

TACKLING TEXTBOOKS OF THE TIMES: THE TELLING TRUTH ABOUT RACE IN
TEXTBOOKS FROM 1945-1970

by

ANNA SHIRLEY MEYER

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Approved by:

Jonathan Hagel

Jeffrey Moran

John Rury

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Abstract

As a key classroom tool, textbooks offer concrete insights from the past. In 1944, Gunnar Myrdal's study *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, convinced Americans that the issue of American prejudice and racism could be eradicated using education. In response, intellectuals, educators, and activists moved the front of the battle against racial prejudice and discrimination to the classrooms and textbooks. In the Cold War geopolitical context and the American Civil Rights Movement, the approach to teaching race shifted rapidly and dramatically between 1945 and 1970. This thesis examines how textbooks shifted due to these influences to show how intellectuals, educators, and activists shaped their attempts to solve the American dilemma. However, textbooks are not without their own limitations. In the twenty-five years after World War II, textbook publishing and adoption rates were generally slow and new classroom sets were expensive. The textbook lag was acknowledged and somewhat amended through supplemental teaching material. Nevertheless, textbooks limited the success of education as the method in which to solve racial prejudice. An evaluation of the shifts textbooks did display, represents that the role of education in solving social issues is possible. There is hope for the future of education and textbooks, as technology continues to diminish the inherent limitations of textbooks.

Introduction

In 1945, a Kansas, high school, senior sitting in the back of the American history classroom, slumped down in his desk while the teacher scraped a piece of chalk across the blackboard probably occupied himself by flipping through the pages of his borrowed textbook. He had been assigned this textbook at the beginning of the school year and he had scrawled his name under the six previous owners of the recycled book that was published in 1939. He skimmed the chapters as he thumbed through the book and the teacher who occasionally gestured to a map of America that did not include Alaska or Hawaii as states, rambled on about American history. The final sentence on the final page of this eighteen-year-old student's textbook explained why he was in this classroom and allocated him and his fellow classmates an enormous responsibility. According to his textbook, "The story of America's making is not a tale that is told and ended. It is a story which is being lived by men and women to-day. It is a story which growing boys and girls will carry forward in the making of America's to-morrow."¹ The future of America rested on the shoulders of this young boy and his classmates.

These students were part of the American story that included the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, the New Deal and the outbreak of World War II in Europe. They would develop the part of the American story following the end of World War II. They would watch schools desegregate and pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They would survive the domestic suspicion of the McCarthyism era, the National Guard protecting students as they walked into school, and race riots. When World War II was over, these students had more responsibility than ever before, to defend, protect, and promote America. After one-hundred and seventy years as a nation, the

¹ Charles E. Chadsey, Louis Weinberg, and Chester F. Miller, *America in the Making: From Wilderness to World Power* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1939).

United States of America emerged as the global hegemony, a role some thought it was destined to achieve. Building America's global leadership role into the American story meant spreading and encouraging uniquely American ideals such as democracy, freedom, and equality. One, glaring issue posed a threat to this mission: racial prejudice. As it was students' responsibility to develop the American story, so it became students who could solve the issue of racial prejudice in America and congeal the country's global dominance.

The issue of racial prejudice was certainly not new at the end of World War II, but Americans did begin to recognize it as an issue that could and needed to be solved. In 1944, Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish social democrat and economist, published his study on the condition of the "American Negro" that was commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation. This study was published with the title, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy*, and it commanded national attention to the issue of racial prejudice. Myrdal researched mostly the Southern region of the U.S. because the absence of Jim Crow laws in the North meant that racial prejudice in the North was not as blatant, even though his study did acknowledge that the North remained incredibly segregated, especially considering education. This work was long and extensive, but he offered his key finding in the introduction. According to Myrdal, "*The Negro Problem, is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggles goes on.*"² He acknowledged how challenging the problem of racial prejudice was, but he was optimistic. Myrdal encouraged social reform and advocated for the idea that racism could be fixed through the education of white Americans. Educators, intellectuals, and civil rights activists paid heed to Myrdal's recommendations at the

² Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & brothers, 1944).

end of World War II and took up the charge to begin this reform in the classroom, using textbooks.

Education became the front in the fight against racial prejudice, so activists started to engage in the debate surrounding the proper approach to teaching students about race, discrimination, and prejudice. As the key classroom tool, textbooks from this time represent the most concrete evidence of how the approach to teaching race evolved from 1945 to the early 1970s. However, textbooks did possess their own set of inherent limitations. The textbook limitation that most obscures a representation of how textbooks changed in response to larger societal influences is that of publication and adoption rates. In the twenty-five years after World War II, textbooks were expensive. When new editions were published they typically had minor changes, so schools used their classroom set as long as possible. Some teachers were probably teaching from textbooks published up to ten years prior. Intellectual activists recognized these limitations and attempted to wedge the gap between the constantly evolving approach to teaching race and stagnant textbooks by publishing supplemental teaching materials. While these supplemental materials lacked the same authority of textbooks, they did represent the extent to which educational intellectuals were encouraging change and do help account for this limitation. The need for an evaluation of supplemental materials alongside textbooks is more crucial in some decades than others. When schools began desegregating there was an obvious need for schools to purchase new textbooks, so the textbooks from the mid-1950s tended to be more up to date than those of other decades. Regardless of publication dates, textbooks introduced shifting racial perceptions slowly and subtly. Supplemental materials were much more radical than textbooks. Students probably developed their own perceptions of race somewhere between the

conservative textbook approach and the more radical approach presented in supplemental materials.

The Cold War increased international criticism about racial prejudice, which threatened America's hegemony and emphasized the importance of solving the country's societal blemish through education. Mary Dudziak provided the geopolitical context in her book, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. She showed how international tensions caused by the Cold War forced Americans to recognize that race relations were a problem that needed immediate attention. This war was very much a war of state ideologies, in which, the winner would solidify its place as the quintessential society. In this war, the armies were citizens and the weapons were criticisms. International criticism of the U.S. emphasized the contradictions between the pillars of democracy and racial prejudice. The country's hegemony depended on the belief that democracy was the ideology that would ensure world peace, so a glaring flaw in a basic premise was a major challenge in convincing other countries to embrace it. The Federal government recognized the importance of handling the problem of racial prejudice on an international level. Politically aligning with civil rights activists became crucial to the country's global reputation. For this reason, in many ways, the Cold War allowed the Civil Rights Movement to progress. To show that racial prejudice did not warrant international attention, the Federal government began responding to the causes of civil rights groups. However, defending democracy meant fervently rejecting the competing ideology: communism. Early, Cold War tensions created a domestic climate of suspicion. Civil rights activists had to be careful to frame their cause as one that promoted America and democracy. Desegregating schools fit within the international political agenda. In the early sixties, Cold War tensions flared as the domestic Civil Rights Movement hit its peak and activists began adopting more violent

and radical methods. The Federal government responded by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965. International criticism would transition away from racial prejudice to focus on the issue of American violence and the country's involvement in Vietnam at the same time. Less international criticism and civil rights legislation allowed the Federal government to frame the issue of racial prejudice as an issue of law and order, not of democracy.³

As civil rights activists began demanding international attention, so too did domestic attention to the movement increase. The domestic consequences of this increased attention to racial prejudice shaped the educational approach to race. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, written by, historian, Thomas Sugrue, provided the domestic racial context between 1945 and 1970. Sugrue showed that the battle for civil rights in America was brutal, messy, and challenging. At the end of World War II, even in Northern states, such as Kansas, the existence of unspoken Jim Crow laws was prevalent. In some ways, the battle for racial equality was almost worse in the North because Jim Crow laws were not written into law. Instead, society was responsible for segregating bathrooms, movie theaters, and schools. Violence and humiliation enforced social norms. When the Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal was inherently unequal and therefore illegal, white people in the South violently resisted desegregation. Resistance in the North was more complex and nuanced because there were laws enforcing segregation as there were in the South. Racism was and is deeply rooted in American society. Between 1945 and 1970, American international and domestic politics forced citizens to grapple with the contradictions between progressive policies

³ Mary Louise Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: The Relationship Between Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs in the Truman Administration*, Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Service, 1994.

and the social reality of race relations in the U.S. At a time when promoting democracy and American unity were incredibly important, racial groups were fighting for their place in America. Prevalent domestic violence proved to be a challenge in teaching about race, discrimination, and prejudice. Educators had to consider how to eliminate racially prejudiced thoughts through the nonviolent method of education, while an incredibly violent and tense society was surrounding students.⁴

Intellectuals who were influenced by the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement were responsible for shifting the educational approach to race. Historian, Zoë Burkholder, framed the educational environment considering racial teachings in the classroom in her book, *Color in the Classroom*. Burkholder's work examined the beginning of racial teachings in America and discussed how racial teachings evolved from scientific, tolerance teachings to those of cultural relativism and then multiculturalism in response to international and domestic politics. Tolerance teachings developed as an early approach because since education was considered the key to eliminating racial prejudice it followed logically that educating students using what were considered unbiased facts of would promote tolerance. Tolerance teachings were not intended to promote the idea that all people were equal but rather to emphasize that people of different races could be different and coexist. The cultural relativism approach was intended to eliminate uncomfortable classroom discussions about peoples' differences, considering Cold War tensions. Teachers abandoned explicit racial teachings for teachings that celebrated American culture and the way different people contributed to it. This approach allowed "color" to be neglected from the curriculum, which continued to be embraced even after desegregation. The colorblind

⁴ Thomas J. Sugrue *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2009).

approach persisted after desegregation, but the growing authority of psychology provided a new approach. This psychological approach emphasized the role of the individual in solving prejudice by encouraging self-awareness about prejudice feelings. In this way, the issue of racism was not rooted in American institutions but the individuals within them. As the Civil Rights Movement became even more aggressive in the early 1960s, educators began to adopt a multiculturalism approach, which started to teach about the historical heritage of African Americans. Race relations and African American heritage began to be taught alongside slavery, which implied that both American problems that had been solved. The Cold War climate and the domestic Civil Rights Movement influenced these evolving teaching approaches.⁵

This thesis builds on the work of these three historians by examining textbooks as the site of the struggle to eliminate racial prejudice, specifically in Kansas. My work is divided into three chapters to represent how three major international and domestic events influenced the way textbook authors approached conversations about discrimination, prejudice, and race. The first chapter is focused on the end of World War II. This chapter evaluates a commonly accepted textbook, published in 1939, that emphasized the importance of science and supported the notion that tolerance was not about social equality but equal opportunity. A supplemental teaching material from the *National Education Association* journal provided the connection between race and science. The second chapter revolves around the *Brown* decision and evaluates a Kansas, high school senior textbook considering the Kansas attempt at desegregation, which embraced the psychological approach and continued to neglect explicit racial teachings. The third chapter evaluates another Kansas, high school senior textbook and a supplemental teaching material

⁵ Zoë Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race 1900-1954*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014).

published by the Kansas Department of Education to emphasize how Kansas educators responded to the peak of the Civil rights Movement in the mid-1960s, even though textbooks were not as responsive. The second and third chapters focus specifically on textbooks approved for use in Kansas high schools because Kansas schools were some of the first schools to handle the challenges of desegregation, and in 1957 Kansas passed a law providing for a State Textbook Screening Committee.

