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The Pain and the Wounds: A Call for Critical Race English Education in the Wake of Racial Violence

For the kids who die are like iron in the blood of the people—
And the old and rich don’t want the people
To taste the iron of the kids who die,
Don’t want the people to get wise of their own power

The days of Black bodies hanging from trees and bearing the brunt of fire hoses have been supplanted with a contemporary form of racism covertly etched within the American fabric. The recent deaths of Black and Brown men and women, the forced disappearance of Indigenous youth, and the violence against transgender individuals “have generated new civil rights urgencies in Black and Brown communities and spirited academic discourse in higher educational spaces regarding the plight of people of color in America” (Johnson & Bryan, 2016). Therefore, we come to this project bearing soul wounds and heavy hearts, anxiety and anger, tears and fire. We sifted through a series of events and melded our wounds into a project that could heal us, our families, our communities, and Black, Brown, and other marginalized youth affected by racial violence. We sit with the heavy hauntings (Gordon, 1997, 2011) of Black and Brown death: photographs, videos, social media hashtags, well-known and underreported news stories. We reflect on Gordon’s (2011) conception of haunting, which he uses to “describe those singular and yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what’s been in your blind field comes into view” (p. 1). When we sat with the “repetitive instances” of young Black and
Brown lives lost within the streets, buildings, communities, and country they called home, the following is what came to view.

On May 3, 2010, while sleeping on the couch, 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones was shot and killed by Detroit police officer Joseph Weekley. On the night of February 26, 2012, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was killed by neighborhood watch member George Zimmerman as he walked from a convenience store to his father’s home. As she left a party on March 21, 2012, 22-year-old Rekia Boyd was shot by off-duty Chicago police detective Dante Servin. While listening to music with friends on November 23, 2012, 17-year-old Jordan Davis was shot and killed by Michael Dunn. On September 14, 2013, after being involved in a severe car accident, 24-year-old Jonathan Ferrell was shot and killed by North Carolina Police officer Randall Kerrick. Less than two months later on November 2, 19-year-old Renisha McBride was shot and killed in Dearborn, Michigan, by Theodore Wafer after knocking on his door and seeking help following a car accident she had near Wafer’s home. Jonathen Santellana, 17, was fatally shot on November 15, 2013, in Houston, Texas, by Rey Garza, an off-duty plain-clothes police officer, who suspected Santellana of having illegal drugs. On November 22, 2014, Cleveland police officer Timothy Loehmann shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice while he played with a toy gun outside of a Cleveland recreation center. While out driving with her friends on the morning of January 26, 2015, 17-year-old Jessica “Jessie” Hernandez died after Denver police opened fire on her car. On March 28, 2015, police shot and killed 26-year-old Megan Hockaday after entering her Oxnard, California, home. She was a mother of three. Alesia Thomas (July 22, 2012), Tanisha Anderson (November 12, 2014), Jennifer Lobato (March 2, 2015), and Sandra Bland (July 13, 2015) lost their lives while in police custody. On June 12, 2016, between 2:02 and 5:15 a.m., Omar Mateen entered Pulse—a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, frequented by LGBTQ persons of color—and killed 49 people, wounding at least 53 more. Ninety percent of those who died were “Hispanic or of Hispanic descent, including Mexican, Colombian and Dominican” (Alvarez & Madigan, 2016).

During the week that the United States celebrated the nation’s freedom from British colonial rule, we grappled with what it means to be Brown, Black, and American. On July 4, 2016, Delrawn Small was killed by police officers in Brooklyn, New York, after a “road rage” incident, and Alton Sterling was killed by police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, while selling CDs outside of a local convenience store. On the same day, San Jose police were called and asked to check on the welfare of 18-year-old Anthony Nuñez, who attempted to take his own life. This incident ended with police officers shooting and killing Nuñez when he reportedly pointed the handgun at
himself and then the officers (6 Latinos killed, 2016). Arizona police officers shot and killed 24-year-old mother of two Melissa Ventura in the doorway of her home in Yuma, Arizona, on July 5, 2016 (Weiss, 2016). The next day, Philando Castile was shot and killed by a police officer in Minnesota during a routine traffic stop. These deadly patterns of racial violence against Black and Brown people have prompted us to revisit Frederick Douglass’s (1852) well-known speech “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” We found ourselves questioning, “What, to Black and Brown Americans, is the Fourth of July?” We recognize that racial violence is part of a longer history. We still sit with the hauntings of the death of 14-year-old Emmett Till (August 28, 1955), 14-year-old Addie Mae Collins, 11-year-old Denise McNair, 14-year-old Carole Robertson, and 14-year-old Cynthia Wesley (September 15, 1963). But the most recent acts of racial violence make us question whether or not we are in the twenty-first century.

