore, Carbado and Gulati make the case for using CRT with a combination of law and economics. They believe that it is important to use CRT with a more nuanced analysis that combines critical race theory analysis and the use of econometric principles to show how and why race is operationalized within the economic sphere of the workplace. Carbado and Gulati argue for using CRT with law and economics to explore the ways employers will use, for example, “ideal racial profiles” of model minorities in a consumerist culture where race is commercialized. From Carbado and Gulati’s perspective, the next generation of CRT analysis needs to focus on the development of workplace identity and the interactions of class, gender, sexuality and race in forming a unique set of experiences for men and women in the workplace. Similarly, O’Connor, Lewis, and Mueller (2007, p. 546) have been critical of the traditional way in which race and racism have been seen as rigid categories of analysis in terms of viewing race as culture or race as a variable. Each of these ways of looking at race has missed the complexity of other factors related to race, racism and educational outcomes for Black students. For example: a) neither gender and social class differences are not adequately fleshed out, nor are historical and place/location differences accounted for in terms of its impact on shaping racial contexts in communities and how black students and parents react to schooling over different generations and social class experiences; b) the ways in which black students interpret and make meaning of who they are and their learning and daily social experiences in education institutions is more assumed rather than really explored for their nuances and particularities related to racism; and c) a lack of attention to how inadequate resources and negative experiences work against black student achievement over time. The future research and practice in CRT needs to move into this direction to provide more detailed and complex conceptualizations of race and racism in education and how it shapes the black experience.

Can CRT and Africana studies be useful for the study of black students in educational institutions? A U.S.-U.K. perspective

I would also argue that the combining CRT and Africana studies can provide us with a comparative perspective to see what similarities and differences exist when looking at the education of black students in different contexts. For example, the work that I am doing with my colleague (Lorna Roberts in the U.K.) we are using CRT and trying to connect it to global ideological agendas in the neo-liberal state regarding immigration restrictions on persons of

color, accountability and assessment in schools, and the push for high-stakes testing to evaluate students of color (Wilson, 2006). Our project is looking at discourse around and answers for educational policy questions that are consistent with students of color in both countries such as: How do race, gender, and class impact the educational conditions and outcomes of students of color? How do schools and teachers reinforce racial, class and gender inequality in relation to students of color? How do students of color and their parents/community respond to race, class, and gender inequality (see for example Sewell, 1997 and his account of racism in schools toward black males in the U.K.). We think there are comparisons to be made regarding educational policy issues that have an impact on persons of color in the U.S. and U.K. Our work seeks to build on a previous book by Stephen Small (1994) entitled *Racialized Barriers: The Black Experience in the United States and England in the 1980s*. In this book, Small argues for the importance of:

a comparison of the United States and England which will enable us to consider theories, policies and political activities in contexts of racialised interaction and conflict...comparison dictates that we examine the process of racialised group formation, transformation and disintegration, and racialised barriers, boundaries and identities...and comparison facilitates an analysis of the intricate interplay of racialised discrimination and class disadvantage and the relative importance of variables that are explicitly racialised (e.g., ideologies, laws, structures, organizations) and those that are more implicitly related to inequality (economic needs, class relations, employment) in accounting for the experiences of racial minorities in both countries (pp. 16-18).

Building on Small's work, we believe that our project utilizes a critical race analysis in education challenges us to analyze racial, class, and gender legal categories within both formal and informal structures and process of schooling and higher education in the U.S. and U.K. In addition, CRT should move into as an interpretive lens of analysis in terms of identifying and transforming traditional notions of the objectivity of law and administrative regulation as it applies to education. CRT in education can be defined as a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of students of color and hopes to foster ways to engage in critical race praxis and positive change with regard to racial justice in the schools and higher education institutions.

In 1971, Bernard Coard published a pamphlet highlighting the institutional racism within the British education system. African Caribbean pupils, especially boys were categorized as 'educationally subnormal' and placed in special schools. Differential educational attainment among some Black and minority ethnic groups is still an enduring problem. Coard's work has been republished in Richardson's *Tell it like it is: how our schools fail black children* (2005). Richardson comments: Black kids may not be labelled as "educationally subnormal" these days, but they are disproportionately excluded from school, dumped in pupil referral units and sent into the world with fewer qualifications than their peers. The Blair administration has placed great emphasis on raising education standards and combating disadvantage. In the vein of the previous chapter, this chapter will conduct an analysis on the policy directives to promote an agenda of social justice to prepare all students for full participation in the global economy. While this has been a noble goal, the rhetoric has not matched the reality and there are still wide

disparities based on race, ethnicity and social class in terms of who is successful and who is not in the U.K.

Similarly, in the U.S. from a critical race theory perspective, Darling Hammond (2007) feels that we need to scrutinize what the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was intended to do to improve education, especially for low income and students of color. NCLB's intent was to push states through test-driven accountability in terms of achieving results in reducing the achievement gap between white students and Black and Latino students. It was put forth as the legislation that was going to finally get at pushing states and schools to provide equal educational opportunity that would lead to measured gains and results in achievement for all students, particularly those low-income and racial minority students who had been previously "left behind". While the rhetoric of the policy has reflected this orientation, the recent data prove that the reality of NCLB as implemented has not resulted in marked gains for black and Latino students. Lee (2006) recently tracked the achievement gains in math and reading during the time of NCLB implementation and overall, the gaps have persisted and in some states has grown when one applies the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) test data to the analysis of this gap. The federal government has provided \$412 million a year to help pay for the testing requirements to meet accountability standards. Yet we see that, "the racial achievement gap in national public schools persist after NCLB. The White-Black and white-Hispanic gaps among 4th and 8th graders did not narrow significantly between 2002 and 2005 in reading and between 2003 and 2005 in math. The racial gap in reading remained about the same between 2002 and 2005 at both grade 4 and grade 8; the one-point change was not only statistically insignificant but also it is much smaller than the 5 point reduction of the gap made during the 2000-2002 period. The White-Black and White-Hispanic reading gaps at grade 4 increased in the early 1990s and then decreased in the late 1990s and by 2002 (prior to NCLB). The discrepancies between NAEP and state assessment results are the largest for Black and Hispanic and poor students and these findings are consistent across grades in both reading and math (pp. 26 & 49). If NCLB was intended to end the "soft racism of low expectations" so far the policy has not worked and from a CRT standpoint the Bush Administration needs to be held accountable for the failure of the policy to deliver on its intent.