The Kansas textbook act of 1957 established a textbook committee designed to be representative of every congressional district and grade level in Kansas. The committee was made of primarily teachers but did include three lay people. This law provided some uniformity and consensus about textbook selection and use in Kansas. Kansas schools recognized the influence of textbooks. According to, *Selecting and Renting Textbooks in Kansas: A Review of Current Legislation and Practices*, published by the Kansas State Department in 1958, “Next to the teacher, the textbook probably exerts a greater influence than any other factor upon the school curriculum.”⁶ Evaluating the influence of teachers regarding racial teachings is simply impossible, so textbooks offer the most concrete evidence of the changing way race was taught. The combination of the textbook act of 1957 and the fact that Kansas schools were some of the first schools to attempt handling the challenges of desegregation, makes Kansas textbooks particularly relevant to the discussion about how textbooks approached race, in the wake of the *Brown* decision, which shaped the future of race in America forever.

Today, the racial prejudice and racism in America continue to plague the country. However, the general conception of race in America today is much different than the conception

⁶ George J. Frey, and Adel F. Throckmorton, *Selecting and Renting Textbooks in Kansas: a Review of Current Legislation and Practices* (Topeka, Kansas: printed in the State Printing Plant, 1958).

of race at the end of World War II. According to a *National Geographic* article from 2018, recent genetic research has revealed two great truths about people. The first is that all humans are even more closely related than chimps. The second is that all people alive today have African heritage.⁷ Skin color began to vary as people migrated to different parts of the world and genetic mutations allowed people to adapt to their environment. The article argued that today, race is nothing more than a social construct created by the legacy of scientific racism. While this article discredits the very concept of race and frames it as a social construct, it does acknowledge that the concept of race continues to play an important role in society. The author argued that “To a disturbing extent, race still determines people’s perceptions, their opportunities, and their experiences.”⁸ For this reason, an evaluation of the way intellectuals attempted to solve race through textbooks and education is relevant to society today. Considering that education is the tool to solving the issue of racial prejudice in America, assessing past approaches to teaching it provides current educators a more in-depth understanding of how to improve it in a society that has the technological means to provide information almost instantaneously.

This thesis evaluates how the textbook approach to teaching discrimination, prejudice, and race evolved between 1945 and 1970 within the geopolitical and domestic contexts of the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement. Clear changes of racial perceptions do appear in the textbooks used in classrooms between 1945 and the early 1970s, but it is imperative to understand that the very concept of race and the meaning of the term evolved as well. When evaluating how racial perceptions changed between 1945 and 1970, it is not accurate or valid to pass judgment on the attempts to solve racial prejudice using the concept of race today.

⁷ Robin Hammond, “There’s No Scientific Basis for Race—It’s a Made-Up Label,” *National Geographic*, (2018).

⁸ Ibid.

This argument is intended to prove that race perceptions in America changed due to the political context of the Cold War and domestic politics, which influenced education and textbooks. Education was considered the solution to racial prejudice and textbooks were the backbone of education. In many ways, textbook limitations also limited the success of education, in solving racial prejudice. However, slow change is change nonetheless, so the representation of change is worth studying. The way that textbooks represented the shifting racial perceptions that were influenced by larger geopolitical and domestic contexts between 1945 and 1970 contributes to the discussion of American civil rights and social progress.

Chapter 1: “The Dawn of a New Era” (1945-1953)

“The boys and girls in the schools of the United States are preparing to enter into this heritage of democracy, ready to do their share of the world’s work and to meet their common problems in the years which lie ahead.”⁹ This final sentence of the final chapter in the textbook, *America in the making: from wilderness to world power*, commonly used throughout the 1940’s, was a sentence almost every Kansas, elementary school student probably read and understood to be the reason for their education. The boy in the back of the room in 1945 had just lived through a pivotal time in world history. He watched as Europe exploded in war and then he rejoiced as he watched it end. He was ready to do his share in the work that laid ahead. He would contribute to the part of the American story in which the Cold War began and he would be among the first group of students who were responsible for solving the American dilemma.

With approximately forty words, this textbook illuminated a few of the most important ideals of the post-World War II era. In 1945, the second world war was over and America had arguably become a hegemony. These boys and girls were being taught it would be their duty to continue the legacy of American democracy, ensuring the country’s role as a global power. As this quote emphasized, democracy was part of the students’ heritage and their education was designed to prepare them for the task of defending democratic ideals on a global scale. This task was the world’s work. These American students were being taught that their education was preparing them to help the world that had just been destroyed by war. America had seemingly come out on top and it was these students’ duty to defend the country’s place at the top. To achieve this lofty ambition, according to the textbook, these students would first have to defeat

⁹ Chadsey et al., *America in the Making*, 718.

America's common problem: racial tension, which contradicted the very nature of democracy and threatened America's hegemonic role.

In the years during and after World War II, democratic ideals were juxtaposed to those of the Nazis and the communists. Liberal activists began using this juxtaposition to further civil rights. In *Sweet Land of Liberty*, historian, Thomas Sugrue, emphasized these contradicting ideologies and how activists began to use them to their advantage. He wrote, "a growing number of civil rights activists drew from an alternative vision of the war, one that emphasized the fundamental democracy of the United States and eschewed comparisons between Americans and Nazis as unpatriotic."¹⁰ As Sugrue discussed, in many ways, World War II was a war of morality framed in directly contrasting ideologies such as equal versus unequal, stagnation versus progress, and democratic versus undemocratic. In *Cold War Civil Rights*, historian, Mary Dudziak, confirmed this notion of contrasting ideologies when she discussed the idea that anything that threatened democracy threatened world peace and contributed to the communist cause, which students were being taught was their duty and legacy to defend.¹¹

Domestically and internationally, people noticed that the ideals of democracy and prevalent racism in American directly contradicted, which threatened the country's global leadership role. The book *Race, Racism, and Science* offered an example of the contradictions between American democracy and racism at the end of the second world war. The authors highlighted how people began to criticize the irony in the fact that the American military remained segregated while it fought the Nazis who promoted the superiority of the Aryan race. For this reason, in Dudziak's book, she pointed out, "World War II marked a transition point in

¹⁰ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 81-82.

¹¹ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 27.

American foreign relations, American politics, and American culture. At home, the meaning ascribed to the war would help to shape what would follow. At least on an ideological level, the notion that the nation had a stake in racial equality was widespread.”¹² At the end of World War II, this national stake in racial equality was a driving force behind society’s attempt to combat racial prejudice.

Americans agreed that racial prejudice needed to be solved through nonviolent methods such as education if democracy was to win over communism. This period of agreement on the issue would come to be known as the “liberal consensus.” Sugrue wrote about how people believed racial prejudice could be solved. He discussed how activists promoted the idea of tolerance through means such as education to eliminate racial tensions.¹³ According to him, one

strand of activists--those who have been most influential in modern American history--emphasized racism as an individual moral and psychological problem: one in the hearts and minds of misguided whites. Their efforts focused on changing the boundaries of discourse and of modifying perceptions of race through therapy, advertising, education, and the media. In this view, eliminating racial inequality was a matter of changing attitudes and beliefs; institutional change would follow.¹⁴

American society at the end of the war was rife with racial tensions and outright conflicts.

However, Sugrue maintained that Americans has a seemingly positive outlook on the issue and believed that racial prejudice could be solved through nonviolent methods such as education.¹⁵

Education was one of the key fronts in this fight over race and democracy. As the historian, Zoë Burkholder noted in her book about race and education in the classroom, “Because social scientists understood racial prejudice to be the result of both inaccurate information and faulty

¹² Dudiak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 7.

¹³ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, xxvi.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, xxvi.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 84.

socialization, schools were the most logical site of reform.”¹⁶ In accordance with the “liberal consensus,” teachers began to consider it their civic duty to combat racial prejudice in the classroom by promoting tolerance.¹⁷

Educators rooted tolerance teachings in science to avoid political controversies surrounding race at the time. Burkholder wrote, “teachers asserted the importance of teaching a ‘scientific’ analysis of human race to promote tolerance. Nearly every article cited anthropological facts to explain the relative equality of all human beings and to emphasize teachers’ political neutrality and professional authority.”¹⁸ This scientific approach was rooted in science, but certain topics concerning the biological concept were rejected because Hitler’s racial teachings were rooted in biological science. The book *Race, Racism, and Science* emphasized that considering Nazism teachings of race, the racial notions behind topics of biological science such as genetics and hereditarianism were rejected.¹⁹ However, while genetics and hereditarianism were rejected the fundamental, biological concept of race was not.²⁰ To avoid the teachings of scientific racism, teachers began to turn to social science, which allowed them to situate their teachings in science while rejecting Nazi racial teachings.

These notions of race in America and the consensus on how it could be fixed were emphasized in the commonly used textbook of the time, *America in the Making: From Wilderness to World Power*. The title pointed to the idea that World War II was a war of progress versus stagnation, and that America was on the side of progress. Obviously, it was

¹⁶ Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom*: 5.

¹⁷ Ibid, 138.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ John P. Jackson and Nadine M. Weidman. 2010. *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 167.

²⁰ Ibid.

important to frame the American narrative as one of progress because this title emphasized the notion that in the approximately 164 years of America, the country advanced its international role from a small wilderness nation to a world power. In this way, the title equated the beginning of America with wilderness and the current climate of America as a world power. Considering the first chapter was truly about the wilderness and the last was called American ideologies the title implied that American ideologies contributed to the impression of America as a world power.

One passage from the book's final chapter addressed the American ideal of equality in the context of American democracy. Regarding the line from the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, "all men are created equal" the textbook authors wrote, "Jefferson did not mean that all men are equal in intellect, strength, or other personal qualities. He did mean that all men are entitled to an equal opportunity to achieve the most for their own and the common good; and that rulers who tried to hold men down are tyrants who should be resisted."²¹ This quote promoted tolerance because it encouraged recognizing that although people were unequal in characteristics everyone deserved an equal opportunity to achieve. Tolerance was about accepting not necessarily appreciating. The notion of equal opportunity was related to democracy and juxtaposed against tyrants, meaning communists. According to the textbook, "The ideal of equality led not alone to opportunities for acquiring wealth; it led also to a greater opportunity for men and women to acquire an education, an education which fitted them to render distinguished service."²² The textbook taught students that equality meant equal opportunity, especially in terms of education. Not only did this passage highlight equality as an

²¹ Chadsey et al., *America in the Making*, 711.

²² *Ibid*, 713.

American ideal in terms of democracy and tolerance, it also emphasized the importance of education, which was the means through which American activists and educators thought racial prejudice could be combatted.

In addition to confirming the authority of education, the book also confirmed the authority of science, which was the field tolerance teachings were rooted in. The textbook stated, "At no previous time in history and probably in no other land to-day has the study of science become such an important part of the school work of boys and girls." An entire chapter was dedicated to the growing importance of science. The book specifically highlighted the social science of psychology in the passage, "One of the youngest of the sciences is psychology or the study of the human mind. In America, William James and John Dewey became leaders in this field and they influenced many others to devote their lives to the study of psychology as well as to the study of pedagogy, or the science of training the mind through education."²³

Equality, in terms of equal opportunity, and science were themes that antiracist educators and activists used to aid in racial tolerant teachings, so the textbook highlighted their importance. However, textbooks stopped short of providing students a connection between racial equality and science. Educational activists recognized this limitation, and published textbook supplements to bridge the gap and foster the connections between textbooks' teachings and the national issue of racial prejudice in response. One such supplement material that situated tolerance teachings within science was published by the *National Education Association Journal* and titled "A Primer on Human Race." The following five statements provided teachers with five, simple scientific truths to offer their students.

1. In the beginning God Created man, of one blood, spread over earth.

²³ Chadsey et al., *America in the Making*, 692.