We are also aware that violence against Black and Brown bodies is not unique to the United States; rather, it spans across the globe. We recall the 147 predominantly Black victims who died in the mass shooting at Garissa University in Garissa, Kenya, on April 2, 2015 (Ellis, 2016), and the 86 who died after Boko Haram attacked in Dalori, Nigeria (Safdar, 2016). April 14, 2014, still haunts us as we think about the 230 Nigerian schoolgirls who are still missing after 270 were kidnapped from Chibok Government Secondary School by Boko Haram Terrorists in Nigeria. Similarly, we think about the forced disappearance of 43 young people from Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College (Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico) five months later on September 26, 2014. Many U.S. mainstream media outlets were silent on these matters, which is also a form of racial violence.

Certainly, race-based violence does not always end in death. On May 24, 2014, 15-year-old Monique Tillman was pulled off her bicycle, slammed to the ground, and tased by Tacoma police officer Jared Williams in a mall parking lot. We recall the YouTube video from June 5, 2015, that captured McKinney police officer Eric Casebolt pulling his gun on a group of Black teenagers at a pool party and slamming and pinning 15-year-old Dajerria Becton to the ground. We remember the violent arrest of 26-year-old elementary school teacher Breaion King, who was body-slammed by an Austin police officer on June 15, 2015, for traveling 15 mph over the speed limit. These incidents have prompted us to think about the question that was posed to W. E. B. DuBois (1905/1989): “How does it feel to be a problem?” (p. 6). We also wrestle with Harris-Perry’s (2013) rendition of DuBois’s question: What might it mean to “have your very body and the bodies of your children to be assumed to be criminal, violent, malignant?”
Our Stories Matter: Story-ing² Our Pain and Wounds

I hear the sound of human cry
from the soul through the heart
I hear the cries of brothers and sisters
of human love loss

—Carlos Raul Dufflar, “Amadou Diallo from Guinea to the Bronx Dead on Arrival,” 2001

On April 18, 2015, we sat outside of the Michigan State University’s (MSU) reception at the American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) annual meeting feeling a bit worn from the hustle and bustle of traveling, conferencing, and processing all that was going wrong in the world pertaining to Black and Brown people. April and Tamara began talking to Lamar about the Racial Violence Teach-In that they were hosting at Michigan State University in the fall. We went on to share our individual stories about what it meant to be Black daughters, a Black son, a Black mother, Black sisters, a Black brother, and Black U.S. citizens in the midst of racial turmoil. Although we could identify with each other’s wounds, what brought us together were our positionalities as Black English educators in the early stages of our careers and our participation in NCTE’s Cultivating New Voices program. In the section below, we recall the stories that we shared with one another. Our stories illustrate the many ways in which we were fractured, deeply wounded, and thirsty for healing.

April

On the night of Saturday, July 14, 2013, it felt like my heart skipped a beat when the words “George Zimmerman found not guilty of murder in Trayvon Martin’s death” scrolled across my TV screen. The next day, I broke down in tears at my 4-month-old son’s baby dedication. There I was, trying to celebrate and honor the life of my Black son, after being slapped with a fresh reminder that one day he will likely be racially profiled, stereotyped, and viewed as suspicious, threatening, bigger, and older than he actually is. As I tried to pull myself together, I noticed my daughter glancing at me. Her eyes were tight and worried as she watched me sob in despair—the same way that I watched angry tears roll down my father’s face when I was 10 years old after the killing of Malice Green at the hands of two White Detroit Police officers.