How Africana Studies holds out possibilities for education

Given the problems in both the U.S. and U.K. regarding the education of black youth, I feel that other avenues need to be explored by any means necessary to deal with this issue. CRT is useful in terms of naming the problem of racism and how it is administratively and legally operationalized against black youth in schools. But to move to the next stage in terms of what to do and a "call to work" (Stovall, 2006), we may need to seek other frameworks to help our thinking in terms of black education. In some ways, critical pedagogy can provide leads, but Handel Wright (2002) articulated insightfully the problems within North American critical pedagogy in terms its evolution to rigid dogmatic binary of positions within itself: on the one hand, postmodern and poststructural and feminist post-critical pedagogy, while post-colonial and neo-Marxist critical pedagogy supporters argue strongly for the merits of their arguments rooted in class analysis. For the most part, this binary has left race out of the theoretical discussion. More specifically, Wright questions "where is the black representation in the discussion of the future of critical pedagogy" (p.1)? This question is important because of the African American/Black ambivalence toward critical pedagogy. Part of the unease and trepidation stems

from the fact that although issues such as racism against African American/Black students have been addressed within critical pedagogy, and African American, African Caribbean scholars have borrowed from critical pedagogy to target inequitable schooling practices, critical theories of race have been virtually ignored within the “generalized theorization of the development and future of critical pedagogy” (Wright, 2002, p. 6).

Part of the response to this gap has been answered in previous work from an Africana Studies perspective (broadly conceptualized). For example, the work of Annette Henry (1992), and Michelle Foster (1997), document the importance of Black teachers’ use of critical teaching instruction and role modeling for African American and African Canadian youth in the interest of the Black community, is also important for critical pedagogy to consider with respect to specific critical race perspectives related to Blacks. Similarly, Dei (1994) posits that an Afrocentric pedagogy should take into account the importance of African centered epistemology, and culturally appropriate pedagogy for curriculum and instruction with African American and African Canadian students (Hale, 2001; Henry, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lee, 2001; Murrell, 2002). This type of education would not seek to glorify or absolve it from its biases or limitations; rather, it would change the curriculum and instructional practice to: 1) link the schooling of black youth to the traditions and histories of African peoples and provide students with a sense of voice and relationship to others; 2) having the black students see themselves within the curriculum materials and being active generators of their own knowledge through not only Africana studies but also through youth cultural studies and popular culture studies; 3) not engage in the marginalization of other groups (e.g., women, Asia-centered, Latino-centered, but to acknowledge the other experiences of these subordinated groups; and 4) the pedagogy should focus on utilizing the best of what mainstream knowledge has to offer but challenge it as well in terms of social justice and white supremacy (pp. 19-21).

Nevelle and Cha-Jua (1998) outlined a model of critical pedagogy for Black studies that incorporated many of its fundamental facets but includes race/nationality as a category of analysis in the curriculum and instruction process. Their model for critical pedagogy in Black studies is influenced by Marxist and Black feminist perspectives, and grounded in the accurate documentation of the sociohistorical and cultural realities of African descended people, and a scholarship that advocates the core values of resistance, freedom, self-determination and education (pp. 450-454). Nevelle and Cha-Jua have discussed incorporating knowledge of a variety of learning styles characteristic of the diversity of African American students, and pedagogical choices that provide structure for learners; linking subject matter to students’ experiences; and drawing upon cultural roots (pp. 456-459).

Ideally, an Africana studies education experience would use CRT to dismantle the laws and policies that claim to leave no child behind but actually do the opposite. The Africana studies education experience would then engage in learning that not only met the base-level state standards of achievement; it would also encompass core beliefs and cultural characteristics that emphasized the success of all students within a child centered schooling where children and adults are treated with love and respect and there is a willingness to families and an openness to innovative and experimental ideas. At the center of these schools is a commitment to children and families by the entire staff and community. In sum, these educational experiences would

help move black youth towards a different future than what has been stereotyped and scripted for them (Duncan, 2002; DeCuir and Dixon, 2004).

Conclusion

In this paper, I tried to put forth a call for the importance of both critical race theory to critique educational institutions, but also using Africana studies to seek ways to create different and more educationally sound experiences for black students grounded in their collective history and culture. This paper represents a way in which the ideas of critical race theory has travelled outside its original site. While I see continual value for CRT to be linked to the law, I also recognize and participate in the field going in new directions and moving beyond the law to borrow from fields such as Africana studies, black sociology, black feminism, etc. Much of the work of critical race scholars in the law is indelibly shaped and influenced by sociologist, W.E.B. Dubois whose seminal works *The Souls of Black Folk* and *Black Reconstruction* influenced an entire generation of scholars with interests in exploring the sociological meanings of race in the U.S. and international context. Dubois had a vision that sociology could be utilized as a means through which to further explore the Black condition and help us to move toward racial equality (1980) and he was committed to fashioning both an intellectual and political movement to examine race and racism through intensive empirical study of the social conditions of persons of African descent. This calls for looking closer at what might be possible between CRT and Africana studies.

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