2. A nation is not a race, a religion is not a race, a language is not a race, a culture is not a race (There is no primitive race) ... NO habits, customs, ideals, or forms of government are inherently typical of any racial group.
3. There are three great groups of races, Caucasian, Monogoloid, and Negroid.
4. There is no truly superior nor inferior race.
5. What can I do? If you are an employer, a teacher, a veteran, etc.²⁴

Although intended to be rooted in science, these statements contradict the nature of scientific fact. The first statement placed scientific fact within the religious doctrine of the creation of man. This solidified the idea that God did, in fact, create man.²⁵ However, the second statement claimed that religion is not a race. The same statement suggested that religion did not determine race, but not all religions believed that their God created man. Also, the second statement detailed what race was not, but none of the statements detailed what race was. The third statement declared there were three races, but not how people fit into these races. Twice, within the five statements, it was explicit that there was no truly superior race. However, the statements do not condemn the practice of categorizing people by race. Of course, textbook supplements did not have as much authority as the textbooks themselves because their use was much more voluntary. In this case, though, the primer helped connect two themes that the textbook had already established as important to democracy and that activists of the time believed to be the solution to solving the increasingly important issue of racial prejudice in America.

As the tensions between democratic and communist ideals increased throughout the late 1940s, the issue of domestic racial tensions in America became increasingly important. According to one commonly used textbook, published in 1953, titled *Your Country's Story*, "We now live in a world in which the United States is one of two dominant powers. To a large extent

²⁴ "A Primer on Race," (*Journal of NEA* 36, no. 2, 1947), 84-85.

²⁵ Evolution was not considered a valid theory to teach. The contradictions associated with rooting race in science in terms of evolution were not even considered until the 1970s.

world peace and prosperity depend upon the alignment of other nations with us. This makes our American attitudes toward minorities of vital importance.”²⁶ These two dominant powers were America and the Soviets. To become the sole, dominant world power each country fought to persuade the rest of the world to align with its ideologies. The textbook taught that if countries aligned with America there would be world peace and prosperity. This represented the heightened urgency to fix any domestic problems that threatened democracy such as, racial prejudice.

America defended democracy fervently within this political climate, which forced the country to respond to more international criticism about how race relations contradicted it. By 1947, just two years after the official end of World War II, Cold War politics dominated American politics. Dudziak highlighted the international criticism surrounding racial prejudice. She wrote, "As the United States held itself out as the leader of the free world, the nation opened itself up to criticism when its domestic practices seemed to violate the nation's principles. Race discrimination, in particular, was America's 'Achilles heel.'"²⁷ To alleviate the increasing international attention to racial prejudice in America, the government tried to prove the problem was improving by outwardly supporting civil rights. For this reason, Dudziak argued, Truman desegregated the army. However, while the Cold War political climate might have persuaded the American government to somewhat advance the Civil Rights Movement, it did so in a narrow context. These civil rights groups had to be cautious to precisely frame reforms as democratic progress if they wanted government support and recognition.

²⁶ Margaret Gilbert Mackey, Ernest W. Tiegs, and Fay Adams, *Your Country's Story: Pioneers, Builders, Leaders* (Boston: Ginn, 1953), 377.

²⁷ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 29.

American's obsession with the evils of communism created a domestic culture of suspicion, which provided for the elimination of explicit racial teachings in the classroom. American's primary concern was containing communism, which was the antithesis of democracy.²⁸ The promotion of any idea that did not align with democratic ideals was considered communistic and maybe even treasonous. For this reason, Burkholder argued that containing communism and promoting American democracy became the most important lessons in the classroom.²⁹ Within this context, teachers abandoned racial tolerance teachings for teachings that promoted American unity and celebrated American democracy by recognizing the cultural contributions of different racial minority groups because it was more socially and politically acceptable. This approach became known as the colorblind approach. Celebrating minority groups in terms of their contributions to American culture allowed teachers to avoid the uncomfortable and risky conversations of racial prejudice that could have been perceived as un-American. Approaching race through the lens of a celebration of "cultural democracy" allowed culture to emerge as the "preferred vocabulary to describe racial minorities."³⁰ According to an article written by William Martin, an intercultural³¹ educator, in 1954, this approach was intended to modify prejudiced attitudes because students would learn to appreciate each individual's unique contribution to American culture, which promoted unity more so than tolerance teachings.³² In this way, "Teachers became to view the problem of prejudice as something divorced from the issue of race," Burkholder wrote. Teachers eliminated explicit

²⁸ Ibid, 11.

²⁹ Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom* 151.

³⁰ Ibid, 162.

³¹ Intercultural education was the educational theory that supported teaching about different cultures.

³² William E. Martin, "Gee I'm Glad We're all Different!" (*Journal of the NEA* 43, no. 4, 1954), 219-20.

discussions of race to avoid the risk of discussing American politics within the climate of suspicion created by the Cold War and Americans' infatuation with the evils of communism.

Discussions of race became framed within teachings of being a socially graceful and polite neighbor because of the Cold War. The role of the schools in shaping students' racial perceptions shifted to focus on the idea that good citizens were able to interact gracefully, not only at home, but on an international scale. This emphasized the important responsibility that students had to understand and handle issues at an international level. Educators understood that interacting internationally meant being able to converse with people from minority racial, ethnic, or religious groups. Students needed to be able to handle different groups of people if American was going to continue being a global power."³³ The goal was for teachers to cultivate good American citizens by instilling good manners and attitudes while avoiding what had become uncomfortable conversations of racial prejudice. This emphasized the idea that teachers did not stop teaching about racial prejudice. They just morphed the teachings to fit the framework of the Cold War. This idea showed how educators took on the task of moral suasion in schools. Teachers had a new responsibility to teach morals, not just facts.

The colorblind approach that developed within the Cold War context and allowed race to be framed as a celebration of American culture, was reflected in the American history textbook, published in 1953, titled *Your Country's Story*. This textbook offered a prime example of how textbooks promoted the idea that students should embrace America as their country, by celebrating cultural contributions of different immigrant groups that were framed as races. The word America is not even in the title of this book, yet, even today, it is apparent that this was a history book about American history intended for a diverse audience.

³³ Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom*, 163.

The textbook dedicated an entire column of text to celebrating the life of an Irish artist, Saint-Gaudens, who sculpted statues. The author of the textbook found it relevant to mention that the artists' parents came from different countries. His mother was Irish and his father was French. This highlighted the idea that the two cultures collided and reproduced an artist that made great contributions to American society, with American being the word of emphasis. Also, the author of this text made sure to mention that the artist was brought to America at an early age.³⁴ The idea that the young artist grew up in American society emphasized that while he was born in another country and had parents from different countries, American ideals probably most influenced him. The passage continued to discuss how Saint-Gaudens' greatest sculpture was a tribute to Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois. This was a clear representation of how an Irishman contributed to the celebration of an American hero.

Saint-Gaudens' story was not the only story in the book that celebrated the contributions of a European immigrant to American culture. This passage came from a chapter titled, "Life and Culture in the Later Nineteenth Century." Saint-Gaudens' contribution to American culture was surrounded by columns of other "American's" contributions to American culture in the late nineteenth century. To further the emphasis on America and American culture that developed from the Cold War struggle to promote uniquely American ideals, most of the stories the book chose to tell about people from other cultures emphasized the idea that the person's true success only occurred after he or she came to America. For example, in a section about the developing American theater, the book summarized the life of the actress Louisa Lane who debuted in England but did not find success until she came to America where she quickly became one of

³⁴ Mackey et al., *Your Country's Story*, 377.

America's most favorite actresses.³⁵ This summary showed that even when attempting to celebrate the diverse culture of America, the book subtly highlighted only the achievements of European immigrants to American culture.

Not one sentence in these two chapters, dedicated to life and culture in the 1900s, mentioned the contributions that African Americans made to American society during the time, and activists began attempts to rectify the omission. Also, there was not a single sentence in the previously mentioned sections of this book that attempted to discuss any negativities within American culture. According to the textbook, life in America during the nineteenth century was full of enriching literature, new forms of leisure, and different cultures existed in perfect harmony. This thesis is not intended to engage in the debate about whether the lessons learned in textbooks were valid but rather to show the change over time. However, in this case, it is simply unrealistic to believe American culture was this positive. Burkholder acknowledged that activists began to recognize that this approach failed to accurately teach about the injustices associated with racial prejudice. She pointed out that, "The most important factor is that these civil rights activists believed that racial integration was the key to social equality."³⁶ In the next chapter, the national response to racial integration would create yet another shift in the perception of race.

³⁵ Ibid, 374.

³⁶ Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom*, 174.

Chapter 2: “Promoting the General Welfare” (1954-1960)

“One of the effective ways to promote the general welfare is this: To make sure that all elements of our American society feel that they have a full share in the democratic way of life. Any less ambitious goal is unworthy of our democratic principles.”³⁷ The eighteen-year-old student who would have stumbled upon this sentence while reading his senior year social studies textbook, *American Values and Problems Today: The Social and Individual Problems of Today's World Considered from the Viewpoint of Youth in Democracy*, published in 1956, would have understood his role in the democratic legacy, but would be left to make sense of the contradictions between these kinds of idyllic statements and the harsh reality of domestic race relations.

The notion that everyone should have a “full share in the democratic way of life” supported the rationalization behind desegregation and the continued efforts to eliminating racial prejudice through education. However, while this student sat at his desk in the back of a Kansas classroom, the Federal guard protected African American students in Arkansas, the seminal bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama started and ended, and Emmett Till was murdered. The middle of the 1950s was rife with inconsistencies between representations of social progress and racial tensions. Especially in these years in which society changed so rapidly and drastically, textbook authors struggled to keep up with the ambitious goal of promoting the general welfare and explaining what was the current domestic situation.

The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision of 1954, was considered a landmark case in terms of the race situation in America. The Federal government would point to

³⁷ Chester D. Babcock and Isaac James Quillen, *American Values and Problems Today: The Social and Individual Problems of Today's World Considered from the Viewpoint of Youth in Democracy*. (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1956), 409.

this case as a symbol of progress on the American race dilemma in the subsequent decades. With one controversial decision, the Supreme Court eradicated the legality of the notion that separate was acceptable if separate was equal. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896, fifty-eight years prior to the *Brown* decision, provided the doctrine of “separate but equal.”³⁸ The *Plessy* decision was about separate railroad cars, on its face. However, the “separate but equal” doctrine cited in *Plessy* provided the justification of Jim Crow laws in the South and legal segregation. The main argument in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was that separate schools were inherently unequal. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote, “We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”³⁹ This statement questioned the entire justification of legal segregation. In theory, the *Brown* decision represented progress on the American race dilemma, and the Federal government framed it as such at an international level. Internationally, the reaction to *Brown* was favorable. However, in the years following the decision, national and international attention to events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the murder of Emmett Till proved contradictory to the notion of racial progress. The Federal government hoped that the new law would prove successful and just needed time to take effect. Then, the 1957 school year in Little Rock, Arkansas rolled around.⁴⁰

The events surrounding the Little Rock Nine threatened the legacy of the *Brown* decision and magnified the gap between American ideals and social reality considering the race problem in America. When an angry mob of white Arkansans blocked nine African American students from entering Central High School for the first time, President Eisenhower decided to send

³⁸ *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

³⁹ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

⁴⁰ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 107.

federal troops to protect the students. Eisenhower, himself, did not necessarily agree that desegregation would solve racial prejudice, but he did know that the Federal government needed to enforce the law because blatantly defying the law, threatened American democracy. The international criticism surrounding the frightening images of federal troops escorting students into school did not bode well for America's fight in the Cold War. At the same time, America's Cold War enemy, the Soviets, launched Sputnik I and became the first country to launch a satellite into space, which emphasized that the Soviets were winning the space race. Little Rock and Sputnik were considered major setbacks to America's Cold War fight. Americans turned to education to restore their reputation of progress.⁴¹

Desegregating schools in the North was, in some ways, more complex than it was in the South because it was much more ambiguous. Northern states did not have laws that enforced segregation, but schools were very much segregated. Northern school desegregation was more peaceful but it was slower and more gradual. Kansas schools reacted to the *Brown* decision quicker than other Northern schools, which forced Kansas schools to begin dealing with the challenges of desegregation without much guidance. While the Federal government framed the *Brown* decision as one that promoted educational equality, true desegregation, even in the North, did not necessarily offer educational equality. In a 2007 article published in *The Urban Review* titled "The Consequences of School Desegregation in a Kansas Town 50 Years After Brown," the authors offered one example of how Kansas schools attempted to desegregate. They wrote, "After serving the Parsons Black community for 50 years, Douglass School was closed in 1958, the consequence of decisions the local Board of Education made in order to comply with the

⁴¹ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*.