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On Sunday, November 2, 2014, Renisha McBride was shot and killed not even 10 miles from where I grew up. Exactly two weeks later, I learned
about the death of 12-year-old Tamir Rice—he was just four years older than my daughter. Two days later, prosecutors reported that the grand jury made a decision not to indict Darren Wilson in the death of Michael Brown. One week following that, the nation learned that Daniel Pantaleo was not indicted in the chokehold death of Eric Garner. I think I woke up every day during the months of November and December feeling dispirited, broken, and powerless. That semester, I taught an English education course to 17 preservice teachers who were mostly White, middle-class women. I chose not to engage them in conversations about the pain I was feeling, the ways in which my world was on fire, about the dehumanization of Black people, and the constant denial of our right to exist. As an English educator, I knew it was my responsibility to “take to the STREETS, [to] LOBBY and ADVOCATE STRONGLY, [to] PROTEST . . . to use the discipline to TRANSFORM THE WORLD!” (Morrell, 2005, p. 319). However, I was in need of healing, and teaching my preservice teachers that Black people are human, too, and our Black Lives Matter, too, would not have been healthy. In that moment, I could not afford to set my humanity aside while these preservice teachers unlearned anti-blackness, checked their privilege, and learned about the ways in which they benefit from white supremacy. I could not take another “all lives matter” or “if he/she didn’t _____, they wouldn’t have been killed” comment. That moment was not about them, it was about healing me.

Tamara

After celebrating the June and July birthdays of my nieces, nephews, uncle, great-aunts, godparents, and sister-friends, I looked forward to celebrating my birthday. Unfortunately, over the years, the summers have become bitersweet to me. Between 2013 and 2015, I struggled with the suffocating presence/closeness of death (much like Coretta Scott King’s words to her husband, Martin, in Ava DuVernay’s Selma). My sister-friend’s 29th birthday was July 12, 2013. On the same day, Fruitvale Station, documenting the life and death of 22-year-old Oscar Grant, was released in movie theaters. As the closing credits rolled and house lights came on, a Black woman’s wail broke the stillness and silence in the theater. No one on our row moved, except to pass our small package of Kleenex. Two days later (July 14), the day of the ruling in the George Zimmerman case, I avoided social media and televisions. Instead, I spent the day cleaning and running errands. A few hours before midnight, while sitting at a bar with a friend (whose birthday was the day after mine), I came face-to-face with what I had been avoiding all day: “Not
Editorial

Guilty” for the murder of Trayvon Martin. A year older, I drove home silent, numb, angry, and afraid.

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That fear would stir in my stomach as I listened to “breaking news” reports and scrolled through my Twitter feed on June 17, 2015. After telling my grandmother about the news, my mother returned to her bed with the remote control in her hand. I tried to drown out the echo of the newscaster coming from the living-room TV my grandmother was watching. We would learn that Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Myra Thompson, and Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney were shot after their weekly Bible study at Emanuel AME Church that evening. Felicia Sanders, Polly Sheppard, and Sheppard’s granddaughter continue to live with the trauma. Two hours prior to the shooting, I served as a Vacation Bible School teacher at my church on Johns Island (21 miles or so southwest of the Charleston peninsula where “Mother Emanuel” is located). The next day, I asked the five fifth- and sixth-grade students if they knew what happened the night before. Without hesitation, the students recounted the story. I was surprised and relieved that there was little fear in their dialogue—they asked questions, offered their commentary, and wanted to move on to another discussion. Once I left South Carolina that summer, I was still thinking about what it meant to talk about racial violence, the hauntings of Black death, and the reality of injustice with children and youth.

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On July 13, 2015, 28-year-old Sandra Bland was found dead in a jail cell in Waller County, Texas. Two days later, I celebrated my 31st birthday. When the sun was out and the temperatures were bearable, I rolled down my windows and turned up the volume as I listened to Kendrick Lamar’s Good Kid, m.a.a.d city. I played “Money Trees” on repeat to hear Kendrick declare, “The one in front of the gun lives forever.” Each time the line replayed, I saw the faces of young Black women—undergraduates and graduate students at Ohio State—who had taken their own lives after finding the pressures too much to bear. I saw the faces of young high school students I had taught in summer programs on life writing, youth activism, and civil rights. I reminisced on our conversations about Assata Shakur, Lolita LeBron, June Jordan, and Dorothy Height. I replayed our dialogue with a local ACLU volunteer about knowing your rights and interacting with police officers. While listening to Kendrick, I thought about my recent birthday wedged between recent deaths. As a newly minted professor, I wrestled with silence, anger, and fear: “Whose...
job is it to protect our children and ourselves? What is academia doing if it isn’t saving the lives of our children?”

