AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS
IN GRADE EIGHT UNITED STATES HISTORY TEXTBOOKS APPROVED BY
THE CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN 2005

by

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Abstract

As the connections between textbooks and schools, student self-esteem, and educational success are further articulated, and the ramifications of deficient textbook material are more clearly understood, textbooks become increasingly a source of concern and contention. The purpose of this study is to investigate the representation of African Americans in grade 8 American history textbooks approved by the California State Board of Education in 2005. This study develops a critical approach to identifying embedded power relationships in the text employing five evaluative criteria. These five criteria are ethnocentrism, over-simplification, voice, absence, and inclusiveness. The findings of this study are that, while particular sections of each textbook may be inclusive of African American perspectives and are satisfactory in their representation according to the criteria used in this study, the overarching narrative of American history remains ethnocentric. This study raises pressing concerns regarding the role of teachers and textbooks in delivering an equitable and inclusive curriculum.
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CHAPTER I: Introduction

In 1983 a comprehensive evaluation of the American public school system was conducted and produced a report that shocked the nation. This report, *A Nation at Risk*, claimed that the American educational system was failing its students. One of the central concerns of this report was that minority groups were not receiving adequate or fair representation within the curriculum. Curriculum reform across grades and subjects then began and in 1998 California published a new middle school social studies curriculum that reflected widespread and longstanding public concern regarding the representation of minority groups in school curricula. This new curriculum was presented to textbook publishing companies and in 2005 these companies produced a new generation of textbooks. These textbooks were then approved for use in the state of California by the California State Board of Education. In 2006, after an independent review of these textbooks, the American Textbook Council published its concerns regarding the use of these texts in schools. The Council claimed that these textbooks were “shockingly deficient” not only in their content and format, but also in their portrayal of minority history and minority perspectives. This study uses a critical approach to evaluate grade 8 United States history textbooks approved in 2005 for embedded power relations involved in the depiction of African Americans and African American history.

1.1: The Importance of Textbooks

As children are almost universally expected to attend an educational institution (with the overwhelming majority attending public schools), they are therefore almost
universally exposed to the material within textbooks during their formative educational experiences. Given the argument that textbooks are a trusted source of truth and knowledge widely relied upon by teachers (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Horne, 1988; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Swartz 1993; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988), it seems reasonable to suggest that textbooks play a significant role in developing appropriate social, moral and cultural values in children. In fact, research has suggested that the images and literature that children are exposed to affects how they view themselves and how they view others (Barksdale-Ladd & Hefflin, 2001; Bishop, 1997). It therefore seems to be of the utmost importance that children see themselves in literature being portrayed positively because it has been suggested that an inadequate or negative portrayal could affect their motivation and their sense of place within a community (Barksdale-Ladd & Hefflin, 2001; Bieger, 1996; Bishop, 1990; Collier, 2000; Roethler, 1998).

1.2: California’s Reform Movement

In 1983 the report *A Nation at Risk* was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education and brought attention to the development of a “rising tide of mediocrity” in American schools. An era of educational reform in California ensued, which produced mixed results. The reform movement did stimulate important improvements in infrastructure, such as increase in instructional time, high school diplomas with minimum course completion requirements, and an emphasis on local planning to improve efficiency and effectiveness (California State Board of Education [CSBEJ], 1998). The shortcoming of this educational reform was that it failed to address academic standards. In a continuing effort to improve academic standards, California
revised the content and curriculum frameworks and standards for all subjects from kindergarten to grade 8. It claimed that these new standards were rigorous and that Californian students would now be “on par with those in the best educational systems in other states and nations” (CSBE, 1998, para. 4). They planned a comprehensive approach to implementing these standards. The systems set up to facilitate this process included statewide testing programs, curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, professional development time, pre-service education packages, and compliance reviews.

With regards specifically to the content criterion addressing American history, the California State Board claimed that its standards emphasized the roles of significant individuals throughout history and the rights and obligations of citizenship. The content was intended to portray America as a noble experiment in a constitutional republic. The content illustrated America’s ongoing struggle to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution and the struggle to maintain a complex national heritage (CSBE, 1998).