1954 *Brown* decision.”⁴² Although the Douglass School officially closed in 1958 and the students had to immediately start attending the “white” school, it had begun the process of merging with the “white” school when the school board was approached to participate in the *Brown* case in 1951. The students of this school were slowly forced to go to the white school, where they suffered incredible discrimination. This was an early example of the problems school districts across the country would face when beginning to desegregate. Although Kansas schools desegregated before other Northern schools, this did not mean Kansas schools effectively desegregated. Nevertheless, the more diverse student population changed the classroom environment, drastically.

The *Brown* decision and the events that occurred in its aftermath, intensified the role of schools and education in the fight against racism. School desegregation was a national issue even though it looked different in the North and South. Social activists had won a major battle with the *Brown* decision, and they were not planning to settle. Educational inequality opened the discussion for racial inequality in other areas such as the workforce and the housing market. *Brown* represented a legal response to the issue of racial inequality. For the first time, the Federal government acknowledged that segregation was detrimental to society because it created a superior and inferior race dynamic within society. The Supreme Court used the growing authority of the social science psychology, to represent this idea. The *Brown* decision affirmed the authority of psychology considering racial prejudice because in the decision Judge Warren cited a psychological study that claimed segregated schools were damaging to the “black

⁴² Jean Patterson, Rae Niles, Cameron Carlson, and William L. Kelley, “The Consequences of School Desegregation in a Kansas Town 50 Years After Brown.” *Urban Review* 40, no. 1 (March 2008): 81.

students' psyches.”⁴³ Considering race in terms of psychology provided a new opportunity in solving the racial issue. The notion of racism and discrimination being rooted in thoughts and feelings of superiority and inferiority supported Myrdal's point that this race issue could be solved through moral suasion using education. Racial prejudice was not deeply rooted in American social structures, it was deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of white American psyches, but this could be changed.⁴⁴

Intellectual activists and educators embraced the psychological approach to combatting racism because it provided for universal teachings about discrimination, prejudice, and race. Psychology provided universal teachings because it emphasized the fact that all humans had the same kinds of basic feelings. These teachings were rooted in the belief that every student had, at one time, felt inferior or superior to another. Recognizing the commonality of these feelings helped teachers promote empathy. Encouraging students to recognize that everyone had the same basic feelings “provided for the general welfare” and “allowed everyone to share in the democratic way of life.” With this approach, racism, prejudice, and discrimination became disconnected from societal institutions. Instead of reforming the institution this approach focused on reforming the individuals who made up the institution. This allowed democracy to prevail, while educators intensified the battle of racial prejudice in the classroom. According to this approach, racism and prejudice were not necessarily rooted in race but in the way people perceived differences among races. This was one reason for why the explicit mention of race remained absent from the curriculum. The other reason the “colorblind” approach persisted was because educators worried that explicitly discussing racial differences in the classroom could

⁴³ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 182.

⁴⁴ Jackson et al., *Race, Racism, and Science*, 152.

have encouraged inaccurate superior or inferior feelings and negatively impacted the psyches of specifically African American students. Classrooms were desegregating and teachers had to figure out how to handle these sensitive, controversial topics without victimizing any group. Embracing a psychological “colorblind” approach allowed teachers to encourage the importance of all students’ democratic heritage, which was crucial considering the setbacks to America’s international reputation, in the mid-1950s. In theory, this approach allowed teachers to promote democracy, American unity, and solve the social issue of racism.⁴⁵

The social studies textbook, *American Values and Problems Today: The Social and Individual Problems of Today's World Considered from the Viewpoint of Youth in Democracy* published in 1956 and approved for use in Kansas schools beginning in 1958, incorporated the psychological “colorblind” approach. The title emphasized that this book included social and individual problems, which were not one in the same, according to psychology. The first chapter of this textbook was titled “The Modern Problem Pictures.” As the first chapter, it was designed to address the basic knowledge necessary for the study of the remainder of the book and introduce large basic concepts that would be addressed throughout. The chapter began by summarizing some problems students might have been facing at the time such as, how to plan for the future, how to stay healthy, and how to be a good citizen of community, state, and nation. Then, the authors dedicated a column to “some crucial American problems.” By progressing the students from basic individual problems to complex national problems the text was following the psychological approach. The book’s following sentence was, “in the United States there are still many crucial individual and group

⁴⁵ Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom* 174.

problems which have to be solved.”⁴⁶ These problems were, of course, prejudice and discrimination. In this sentence, the textbook authors made the distinction between the individual and the group, considering American problems. This connected to the psychological approach in that the authors were implying that individuals’ problematic feelings caused group tensions. According to the psychological approach echoed in this textbook, prejudice was an individual problem but racism was the social problem created by racist individuals. The next section explicitly discussed the relationship and distinctions between social and individual problems. The authors emphasized that social problems could only be solved by individuals. According to the textbook, “And so it becomes true that social competence rests on individual competence, and individual competence may be said to rest largely on character, knowledge, and problem-solving ability.”⁴⁷ This quote showed how education was using psychology to combat racial prejudice without discussing race. The psychological approach emphasized that racism was not deeply rooted American society but in the individuals that made up the society. Individuals could improve through knowledge and problem solving, which would, in turn, improve the societal issue of racial prejudice. However, the textbook’s “American problems” did not mention racial tensions explicitly.

Instead of evaluating the differences among races, the textbook authors discussed Americans, in general, to promote unity, emphasize commonalities, and avoid conversations that could possibly damage student psyches. This was how the colorblind approach persisted within the context of school desegregation. In fact, this entire 527-page book was dedicated to helping students work through social issues but neglected to include an explicit discussion of racial

⁴⁶ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 14.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

prejudice or racial tensions, which were receiving domestic and international attention in the mid-1950s. The index of this book did not reference either the term “race” or “Negro.” Even the 1939 textbook, *America in the Making*, had a few references to the term. In 1939, these references were to sections about slavery and one brief section about “negro music,” which the textbook claimed, “many music critics say is not music at all,” but they were references, nonetheless.⁴⁸ The 1956 textbook, *American Values and Problems Today* did not fully address the history of slavery because it was focused on current social and individual problems and how to solve them, but there was no reference to any “negro” cultural contribution, even framed in such a manner as seen in the 1940 textbook. While the 1956 textbook did not mention “Negroes” or race, in the index, which implies that the book did not place an emphasis on either, the index did reference prejudice and discrimination.

In the textbook’s chapter titled “Promoting the General Welfare,” the psychological approach was used to foster American unity, which framed the book’s discussion about prejudice and discrimination. According to the authors, “In this chapter three important social problems affecting the general welfare are considered. These are problems of intergroup relations, slum housing, and education.”⁴⁹ When this textbook was published, racial inequality existed within housing and education, but the authors separated the ambiguous concept of “intergroup relations” from institutions because the psychological approach to racism shaped it into a societal problem created by individuals, not institutions. Before the authors began the overt discussion of discrimination and prejudice, they emphasized that while prejudice was an individual problem, all Americans had a stake in the societal problem that it created. The textbook declared, “We

⁴⁸ Chadsey et al., *America in the Making*, 708.

⁴⁹ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 409.

have to recognize the fact that we support our values and our institutions because we know they are *ours*, that they belong to *us*, because we belong to our country.”⁵⁰ The authors continued, “That simply means we are a part of its society—no matter in what community we live or in what group we make our friends.”⁵¹ According to the textbook, the individuals of all groups belonged to the larger, American group, which was an incredible honor. Emphasizing the common stake in promoting American society framed the textbook’s following discussion about race and prejudice as an issue that everyone faced.

This 28-page chapter emphasized how the psychological approach to combatting racism supported empathy by encouraging students to apply individual feelings on a national scale. Educators believed this would reduce individual prejudiced thoughts and allow all students to promote the general welfare. The first main section of this chapter was titled “The Feeling of Being Excluded.” To begin, the authors encouraged students to consider a time when they, themselves, felt they did not belong within the larger group. The book offered common examples of situations in which someone might have felt like an outsider such as, moving to a new neighborhood and not knowing anyone on the new block or starting high school and sticking out in the hallways. Whatever the situation, the book acknowledged that at some time or another every student had felt excluded in some situation, which echoed the importance of emphasizing commonality and made this lesson universal. Then, the authors transitioned to focus on how the negative feelings in those situations were the way that entire groups of American citizens felt in their everyday American lives. According to the book, this was a problem because “all Americans deserved to share in the democratic way of life.”⁵² The only way to fix this problem

⁵⁰ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 410.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, 409.

was to understand it first at an individual level and then nationally. This point aligned with the belief that a psychological understanding of prejudiced thoughts was the key to eradicating them. Within this section, the book followed its own teachings. First, it encouraged students to consider how they felt. Then, it placed these individual feelings on a larger, national scale. This passage clearly emphasized American unity and the importance of understanding and evaluating individual feelings to solve this social issue created by individuals.

After situating this discussion within American unity and the psychological framework of the mid-1950s, the textbook tackled the subjects of prejudice and discrimination directly. The authors began with a brief history of discrimination, which acknowledged the existence of the concept on American soil before the U.S. was a country. The passage stated, “Discrimination has been present in America since the Spaniards took home a few Indians as curiosities and later used the natives as slaves.” This quote very clearly linked discrimination and slavery, which had not always been the way the two themes were taught. However, even though this quote referred to American roots of discrimination and connected it to slavery, the text did not connect the enslavement of African Americans and discrimination. The decision to begin a conversation about discrimination in a textbook focused on current social issues of 1956 without mentioning African Americans was based on the psychological approach to race. This approach stressed the importance of not damaging students’ psyches. Native Americans would not have been present in the Kansas classrooms in which this book was being used, so their psyches would not have been damaged by this statement. Vice-versa, it is likely that the white students in the same classroom would not have identified with Spaniards, so their psyches would have also been protected. Beginning this discussion with white people enslaving African Americans could have damaged the psyches of both groups of students who would have been taught a harsh reality

about their own heritage. In this book, the part of American history about African American slaves and discrimination was glossed over. Instead, the passage skipped to the presence of current discrimination with the sentence, “In our own history we can see reflected all the various kinds of discrimination that are inflicted today.”⁵³ Perhaps, the decision to cite the beginning of race in America with the Spaniards and the Indians was to show that discrimination had been present since before America was even a country implying that the people in the middle of the 1950s inherited the issue of discrimination from people who actually were not part of the American story. Perhaps this solidified the notion that discrimination was not an American problem, but one created by other nations that Americans had to solve. The intentional elimination of African American enslavement aligned with the psychological “colorblind” approach of the mid-1950s.