Lamar

It was my first time meeting with my 23 White preservice teachers since the decision was made not to indict Officer Darren Wilson for the unjust killing of Michael Brown. I stood there feeling vulnerable and empty. The conversation I was about to have was pivotal because it reflected many of the class readings and our prior discussions around issues of race, racism, and power. I asked, “By show of hands, how many of you have been following Michael Brown’s story?” When they stared blankly at me, I supplied more information: “You know, the unarmed Black male teenager who was killed by a White male police officer, Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, Missouri.” A heavy silence came over the room. Only one White female preservice teacher raised her hand to affirm that she had been staying current on the 2014 Ferguson uprising. Immediately, the silence was disrupted by another young White female preservice teacher, who proudly and boldly stated, “I don’t know much about this particular case, but I followed the story of Trayvon Jackson.”

As I looked around the room, I thought to myself, I shouldn’t be surprised that the majority of you haven’t heard about or followed the recent events that are happening in Ferguson. Your privilege and whiteness protect you from having to know the names or the stories of Black people who have lost their lives to police brutality and white supremacy. I stood there disheartened, bruised, and on fire. My thoughts continued to race: For three months, I have been the only person of color present in this space. It is quite difficult to detach my Black male identity from who I am as a Black male English educator. Therefore, how can I discuss both of these racialized incidents with you as a way to help you recognize your unconsciousness and your privilege of not having to know or to care about the devaluation of Black lives? In that moment, I decided to release my repressed pain. I channeled the spirits of Black revolutionaries such as Frederick Douglass, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X. Glancing over the room, I took a deep breath, and I consciously stated,

I have developed an ongoing rage and anger, but this rage and anger should not be conflated with hate. I am angry at the fact that Black bodies were/are misread in society and the very sight of our Black bodies positions us as subservient, criminals, and inhuman. . . . I am angry that Black and Brown youth are losing their bodies to the hands of white supremacy. I have a right to be angry because white supremacy shields you from having the willingness to learn or to understand the many forms of racism. Not only does white supremacy protect you from seeing the
humanity in Black and Brown people, it also protects you from seeing the humanity within yourself. Furthermore, unintentionally and/or intentionally refusing to name and to recognize white supremacy and whiteness continues to hurt people of color. . . . I am angry because it has been three months since Michael Brown’s death. His death ignited national attention across different racial and ethnic communities and within higher educational spaces, such as this institution. . . . I am angry because two days ago, Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old Black male, was killed playing in the park in Cleveland, Ohio, just three hours away from here. At this moment, I want you to take a few minutes to think through the following question: What does it mean to be human in the twenty-first century?

In Need of Water: Call for Critical Race English Education

As Black English educators, we know that “the same racist brutality toward Black citizens that we see happening on the streets across the United States mirrors the violence toward Black students that is happening in our nation’s academic streets” (Baker-Bell, Jones Stanbrough, & Everett, 2017, p. 151). As coeditors of this issue, we think about what our society (on fire) and classrooms (thirsty) need. For us, both need to unlearn and engage in transformative conversations about anti-blackness, anti-brownness, homophobia, and other forms of xenophobia. To this, we offer what Lamar is calling Critical Race English Education, or CREE (as water). CREE stems from Morrell’s (2005) notion of Critical English Education, which is “explicit about the role of language and literacy in conveying meaning and in promoting or disrupting existing power relations” (p. 315). Lamar extends Morrell’s notion by centering race and racism in English education. More specifically, CREE is explicit about naming and dismantling white supremacy and anti-Black and anti-Brown racism. We use Lamar’s conception of CREE in this issue to raise the following question: What should be the responsibility of all English educators in the wake of terror, death, and racial violence? In asking this question, we realize that we, as educators, are complicit in some of these acts of racial violence when we ignore the pain and overlook the wounds that Black and Brown youth bear as they sit in our classrooms, trying to listen to us lecture while the viral footage of Black and Brown death is replaying in their minds. We also invoke racial violence on Black and Brown youth when we
don’t include literature that portrays Black and Brown people as heroes and victors. We invoke racial violence when we fail to portray Black and Brown women as heroines and activists. We invoke racial violence when we don’t affirm or sustain Black and Brown youths’ multiple languages and literacies in our classrooms. We invoke racial violence when we don’t cultivate critical media literacies that Black and Brown youth can use to critique, rewrite, and dismantle the damaging narratives that mainstream media has written about them. We invoke racial violence when we don’t provide opportunities for young people to speak back, to, and against racial oppression. Undoubtedly, racial violence is a manifestation of “interlocking” ideologies of white supremacy, anti-blackness, and anti-brownness that are perpetuated in our nation’s schools (Ferguson, 2000; Kirkland, 2013; Morris, 2015), classrooms, curriculum, and teacher education programs.