With regards to the standards developed that do not directly relate to content, the California State Board expects the implementation of these rigorous standards to develop critical thinking skills which will help students distinguish the important historical events from the unimportant, to recognize the vital connections between past and present, and to appreciate universal historical themes and dilemmas (CSBE, 1998). The California State Board of Education has expressed its belief that the mastery of these standards will ensure that students not only know historical facts, but also understand common and complex themes throughout history in order to facilitate connections between their own lives, the lives of people from the past, and the lives of those to come (CSBE, 1998).
fact, California was praised as it made the most comprehensive curricular changes in the United States at that time. California was said to have made the cleanest break from policies and practices that have characterized efforts to promote basic skills development and has instead focused on the development of conceptual understandings, higher order thinking and subject matter integration (Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects [CLTES], 1990). In order to support the enrichment of the curriculum California elected to describe learner outcomes in narrative terms rather than as lists of goals and objectives (CLTES, 1990). These more general goals originated from the framework provided by the twenty-three educators and professionals who were involved in the development of the standards. This group developed a mission statement that captured the spirit of the aspirations of the California educational reform movement,

As educators in the field of history-social science, we want our students to perceive the complexity of social, economic, and political problems … to have the ability to differentiate between what is important and what is unimportant…. to know their rights and responsibilities as American citizens … to understand the meaning of the Constitution as a social contract defining our democratic government and guaranteeing our individual rights. We want them to respect the rights of others to differ with them…. to understand the value, importance, and the fragility of democratic institutions … we want them to develop a keen sense of ethics and citizenship … to care deeply about the quality of their life in their community, their nation and their world. (Honig, 1991, p. 112)

The writers and developers of the content standards developed a framework that they felt would alert publishers that they were looking for big improvements in the quality of textbooks, and the expected enhancements to textbooks were specifically laid out in order to ensure their implementation. In fact, this committee did lay out guidelines that they felt, if met, would produce the quality of textbook they were looking for. Most notably among these were: increased time for an in-depth study of American and world history, a
multi-cultural perspective that reflects the experiences of men and women of various racial, religious and ethnic groups, and an understanding that the national identity, heritage, and creed of the United States are pluralistic and that there should be a major focus on ethical literacy, civics and democratic values where basic concepts such as justice, equality and liberty should be emphasized. The character of the educational reform and resulting curriculum content standards in California, by all accounts, encouraged a responsible, inclusive, pluralistic, in-depth, complex portrayal of American history.

1.3: The American Textbook Council

The American Textbook Council is a non-partisan, non-profit, independent national research organization established in 1989 as the operating arm of the Center for Education Studies in the state of New York, and that is interested in textbook reviews, textbook improvement and the development of instructional materials in history and civic education (American Textbook Council [ATC], 2005). The American Textbook Council is not a trade association or commercial enterprise and does not represent textbook publishers or editors. This Council has retained a prominent position in national discussions regarding the quality and content of American textbooks and has published several reports including: History Textbooks: A Standard Guide in 1994, Religion in the Classroom: What Textbooks Tell Us in 1995, Learning about Religion, Learning from Religion and A New Generation of History Textbooks in 1998, History Textbooks at the New Century in May 2000, Islam and the Textbooks in 2003, and World History Textbooks: A Review in 2006. As a result of these publications the American Textbook
Council has addressed the United States Senate on several occasions regarding textbook publication and approval. The Council endorses textbooks that “embody a vivid narrative style, stress significant people and events, and promote a better understanding of all cultures, including the American culture, on the principle that improved textbooks will advance the curriculum, stimulate student learning, and encourage educational achievement for children of all backgrounds” (ATC, 2005, para. 2).

The American Textbook Council has publicly criticized the decision of the California State Board to approve most of the textbooks submitted to it in 2005 which were supposed to be written according to the new content standards laid out in 1998. The American Textbook Council states that, “The approval of some shockingly deficient U.S. and world history textbooks indicates that all qualitative impulses in Sacramento have been subordinated to the power of publisher interests and aggressive pressure groups” (para.1). There were several specific areas where the Council articulated its disapproval. Most significant was its observation that the textbook content was “dumbed-down” which was impeding the narrative in favour of a more “super-hot graphic” approach. Another major criticism was that American history had been reduced to a list of a few (very few) important characters, and that this approach, and sometimes even the characters, were highly unrepresentative. The Council felt that some of the textbooks were dreadfully written and poorly produced. The Council believed that these textbooks were approved only because they are clearly laid out and give teachers plenty of activities to work with. These observations are echoed throughout public literature. Most newspapers reported the controversy surrounding the adoption of these textbooks, with specific attention given to the biased portrayal of the Islamic demographic, the lack
of representation of homosexuals and other alternative lifestyles, and the broad
brushstrokes used to deal with Native American and African-American narratives (ATC,
2005). All newspaper articles and independent research groups referenced the shallow
version of history being portrayed by the textbooks, and this fuelled a long-running
debate regarding how and if historical accuracy is to be sacrificed at the altar of political
correctness (American School Board Journal [ASBJ], 2006).