After a historical discussion of discrimination, the book discussed the “roots of discrimination.” Once again, the authors managed to engage in a discussion about discrimination in America without mentioning the racial tensions present in the national and international media of the time. The discussion of the roots of discrimination avoided uniquely American examples of discrimination and placed the cause of the concept within psychological issues. This section highlighted four reasons for discrimination posed as questions:

- 1) Is the discrimination due to historic enmities, habits, or prejudices?
- 2) Has discrimination arisen for economic reasons?
- 3) Does the discrimination exist because people needed a scapegoat?
- 4) Did the discrimination begin with a feeling of superiority?⁵⁴

Following each statement question, the book offered a short description of what the question meant and offered examples of that type of discrimination. Although a few of the descriptions

⁵³ Babcock, et al. *American Values*, 412.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 412-415.

acknowledged that the type of discrimination occurred in America, all the examples of the discrimination were from other countries, except for the economic reason which referenced the economic tensions between immigrants and American citizens. The economic system was an American institution so racial inequalities were not discussed in its context because of the psychological authority on race. The most explicit example of the authors' avoiding American discrimination was in the book's explanation of the scapegoat question. After a brief explanation of what a scapegoat is, the passage stated, "The idea has a psychological basis in the very human fact that we all like to have an excuse for our failures and a way to get rid of them. When a group feels that they have failed to achieve ambitions, they often resort to the scapegoat idea."⁵⁵ In this quote, the reference to psychology and its connection to problems of discrimination was obvious. This quote very clearly emphasized the humanity and commonality of discriminatory feelings by claiming that it is human nature to avoid the responsibility of failure. Ironically, instead of placing the blame of American discrimination on Americans, the authors chose to use Nazi Germany as a scapegoat to further explain this idea. According to the textbook, "Because a large segment of the business and commercial enterprise was controlled by German and Polish Jews, the Nazis blamed their hard times and political failures on these people. ...these scapegoats were first blamed, then despised, humiliated, deprived of rights, and murdered wholesale."⁵⁶

One scapegoat was not enough because this was not the only example of this type of discrimination the textbook offered. The authors also mentioned that Communists used capitalistic societies as a scapegoat for their failures. The Communist example, though, was equated to 17th century Quakers who blamed everything from floods to naval defeats on their

⁵⁵ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 414.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 415.

neighbors.⁵⁷ According to this textbook, “History is full of examples, both laughable and tragic, of similar discrimination.”⁵⁸ Communism and democracy were considered direct contrasts of each other, so using communism as an example of this type of discrimination emphasized this contrast. Also, by insinuating this type of discrimination regarding communism was laughable and outdated, the book equated communism as laughable and simplistic. In this way, the book perhaps attempted to reduce some of Americans’ tensions associated with the Communists’ criticism of American prejudice. After the roots of discrimination were handled, the book moved on to discuss how “social differences cause feelings of superiority”⁵⁹ and that “prejudice is the root of superiority.”⁶⁰

The next section of the textbook continued to represent the educational embracement of the psychological approach to race by relating how the feelings of superiority and inferiority contributed to the issue of discrimination and prejudice. Before a thorough explanation of how societal differences created superior feelings, the authors felt it necessary to define the term “minority group.” According to the textbook, “The meaning of minority, in this case, is that of *lesser*. The minority group is the one with less power, less prestige, less influence, less opportunity.”⁶¹ Although it might have been understood that some racial groups were *lesser* in terms of these characteristics, the book did not acknowledge race as a factor that contributed to being considered a “minority group.” Neglecting to mention race as a characteristic of minority groups aligned with the psychological “colorblind” approach to race. After this definition, the textbook transitioned to an explanation of what it considered sometimes trivial and insignificant

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 415.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 415.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 417.

⁶¹ Ibid, 416.

social differences could cause superior feelings, and therefore, prejudice. One example of this idea the authors offered was how an American student might feel superior to a French student who tucked a napkin under his or her chin at a restaurant because the American student thought his or her table manners were better. The book explained that in France it was considered more polite to tuck the napkin under the chin than to place it in one's lap, so neither student was wrong but each prejudged and felt superior to the other based on a trivial table manner difference. In providing a rationale for discussing these minor social differences the textbook claimed, "The idea is to drive home the point that the result of every one of these differences rests not on the difference itself but on prejudice."⁶² The authors were emphasizing the idea that prejudice is not rooted in differences but in the way people perceive the differences. Just as the Frenchman was wrong to judge the American, the American was wrong to judge the Frenchman. Of course, an example of prejudice forming from racial differences was not included because it could have hurt the psyches of one or both of the two major racial groups in the classroom at the time. However, it is likely that students would have understood this teaching could have been applied to the national problem of racial prejudice especially because the textbook had encouraged the practice of applying the individual examples it offered to the national context in previous sections. Emphasizing the universality of this teaching, the authors reiterated the idea that everyone had probably felt superior to someone at some point in their life, which was only natural but that students needed to begin to recognize when they had prejudiced thoughts because of a trivial social difference between themselves and someone who identified with another "group." Once the students recognized the prejudiced thought, they needed to try to change it, and in this way, prejudice could be eliminated.

⁶² Babcock et al., *American Values*, 417.

Teaching students how to be self-aware about their own prejudiced thoughts was the fundamental lesson involved in the psychological approach to race. This 1956 textbook about the current individual and social issues of its time taught students that the social issue of prejudice and discrimination was rooted in the hearts and minds of individuals who were responsible for fixing themselves, which would contribute to American unity and the promotion of the general welfare. According to this book, individuals could change their thoughts through knowledge and adjustments to their attitudes and behaviors, if they recognized their own feelings. The textbook highlighted the importance of self-awareness through a discussion of those that were not self-aware. According to the authors, those that did not recognize their own prejudiced thoughts considered themselves “tolerant.” The textbook declared, “one thing you will notice is that many people do not know they have [prejudices]. When we come to the kinds of prejudices we are especially dealing with in this chapter, these people are very likely to insist that they are ‘tolerant.’”⁶³ At the end of World War II, tolerance teachings, rooted in the biological concept of race were applauded. In 1956, the high school seniors of 1945 would have been about 29-years-old. This generation whose teachers stressed racial tolerance was likely teaching the high school seniors of 1956. The tolerance approach taught that the differences among racial groups did not mean that racial groups were socially equal, but that every group deserved an equal opportunity to achieve. The psychological approach emphasized that feeling superior because of these differences was not accurate. In just eleven years, education not only abandoned the tolerance approach but began to outright reject it in textbooks. Obviously, society and racial perceptions were changing rapidly and drastically. Clearly, intellectual activists and educators continued to adapt the approach to the needs of society considering the geopolitical and domestic context. In

⁶³ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 418.

this case, this 1956 textbook represented a clear change in the approach to teaching about prejudice, discrimination, and race.

The final section of this textbook's crucial chapter highlighted two vital problems: discrimination based on religious differences and discrimination based on race.⁶⁴ Although typically an explicit discussion of race was avoided, this textbook's authors decided to engage it but not without caution. The theories surrounding the psychological approach were still present in this discussion. The textbook's introduction to this section explained that up until this point the authors had purposely neglected an overt discussion of race to protect students' feelings. According to the book, "Thus far in the chapter, we have tried to deal with discrimination—that very controversial subject—in an impersonal sort of way. The idea has been to begin with instances and examples that are so general that no one would be embarrassed or ill at ease in discussing them."⁶⁵ This quote emphasized the attention paid to the psyches of all students, which contributed to the effort of promoting American unity. While educators were concerned about the effects of explicit racial teachings on the psyches of all students, the textbook authors justified the book's discussion of race by claiming that the race problem was too serious to ignore.

While this 1956 textbook overtly discredited the tolerance approach to teaching about race, which was common at the end of World War II, it did return to the biological concept of race that was also popular at the end of the second world war. In its single column about race, the 1956 textbook returned to the biological concept of race. The authors wrote, "*Race* refers to large divisions of mankind with biologically inherited physical differences."⁶⁶ The psychological

⁶⁴ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 419.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 418.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 419.

approach to race supported the notion that trivial differences among groups did not warrant inferior or superior feelings. Returning to the seemingly unbiased, biological concept trivialized physical differences among racial groups. After a few sentences of how races blended due to advancements in technology and transportation, the book explained why different races looked differently. The passage declared that “Then isolated groups developed different physical characteristics such as skin color, the shape of head and nose, and hair texture. These characteristics were transmitted biologically from generation to generation.”⁶⁷ To further feature the return to this scientific approach, the textbook mentioned the teachings from the “Primer on Human Race,” written in 1947. The textbook cited the primer when the authors wrote, “Today there are three large racial groups. Mongolian, Negroid, and Caucasian. These groups are distinguished largely by differences in skin color, and they are sometimes referred to as the yellow, black, and white races.”⁶⁸ In the next sentence, the authors related the psychological approach to this scientific one. According to the textbook, “Scientists have concluded that racial characteristics do not determine individual personality or competence.”⁶⁹ This single sentence was the premise of the psychological approach. Racism was not rooted in the concept of race but the individual psyche. The way the authors of this book combined new social and old biological sciences to combat racial prejudice represented how education adapted and evolved to fit within the context of the then current society and its larger influences.

Although the beginning of the textbook’s section about race claimed that the problem of race in America was too great to ignore, the authors failed to discuss the current problem. Instead, the book emphasized “Negro” progress. Here the writers echoed the exact message that

⁶⁷ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 419.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 420.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

U.S officials wanted. The passage about “Negroes” began by mentioning that their struggle began with slavery and had since progressed, immensely. According to the textbook, “Negros, when given the opportunity, have excelled in all areas of American life.”⁷⁰ While this passage did mention slavery, it quickly shifted the discussion to one of progress and eliminated the long struggle between

slavery and the current treatment of the group. In a more explicit manner, the book claimed, “We are making progress in the matter of discrimination for religious reasons. And we are also making progress in overcoming discrimination on the score of color or race.”⁷¹ To emphasize the extent