In this special issue, we provide various examples of what CREE looks like in English education and English language arts (ELA) classrooms. In “The Stories They Tell,” Baker-Bell, Jones Stanbrough, and Everett examine how mainstream media reinscribes and reinforces white supremacy, which leads to anti-blackness. They offer pedagogies of healing and critical media literacy as tools to encourage Black youth to investigate, dismantle, and rewrite the damaging narratives that mainstream media use to construct and oppress them. In “#Say[ing][HerName as Critical Demand,” Butler suggests how English educators can engage in the political work of the #SayHerName movement within the ELA classroom. She encourages educators to assess why Black women’s autobiographies are absent from their curricula, especially in a time when Black women are being assaulted, murdered, and erased. To bring attention to the lives and literacies of Black women, Butler advocates for the inclusion and centering of Black women’s autobiographies in ELA classrooms.

In the next article, Martinez explores the symbolic linguistic violence that Black and Latinx youths experience in schools. He considers how Black and Latinx youth linguistic alignment in classrooms might offer practitioners tools to mediate Black-Brown solidarity within the ELA context where linguicism and narrow conceptions of literacy exist for both groups. We close with Love’s Provocateur Piece, in which she offers a critical reflection of her regrets, mistakes, and fears in hopes that more conversations about how educators—especially Black female educators who are on the front lines of educating students about race-centered violence toward women—have a space to wrestle with the difficult knowledge and task of teaching anti-black, state-sanctioned violence toward Black women while dealing with the reality that their lives and spirits are also in danger.
As we conclude this editorial, we are reminded of the urgency of this themed issue. Racism and state-sanctioned racial violence committed against Black and Brown people continues to accumulate at an alarming rate. Within the last week, Chicago police officers executed 18-year-old Paul O’Neal, and Baltimore police officers shot and killed 23-year-old Korryn Gaines and wounded her 5-year-old son, Kodi Gaines. We are in agreement with the sentiments expressed in the NCTE Statement Affirming #BlackLivesMatter that “The picture of US racism begins with our children (though it does not end with them).” In the struggle to move from racial violence to racial justice, we call for English educators and classroom teachers to consider the following steps before implementing CREE in their classrooms:

1. Engage in critical self-reflection, specifically working through the ways in which their own positionalities influence their pedagogical practices and the ways they perceive Black and Brown youth.

2. (Re)imagine ELA classrooms as sites for healing and racial justice.

3. Engage all youth in concentrated and serious dialogues about how white supremacy, anti-blackness, anti-brownness, homophobia, and other forms of xenophobia lead to race-based violence.

Coda

We cannot accept the world as it is. Each day we should wake up foaming at the mouth because of the injustice of things.

—Hugo Claus

As a final note, we return to our stories to illustrate how each of us plan to work through these extremely difficult times, through our pain and deep wounds, in pursuit of racial justice.