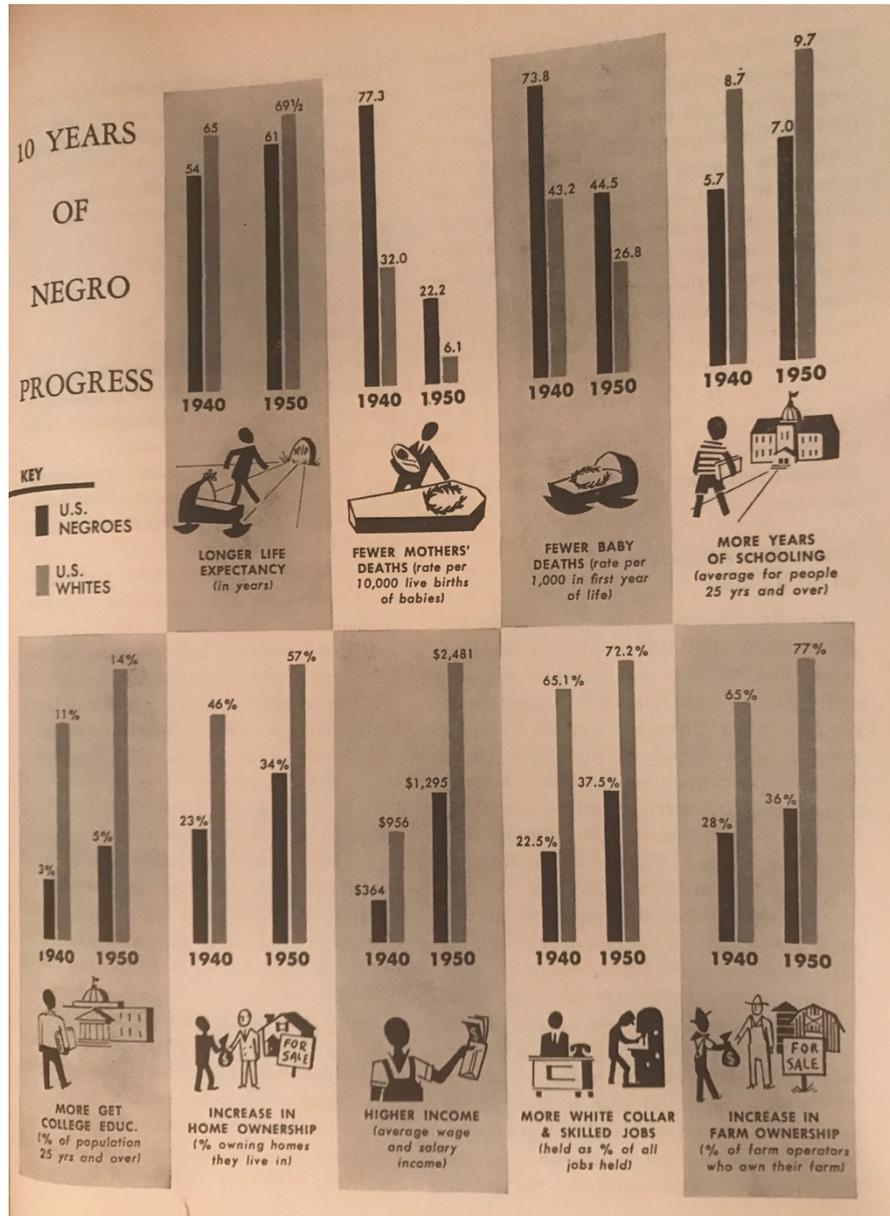


Figure 1: 10 Years of Negro Progress. Babcock et al., *American Values*, 421.

⁷⁰ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 420.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 422.

of “Negro” progress in America, the textbook offered a visual comparison of progress between “U.S. Negroes” and “U.S. Whites” from 1940 to 1950. This chart emphasized “White” progress as much as “Negro” progress. In this way, the book reiterated American progress, in general, but highlighted the inequalities that still existed between the groups without acknowledging them as a problem. The textbook did admit that “Racial discrimination has become one of the most important problems in intergroup relations in the United States.”⁷² However, instead of discussing current discrimination problems, the textbook focused on the unequal progress of American “whites” and “Negroes.”

The text’s focus on the advancement of “Negroes” throughout history fit within the Cold War context’s political push to prove racial prejudice was diminishing in the U.S and that African American’s status was improving. The book even cited and warned about the international attention to racial prejudice. It declared, “Any indications of discrimination on our part are played up by communists and by those who agitate against the United States. Leadership, or even friendly alliance, becomes difficult when we have and display strong prejudices against minority groups.”⁷³ The sections following this quote discussed the international repercussions of race and the idea that discrimination was expensive for all Americans in terms of the idea that “discrimination is not good business.”⁷⁴ The textbook listed seven reasons for “How we Pay for Discrimination.”

1. It lowers our national production
2. It hampers the conduct of our foreign affairs and lessens the effectiveness of our world leadership.
3. It lessens national unity, and reduces minority incentive to abide by our laws, customs, and practices.
4. It deprives our culture of the full contributions of the partially excluded groups.

⁷² Babcock et al., *American Values*, 420.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 422.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

5. It contributes to the growth of slums and endangers health, physical and mental.
6. It raises the costs of police, fire, health, and welfare programs.
7. It is contrary to the basic principles stated in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and therefore weakens the fabric of the American way of life.⁷⁵

These reasons highlighted the concerns of American society in the context of the Cold War. For these reasons, the book claimed, discrimination needed to be addressed by all people, on both sides of the issues because “One thing we must recognize, as we begin to understand this problem, is that both sides have attitudes and that these attitudes can change and be changed.”⁷⁶ However, as the book claimed, America was making slow progress in the battle of racial prejudice.

The Kansas, high school senior social studies textbook, *American Values and Problems Today: The Social and Individual Problems of Today's World Considered from the Viewpoint of Youth in Democracy* *American Values and Problems Today*, published in 1956, did represent the newest approach to teaching about discrimination, prejudice, and race. This textbook embraced the psychological approach to race that separated it from social institutions and taught students how to be self-aware of their own prejudiced thoughts and adjust them. The book rejected tolerance teachings because they were not successful but returned to the biological concept of race while making sure to point out that racism was not rooted in race but the individual. This book was one of the first to be used in Kansas classrooms after desegregation, so it began to tackle the challenges of teaching to a desegregated classroom. The approach to prejudice, discrimination, and race in this textbook, represented an idealistic approach, but its ambiguity and contradictions did not even begin to explain the Little Rock crisis and its section on

⁷⁵ Babcock et al., *American Values*, 422.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 426.

“progress” could not account for the Bus Boycott in Montgomery. The textbook’s writers did their best to explain the rapidly and dramatically changing society in terms of race in America. However, they were forced to engage in a complex dance of recognition and evasion. Students were forced to form their own perceptions of race within the contradictions represented by this textbook, the Federal government’s progressive frame, and the harsh domestic reality of prevalent racial prejudice. As the country transitioned out of the 1950s and into the early 1960s, Cold War tensions intensified and the Civil Rights Movement gained more momentum than ever before.

Chapter 3: We Are In ‘The Big Circle’⁷⁷ (1960s-1970s)

“Go beyond the group label—see the worth of the individual. Go beyond prejudice and try for understanding and cooperation. ‘United we stand, divided we fall’ is more than a motto; it is a formula, a warning, and the essence of the challenge in intergroup relations.”⁷⁸ The student who read this sentence was a baby boomer. He was born after World War II and while he probably did not know it yet, he would qualify for the draft in just a few short years. His role in defending democracy against communism would be active and dangerous. His individual contribution to America would determine whether the country stood or fell. This student and his fellow classmates would develop the chapter of the American story that included shocking assassinations, the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, and the first man on the moon. This 1958 high school senior textbook, *Challenges to American Youth*, challenged students to individually go beyond and strive for greatness. Expand your circle, the book warned, and America will prosper. This textbook’s advice was more personal and more direct, than its predecessors, but a vague ambiguity surrounding race persisted.

In the early 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was gaining a new kind of momentum that threatened the country’s international image. John F. Kennedy was inaugurated in 1961 and immediately forced to handle critical international crises such as the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Civil rights activists in America propelled the movement into a new phase, in which nonviolent methods of protest and civil disobedience were embraced. Nonviolent protest methods such as sit-ins, boycotts, and freedom rides warranted international criticism because of the violent methods anti-civil rights groups used to resist them. Kennedy was concerned with the

⁷⁷ Joseph Irvin Arnold and Harlan A. Philippi, *Challenges to American Youth* (Evanston, III: Row, Peterson, 1958), 123.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

negative consequences that this violent backlash to civil rights had on America's image considering the Cold War had escalated into an aggressive arms race. Not only did the international criticism magnify America's issue of racial prejudice, it began to highlight the American systems inability to maintain law and order. Kennedy was forced to align with the Civil Rights Movement because he needed to prove he was a competent leader and that democracy was sustainable. According to Dudziak, "Because federal rights were at stake, because law and order demanded it, because it had an impact on his image as a national leader, because it harmed U.S. prestige abroad, Kennedy would find himself increasingly involved in civil rights."⁷⁹ Kennedy also had to engage in this complex dance between recognition and evasion. To maintain America's role as a hegemony, he had to placate civil rights activists and stop the violent resistance to the movement.⁸⁰

Towards the end of the decade, international criticism was more focused on American violence and the country's involvement in Vietnam than the issue of race. Kennedy managed the international criticism in the first few years of the sixties, but his shocking assassination left Lyndon B. Johnson to work out the challenges associated with the complex issue of American racism. Johnson would be remembered as a proponent of the Civil Rights Movement for his role in passing legislation that made discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin unlawful. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 provided concrete evidence that the Federal government did not support discrimination or prejudice. With legislation designed to protect civil rights in place, solving racial prejudice became a matter of law and order opposed to a social issue that could be solved using psychological methods.

⁷⁹ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 162.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 154.

Considering the absence of international attention to the issue of race in America and new civil rights legislation, attention to the American dilemma of race diminished. While these pieces of legislation framed America's racial prejudice issue as one of progress, racial equality was far from solved.⁸¹

By the middle of the decade, the violence surrounding race had escalated. President Johnson assembled the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission, in 1967 to investigate and explain the violent, urban unrest. The commission visited the cities in which race riots occurred, surveyed participants and witnesses, and consulted experts. The commission's basic conclusion was that "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."⁸² The authors warned, once again, that this racial division threatened the progress of American democracy. To solve this issue, the commission recommended that the Federal government enact programs designed to eliminate the "urban ghetto" that white Americans created, maintained, and condoned. Specifically, the report recommended, "Opening up opportunities to those who are restricted by racial segregation and discrimination, and eliminating all barriers to their choices of jobs, education, and housing."⁸³ However, when Richard Nixon took office in 1969, he chose not to enact such programs as suggested by the Kerner Commission.

In terms of education during the 1960s, the domestic debate continued to be centered around the challenges of school desegregation. The *Brown* decision sparked the school desegregation movement but provided nothing in terms of implementation. According to Sugrue,

⁸¹ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 248.

⁸² United States, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. [Washington]: [For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt. Print. Off.] 1968.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 22.

“The inadequacies and the possibilities of the *Brown* decision sparked an extraordinary wave of grassroots protest, school boycotts, and litigation. Activists and renegade attorneys--and the NAACP itself--began to challenge the boundaries between de facto and de jure segregation.”⁸⁴ Legally, schools could not remain segregated, but in many Northern cases, school districts remained segregated based heavily on residential politics. Neighborhoods developed based on group identities. Since school district boundaries were determined by neighborhoods, schools remained segregated, but not because school districts were forcing segregation. African American neighborhoods were typically lower income, so their “neighborhood” schools were overcrowded and underfunded. In this manner, educational and social inequality persisted despite the *Brown* decision. This situation engaged the debate about the *de facto* versus *de jure* segregation. Legally, school segregation did not exist, in fact, it was prevalent. The Kerner Commission acknowledged the persistent educational inequality. The authors wrote, “But for many minorities, and particularly for the children of the ghetto, the schools have failed to provide the educational experience which could overcome the effects of discrimination and deprivation.”⁸⁵ The Commission suggested that the Federal government could fix this issue through federal funding and increased effort to end *de facto* segregation. However, the commission’s suggestions were not enacted. Determining what *Brown* and school desegregation meant was a grassroots effort advanced by the protests of parents, students, and civil rights activists. One major concern of this bottom-up reform movement was the curriculum.⁸⁶

Activists began criticizing textbooks that neglected to discuss minority groups’ role in America and promoted the use of racial epithets. The push for minority inclusion in school

⁸⁴ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 199.

⁸⁵ United States, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*.

⁸⁶ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.

textbooks was not new, but in the context of American society during the 1960s and the slow process of desegregating schools, it gained recognition. Berkeley history professor, Kenneth Stampf, Berkeley history professor, spearheaded the so-called “textbook revolution” and worked with intellectuals associated with the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to design a curriculum that incorporated up-to-date works in African American history. There was another more radical movement that campaigned for much more extreme inclusion. This group argued that students should be completely immersed in black history and culture and that white teachers could not accurately teach this history. While this approach gained some recognition in inner-city schools, most school districts began to adjust the curriculum more moderately. The curriculum debate discussion began in the mid-1960s, and by the end of the decade, schools were beginning to adapt to it by publishing materials about how to be more inclusive. Textbooks were much slower to respond to a more inclusive curriculum than the publications of local school districts.⁸⁷

Kansas was among the states with educational publications that promoted a more inclusive curriculum. In 1969, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) published the “Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies into the Curriculum of Kansas Schools.” The KSDE published these guidelines with assistance from the Kansas Commission on Civil Rights (KCCR). The KCCR was formed in 1953 when the Kansas Act Against Discrimination was first passed. This act prohibited discriminatory practices based on race, religion, color, national origin, or ancestry. In 1961, the act was amended to become an enforceable law. Kansas was the twelfth state to have enforceable regulation against discrimination, even before the Federal

⁸⁷ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 473.

government.⁸⁸ The KCCR highlighted the effectiveness of education as a tool for eliminating racial prejudice and discrimination in Kansas in its newsletter, the *Reflector*, since it first formed in 1953. In 1960, the *Reflector* reported that the KCCR budget had been expanded to provide for the hiring of an educational director “to help with the 100 years of educational work ahead to end prejudice and discrimination in the great state of Kansas.”⁸⁹ Ernest Russell was appointed the first Educational Director to the KCCR, and he encouraged the collaboration between the KCCR and KSDE for the publication of the guidelines. Although the guidelines were not used as a classroom textbook, they are worth evaluating as a supplement to the textbook discussion.

The guidelines showed that Kansas was reacting and adjusting to the push for minority inclusion, despite the textbooks used in the decade that were not as up-to-date. According to the guidelines, public education in Kansas was designed to be flexible and foster open conversation. The first sentence of the guideline’s policy statement was, “The State Department of Education believes that the elementary and secondary curriculum should deal realistically with the persistent issues of American society.”⁹⁰ In the next sentence the persistent American issue was connected to race when the authors wrote, “Consequently, the department believes that an open, rational, examination of information about minority groups and human relations, conducted in a spirit of free exchange of ideas, is a valuable experience for students and an essential one if they are to be prepared to assume their role as participating members of a democracy.”⁹¹ Students were still being taught that their role in defending democracy was connected to solving the issue

⁸⁸ “Records of the Kansas Commission on Civil Rights - State Archives - Kansas Historical Society,” 1993.

⁸⁹ Kansas Anti-Discrimination Commission, “Educational Director,” *Reflector*, (Topeka, KS), March 1960.

⁹⁰ Kansas State Dept. of Education, Topeka. *Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies in to the Curriculum of Kansas Schools (Preliminary Edition)*, 1969, 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 4.

of racial prejudice. This notion remained consistent throughout the years following the end of World War II because Cold War tensions were consistent. However, these guidelines did present a new approach to teaching about prejudice and discrimination that combined all the approaches to teaching race from 1945 to 1970. According to the authors, “Tolerance, open-mindedness, respect for the rights of individuals, although difficult concepts to teach because they stem from feelings rather than facts, are attitudes essential to the health of this nation’s democracy.”⁹² The psychological approach is referenced by acknowledging feelings and the tolerance approach is clearly referenced. The people writing these guidelines would have probably lived through all the different approaches, so they were most likely combining all the lessons from their past.

The authors of these guidelines also introduced a new type of racism that they believed was the then current state of American racism to help teachers further their understanding of racial and ethnic groups. In Part II, the authors included an essay written by the assistant director of the KCCR, Joseph Doherty, titled “Institutional Racism in American Society.” In this article, Doherty connected the Kerner Commission’s notion of “white racism” to “institutional racism.” He emphasized that “institutional racism” was self-perpetuating, psychological, unconscious, and devastating. He argued that white children were born into a society in which white was equated with good and black with bad. According to Doherty, “The child’s incorrect images of blacks and whites are systematically reinforced and an unfortunate foundation is laid upon which he will build many of his adult racial attitudes.”⁹³ This article was published in the Kansas guidelines to encourage teachers to recognize that they already possessed these unconscious racial attitudes. By recognizing this notion of “institutional racism” teachers could work to make

⁹² KSDE, *Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies*, 7.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 20.

sure they did not instill the same kind of unconscious beliefs in their students when they were facilitating conversations of minority history and heritage.

The guidelines also recognized that teachers were ill-equipped to foster an open conversation about race because not only had teachers already developed unconscious perceptions of race, they had never been taught about different minorities. Teachers lacked the necessary education about different minority groups because minorities had been neglected from education for so long. According to the authors, “Because the strands regarding the involvement of such groups as American Negroes, Indians, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans have been largely omitted from textbooks and literature, few teachers have been aware of the need to supplement this material from other sources for the courses they teach.”⁹⁴ The authors’ rationale for why the omission occurred in the first place is particularly telling of the perception of race in education in 1969. The guidelines offered three schools of thought for why minority groups were typically neglected in education. The first was that the omission was “part of a deliberate plan to clear from the pages of American history the guilt of conquest of Indian lands, slavery of imported Africans, and exploitation of all such peoples.”⁹⁵ This explanation echoed the “scapegoat” theory behind discrimination, from the 1956 textbook, but finally admitted that Americans were trying to escape guilt. The second rationale from the guidelines about the omission was, “not mentioning minorities’ part in history was a subconscious burial of a sense of guilt, accompanied by the rationalization that a darker-skinned person is thicker-skinned and does not experience equal physical or emotional pain, love, ambition, or intellectual activity.”⁹⁶ This rationale related to the psychological theory because this theory taught that everyone’s

⁹⁴ KSDE, *Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies*, 8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*.

feelings were valid and equal. Finally, the third explanation for the omission was that historical writers neglected minorities because of an unintentional oversight. The guidelines argued that this was where society was now. In the society of 1969, there was no ill-intent behind the current omission, but because of the historical neglect, it persisted. However, it was time to begin incorporating an inclusive curriculum. The authors of the guidelines warned, “It is disturbingly reminiscent of the novel 1984 to realize in a time of such tremendous influence of the mass media that manipulation or oversight in recording history can have such far-reaching and devastating effects eventually.”⁹⁷

After the explicit explanation of the past omissions and a warning of their dangers, the guidelines began to offer specific recommendations for how to develop an inclusive curriculum. First, the authors acknowledged that teachers needed to educate themselves by reading journals, newsletters, research reports, book reviews, and books for their own background knowledge.⁹⁸ Then the authors specifically acknowledged the limitation of textbooks. According to the guidelines, “A variety of up-to-date instructional materials, rather than a single type, can be used to compensate for the inadequacies of textbooks, organized to fit into existing courses, and used to provide for the complexity of needs, individual differences, experiences, and interests of the students.”⁹⁹ In the appendix, the guidelines offer recommendations for biographies, novels, poetry, reference books, newspaper and magazine articles, films, filmstrips, records, tapes, photographs, and pictures that teachers could use to supplement their teachings about minority groups and facilitate free discussion in the classroom. This free discussion was designed to “lead students forward foundations of knowledge and opinion that will help them think critically about

⁹⁷ KSDE, *Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies*, 6.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

social issues, investigate various approaches, and apply policy-making and problem-solving skills.”¹⁰⁰ However, the guidelines did warn that when adopting this new curriculum it was likely that teachers would face resistance from students and parents because “it is hard to abandon a long held belief or image, and the image of minorities has been a degrading one formed by histories, textbooks, and mass media.”¹⁰¹

The Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies into the Curriculum of Kansas Schools, published in 1969, encouraged an approach to teaching about race that involved explicit racial teachings, using supplemental primary sources to further students’ understandings of minority groups and acknowledge the heritage of minority groups. While this approach shifted away from the “colorblind” approach and embraced explicit racial teachings, the theories of the psychological approach persisted. According to the guidelines, “Any cursory observation or surface explanation without the assistance of sociology and psychology and without direct, genuine communication with members of other groups is probably over-simplified and untrue.”¹⁰² The authors of the guidelines acknowledged the inadequacies of textbooks concerning these teachings. These inadequacies were certainly present in the common social studies textbook of the time. However, there were a few differences represented in the more recent textbook that proved textbooks were somewhat beginning to adapt to the more inclusive and explicit approach represented in the Kansas guidelines.

The relinquishment of the colorblind approach and the persistent psychological approach to teaching about race was apparent in the textbook, *Challenges to American Youth*, which was

¹⁰⁰ KSDE, *Guidelines for Integrating Minority Group Studies*, 12.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 7.

approved for use in Kansas classrooms throughout the sixties.¹⁰³ Chapter 7 of this book was titled, “Intergroup Relations.” This was the same term used in the 1956 textbook, which represents how little textbooks changed and how they continued to adopt this ambiguous term. The chapter began with a story about a little girl talking to her parents on the way home from visiting her extended family. She realized that she loved her family because every one of her family members was so different and they all had different strengths and weaknesses, yet, they all had so much fun together. The little girl’s father told her he was happy that she loved her family and that she appreciated them for each one’s individual characteristics. Then, he told her that she should think of America as her family and that she should love America because of all different contributions made by individuals. This light-hearted story between a little girl and her father set the mood for the chapter that planned to discuss “intergroup relations.”

At first, this passage resembles the previous examples of “colorblindness” from the early 1950s, but there was one explicit difference, which represented the societal shift of racial perceptions. At the end of the opening story, the father told his daughter that, “One of the big reasons that America is a great nation is the fact that we have so many different kinds of people in it. We have various races and many nationalities and cultures represented—white people and Negroes, Hews and Gentiles, and people from just about every nation on earth.”¹⁰⁴ This opening story highlighted the “American family” and broke from the colorblind approach by explicitly mentioning race and “Negroes.” However, this quote is a representation of how the psychological theory that not discussing racial differences protected students from inferior feelings persisted somewhat. The chapter opened by highlighting the “American family” and

¹⁰³ KSDE, *Textbooks Suitable for Use in Kansas Schools*.

¹⁰⁴ Arnold et al., *Challenges to American Youth*, 108.

“common needs and goals” because framing the rest of the discussion about “intergroup relations” as such allowed teachers to protect the psyche of their students, which was important after the *Brown* decision that spurred the reliance on psychology to combat racial prejudice and even more important in terms of a desegregated classroom. Regarding the issue of racial prejudice, the book began by claiming, “emphasizing differences and sharpening group lines can cause serious trouble for all groups and can block progress toward reaching common goals.”¹⁰⁵ The combination of a new approach mixed with older approaches to teaching about race is a prime example of the slow and subtle shift in racial perceptions represented in textbooks, but a shift nonetheless.