April

Moving forward, I will continue to maintain critical friendships and engage in critical projects that make this work possible. It was through organizing the Racial Violence Teach-In at MSU with Tamara and our journey guest editing this issue with Lamar that I found relief, healing, and the energy to take this work up in my English education classes. However, to get to this point, I first had to take seriously Audre Lorde’s (1988) point: “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare” (p. 131). As a Black woman and English educator, I realize that it is extremely important for me to prioritize and listen to my spiritual,
emotional, mental, and physical health. How could I contribute to healing a wounded nation if I have not cared for or addressed my own wounds? In the wake of racial violence, self-care has sometimes meant taking breaks from social media, tuning out and taking mental breaks from thinking about race-based violence, following some of the hilarious hashtags and memes on Black Twitter, watching mindless TV, or reading a book for pleasure. Other times, self-care has meant loving on my children, exercising, meditating, going to sleep early and waking up late, or traveling. Self-care does not mean that we forget about racial violence; rather, it means that engaging in self-care practices makes us healthier and helps us to work wiser at dismantling racial violence.

Tamara
In the upcoming years, I will continue to channel my fear and anger into transformative dialogues about the lives of Black women and other women of color. In my classrooms, I want my students to walk away echoing the sentiments of Panama Jackson (2016), writer for “VerySmartBrothas”: “We can’t expect women to be at the forefront of these movements without acknowledging that they’re not just there to support men, but because they also feel the same sting and same circumstances that we do.” I do this to remember the sting felt by Earledreka White, Korryn Gaines (and her son), Joyce Quaweay, Skye Mockabee, and countless others.

Lamar
As I critically reflect on my vignette, it is clear that the spirits of racism and of state-sanctioned racial violence still linger in our present time. With that being said, the ways in which we handle racism and racial violence today will affect how racism and state-sanctioned racial violence will manifest themselves in our future. In my English education courses, I plan to center racial violence to further explicate how physical racial violence is inseparable from the symbolic violence that plagues many ELA classrooms. Indeed, my preservice teachers and I will discuss emancipatory theories and pedagogies that move the experiences and multiple languages and literacies that Black and Brown youth bring to classrooms from the margins to the center; however, before we can truly understand what it means to educate Black and Brown youth, first, we, as educators, have to come to grips with state-sanctioned racial violence and understand that if the field of English education is complicit in racial violence, then we are further perpetuating racial disparities.
Acknowledgments

We (April, Tamara, and Lamar) would like to express our deepest gratitude to Marcelle Haddix for serving in an advisory role on this themed issue. Without her leadership, critical feedback, unyielding encouragement, and commitment to cultivating junior scholars of color, this issue would not have been possible. We thank you!

Notes

1. As coeditors, we use the pronouns “we” and “our” to signal a collective (April, Tamara, and Lamar) or our shared/interlocking identities as Black people, English educators, and Black English educators.

2. We are building upon Kinloch and San Pedro’s (2013) notion of story-ing, which involves narrating—nonlinearly—between conventional academic and critical reflexive writing to work against the positivist ways of engaging in and writing research, which are grounded in objectivity, neutrality, and linearity.

3. This narrative is from a personal journal entry and a recorded class discussion that took place on November 26, 2014.

4. In our discussion of schools, we differentiate between schools and classrooms. For schools, we are referring to school disciplinary policies that are linked to the school-to-prison pipeline (i.e., expulsion policies, attendance policies, and other practices that tend to behavioral issues).

5. Cutts, Love, and Davis (2012) define critical friends as “a formal and informal academic support group that encourage[s] to decontextualize our deeply raced and gendered experiences” (p. 64).

References


Editorial

April Baker-Bell is an assistant professor of language and literacy in the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures at Michigan State University. She is also affiliated faculty in the English Education and African American and African Studies programs. Dr. Baker-Bell’s research examines how African American youth construct their linguistic, cultural, and racial identities in relation to dominant language ideologies. Her research also explores how classroom instruction and counterhegemonic pedagogies can be leveraged to support African American youth in constructing positive and transformative understandings of their linguistic and racial identities. She has been a member of NCTE since 2010, and she was also a fellow in the 2012–2014 cohort of NCTE’s Cultivating New Voices among Scholars of Color program. Her email address is adbell@msu.edu.

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Lamar L. Johnson is an assistant professor of English Education at Michigan State University. He is interested in the complex intersections of race, literacy, and education and how ELA classrooms can become sites for racial justice. He was a fellow in the 2014-2016 cohort of NCTE’s Cultivating New Voices among Scholars of Color program. His email address is john5589@msu.edu.