Another hint at a more inclusive approach in this more recent textbook was in the definitions of race and nationality. The father in the opening story of this textbook pointed to the idea that America has various races and nationalities. After the column about “dangers in drawing group lines,” the next two subheadings were nationality groups and racial groups. The book’s focus on the difference between the two groups represented a shift away from the colorblind approach, which grouped what this more recent textbook defined as separate. This book defined nationality groups as, “the people of a nation.”¹⁰⁶ The rest of the discussion about nationality groups in the textbook was centered around the criticism each group received and claimed that offered examples of “name-calling” used to make each group feel inferior, representing the persistence of a psychological approach to the issue. Also, the book referenced the teachings of the psychological approach when it emphasized that, “Mistaken impressions frequently grow up concerning the abilities of people in one racial group as compared with those

¹⁰⁵ Arnold et al., *Challenges to American Youth*, 108.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

of people in another racial group.”¹⁰⁷ However, unlike the Kansas guidelines, the textbook reverted to an example that did not acknowledge America. The authors used an example of how Nazi’s mistakenly developed the abilities of people in one racial group. According to the textbook, “During the Nazi regime in Germany, the Nazis considered the ‘German race’ – the so-called Aryan race – to be the superior race.”¹⁰⁸ The authors continued that the Aryan race was based on psychical characteristics such as height and hair and eye color. However, Hitler’s own physical characteristics did not even match those of the Aryan race he described.¹⁰⁹ Teaching about racial groups using Hitler’s Aryan race allowed teachers to avoid an uncomfortable conversation about current examples of race in America and protect their students’ psyches. However, this example did represent the idea that using psychical characteristics to judge racial groups’ abilities was inaccurate by emphasizing that Hitler’s own physical characteristics did not even fit those of his “superior race.” Following this Nazi example, the textbook claimed, “When an individual or a group is superior in some way, this superiority may be related to culture or location rather than to membership in a certain race.”¹¹⁰ This quote highlighted the distinction between the concepts of race and culture, which had been blurred since the beginning of the Cold War. This was another representation of the continued persistence of the psychological approach. The authors emphasized that culture affected personality, skill, education, and customs but that these characteristics did not determine racial groups. In this way, the book taught that it was not valid to judge someone of a different race based on the way their abilities. Although this lesson was similar to the way the 1956 textbook approached race, this more recent textbook emphasized

¹⁰⁷ Arnold et al., *Challenges to American Youth*, 108.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 108-109.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 108.

the inaccuracy of prejudice based on physical appearance just a little more than the older book by distinguishing the differences between race and culture.

In accordance with the civil rights activists' push for minority inclusion in textbooks, this textbook included a brief passage about African American history and culture. Under the heading "Some American Groups" was the subheading labeled "The American Negroes." The text about the "American Negro" consisted of approximately two columns. The two columns were divided into short paragraphs about economic status, social status, education, and contributions. Within each section, the "status of Negroes" was framed as one of progress. What makes this textbook different from previous books was the four sentences about "Negro" contributions were framed positively. The book mentioned the contributions of the agricultural chemist, George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute, Marian Anderson, the singer, and Ralph Bunche, who won the Nobel Prize for peace. Accompanying the contributions section was a picture of George Washington Carver. The textbook did not recognize any of the contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, but the inclusion of these four noteworthy African Americans represented the attempt at a better inclusion of African Americans' cultural contributions in textbooks. The book did not mention any negative aspects of "American Negroes" societal status. Although, in the pages that followed the "American Negro" section, the issues

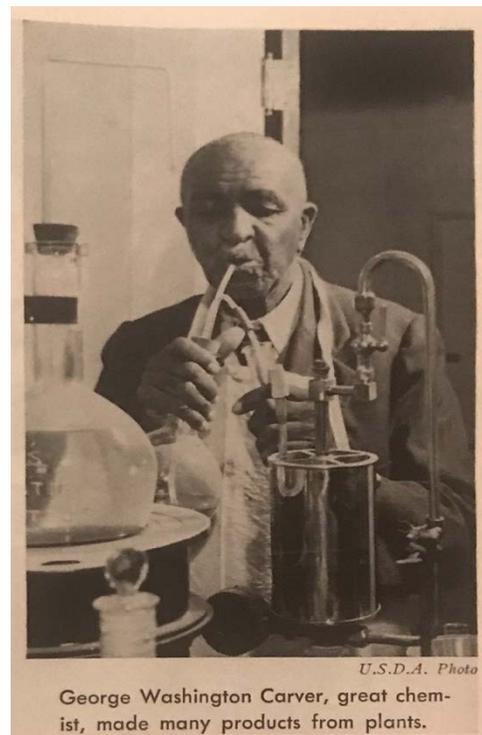


Figure 2: U.S.D.A. Photo. Arnold et al., *Challenges to American Youth*, 113.

surrounding other American groups, such as, immigrants, American Jews, and American Indians were mentioned. Avoiding the mention of any problems surrounding “American Negroes” was to protect the feelings of these students who were now in the same classroom as the white students, considering the shift to psychological problems associated with racial prejudice. Desegregation changed the classroom climate and presented teachers with new challenges when teaching about race. This textbook was slightly more inclusive of minority groups than that of the 1956 textbook. However, the differences between the two books were slight and subtle. The Kansas Guidelines represented a much more radical approach to the push for a more inclusive curriculum.

In a different textbook, published in 1970, titled *American History for Today*, racial tensions were approached within the discussion of the Civil War, which implied that both issues were in America’s past. In total, this 583-page book dedicated exactly 50 pages to the Civil War and Reconstruction. The book was organized by grand, over-arching themes. The chapter about race relations and the Civil War was titled “The Nation Divided.” Within this chapter, the text was broken up by a question followed by a few paragraphs that answered the question. One of these questions was, “What was the single most important fact about slavery.”¹¹¹ The answer to this question, offered by the textbook was, “That single fact was that only Negroes were still slaves. The problem of slavery was really a problem in race relations.”¹¹² Rooting race relations within slavery, which had been abolished, suggested that racial tensions were also part of America’s past. A more inclusive curriculum promoted teachings about the history and heritage of minority groups in America, but it eliminated explicit teachings about discrimination,

¹¹¹ Margaret Branson and Edward E. France, *American History for Today*, [Boston]: Ginn, 1970, 229.

¹¹² Ibid.

prejudice, and “intergroup” relations in America. The only mention of the current racial situation was, “The problem of race relations, or of blacks and whites living together in peace, has not yet been solved.”¹¹³ This quote acknowledged that the issue of race relations was still present, but did not attribute the problem to prejudice or discrimination. The Federal government’s civil rights legislation and a lack of international criticism to the American issue of racial prejudice allowed the issue to be considered one of the past. Although racial tensions continued to persist, the American dilemma of race was no longer considered one of discrimination but of law and order. This more recent textbook did reflect this notion of racial progress, but it did not include explicit teachings of minority groups’ history or heritage. This is a clear example of how inadequate the textbooks were in responding to a more inclusive curriculum, which is why the KSDE recommended supplemental materials for its teachers.

¹¹³ Branson et al., *American History for Today*, 231.

Conclusion

“In an age that is often crisis-laden and chaotic, an understanding of our Western heritage and its lessons can be instrumental in helping us create new models for the future. For we are all creators of history, and the future of Western and indeed world civilization depends on us.”¹¹⁴ Today, the eighteen-year-old boy reading this sentence in his textbook, *Western Civilization*, published in 2016, was born in 2000. He was twelve-years-old when America elected its first African American president, Barack Obama. He debates the achievements and legacy of LeBron James with his friends during lunch and he most likely celebrates Black History month every February. He also watched the race riots in Ferguson, Missouri and white supremacist rallies in Charlottesville, Virginia on the news. Despite these advancements, racial tensions continue to exist in America. No one knows what part of the American story current high school seniors will contribute to. Just like their predecessors, though, the young boys and girls of America today continue to bear the responsibility of creating the future of America and world civilization, according to their textbooks.

In 1944, social scientist, Gunnar Myrdal, emphasized the idea that education was the key to eradicating racial prejudice because Americans were rational and moral, and so the young boys and girls of America became responsible for writing an American story that did not include racial prejudice. Educators, intellectuals, and social activists took up the responsibility to solve this issue in the classroom. The textbooks evaluated, in this thesis, from 1945 to 1970 represent how educators attempted to adjust racial perceptions through education in the context of the Cold War and the American Civil Rights Movement. Over the twenty-five years following the end of

¹¹⁴ Jackson J Spielvogel, *Western Civilization, 9th Student Edition, 9th Edition*, Cengage Learning K12, 20150629, VitalBook file, 2016, 958.

the second world war, the approach to teaching about racial prejudice transitioned from tolerance teachings rooted in science to neglecting explicit racial teachings and celebrating European immigrants' contributions to American culture. This shift occurred in response to Cold War tensions and the American governments attempt to prove racial prejudice was improving on an international scale. Then, the *Brown* decision forced schools to start desegregating and a psychological approach that continued to neglect explicit racial teachings was adopted. However, the Civil Rights Movement allowed for more aggressive domestic criticism of race in the curriculum and educators began to react by publishing supplemental teaching materials to account for the teacher and textbook limitations to minority inclusion. The textbooks of this time represented how racial perceptions shifted between 1945 and 1970. However, due to textbook limitations such as publication and adoption rates, these textbooks struggled to stay up-to-date in a society that was rapidly and dramatically changing. For this reason, it was necessary to evaluate supplemental teaching materials alongside textbooks in every case except immediately after the *Brown* decision when schools adopted new textbooks for an obvious reason.

Despite activists, intellectuals, and educators' best efforts to eradicate racial prejudice in America between 1945 and 1970, racial tensions continue to exist in contemporary America. While racism is deeply rooted in American society, part of the explanation for why Americans did not make as much progress in addressing the problems of discrimination or prejudice owes to the limits of antiracist educational efforts. And, those limits, as this thesis showed, can be attributed, in part, to the inherent limitations of textbooks, which continue to be a key educational tool. While these inherent limitations might have blocked education's goal of eliminating racial prejudice in the past, this idea does offer hope for the future role of textbooks in solving not only racial prejudice, but other social issues.

Obviously, there are many differences between the textbooks of today and those of the twenty-five years after World War II. The most striking difference between the textbooks that have played such an outsized role in the American classroom in the past and the ones at use in the present is the format of the book itself. No longer do students turn pages; now they scroll, tap, and rotate their iPads or other tablets. Today, students do not even have to carry their books home to study or do homework. Gaining access to their textbooks involves registering with a website using a student ID and typing in an access code. These students instantly have access to their textbook whenever they need. They can highlight passages, search for key words, and save their place in the reading all by clicking around on their computers. Gone are the days when textbooks were handed out on the first day of class. Teachers no longer have to record the textbook number next to the student name to ensure the same book is returned at the end of the year. Students no longer rejoice in seeing a familiar name scrawled above theirs on the previous owner list. Technology provides many conveniences, but in the case of textbooks, the most important contribution is the ability to update textbooks almost instantly, eliminating the inherent textbook limitations of publication and adoption rates.

This change in format carries myriad implications, not all of them necessarily good. Consider the new American issue of digital distraction. But, in that simple, often-overlooked technological detail—the automatic update—the digital format holds a promise that bears on the history of antiracists educated sketched out in the proceeding pages. This downloaded app automatically checks to make sure that the textbook is up to date every time the student opens it. Digitizing textbooks presents opportunities unimaginable to the activists, intellectuals, and educators who dedicated their lives to eradicating racial prejudice through education and textbooks. These textbook limitations no longer exist, so maybe there is hope for the problem of

racial prejudice in America. The discussion of more recent textbooks will be greatly impacted by technological advancements. Hopefully, the textbooks of the future will prove to be more successful in eradicating racial prejudice than the textbooks of 1945 to 1970.

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