California is one of few adoption states in the United States. California, Texas
and New York have always been regarded by educational reformers as areas to target
because that is where textbook standards for the entire nation are determined. California
and Texas, in particular, are the two most influential states with regards to textbook
adoption. This is because they both have extremely large school-aged populations, and
because they adopt state-wide. This means that they have the largest market for textbook
publishers. The rest of the nation is therefore forced to accept and use the textbooks that
publishers have written that conform to Californian and Texan standards and are adopted
by these two states (Cody, 1990). As Richard Venezky (1992) states, “economic power
is also censorship power, as demonstrated year after year by the textbook adoption
policies of Texas and California. No textbook publisher is required to do what these
states want, but not to do so is to foreclose on a significant portion of the American
textbook market” (p. 446). Michael Apple and Linda Christian-Smith (1991) state that
textbook sales “to California and Texas can account for over twenty percent of the total
sales of any particular book” (p. 32). Therefore California holds one of the greatest
The American Textbook Council, after its review of the textbooks approved in 2005 stated that,

No longer can educational reformers even hope that states like California and Texas will use their power to force publishers to produce books of high standard. More so, what California has done will determine what students nationwide read about the past for years to come. (para. 1)

The American Textbook Council stressed that a slipping in the standards of textbooks in California will be devastating to the educational system nation wide because what California adopts today will be sold across the nation tomorrow. The educational reforms that were expected with the development of new content standards in 1998 by the California State Board of Education do not seem to translate into the textbooks being adopted by the state in 2005. Given that the portrayal of African Americans in the mainstream American narrative has been a continual concern for scholars in black studies for over a century, and the potential impact of California’s recent adoption decisions, an analysis of these new textbooks appears imperative.

1.4: Curriculum Context

This study is focused on an evaluation of grade 8 United States history textbooks. The grade 8 social studies curriculum is designed to be an intensive review of the major ideas, issues and events spanning from the discovery of America to 1914. The standards for the curriculum specifically indicate that students should be able to describe political, economic and social relationships that existed over this time period, analyze the philosophies behind events and ideologies, discuss the significance of major events, evaluate the major debates throughout this time, and understand the significance of these happenings (CSDE, 2005). Some of the events and themes from the grade 8 curriculum
can be found in the grade 5 curriculum and again appear in grade 11, however, grade 8
social studies remains the major exposure Californian students will have to a narrative of
American history from colonization to the early twentieth century in high school. The
grade 5 curriculum is built around an introduction to early American history from the
time of discovery to the early 1800s but represents only a fraction of the content
appearing in the grade 8 curriculum. Various events and themes from the grade 8
curriculum also reappear in grades ten and eleven, particularly grade 11, but primarily as
a revision that links “past to present” before continuing on with twentieth century history.
The grade 8 curriculum, therefore, represents an important indoctrination of American
history for youth (CSDE, 2005).

1.5: Personal Rationale

This researcher has many motivations for conducting this study despite the
problematic nature of not being either of African American descent or American.
Beginning with an undergraduate degree focused on American history, and African
American history in particular, this researcher has developed a deep and intense interest
in African American and American history. This interest has developed and grown over
the last nine years and has motivated further reading and research. This research includes
not only history books and historical documentaries, but has also focused on the
development of present-day popular culture, society, economic trends, and political
events. It is a result of this constant and deliberate watch that this researcher developed
an interest in and awareness of California’s “problematic” textbook adoption.
Further motivating this researcher’s interest in this subject were experiences in one undergraduate course taught by Dr. Paul Krause which introduced this researcher to the concept of discursive racism and oppression with specific examples through African American history. This course had far-reaching implications and consequences in this researcher’s personal life, academic interests and interest in and observations of societies and cultures. It further laid the ground work for an interest in developing a critical lens with specific attention to the discursive frameworks of racism and oppression. This interest in social justice motivated further academic studies at both the undergraduate and graduate level in order to develop this lens and insight into the discourses and voices in social justice theory.

These academic experiences have combined with this researcher’s personal experiences of living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for several years and having the opportunity to be a linguistic, religious, political, racial, cultural, and economic minority while also providing an opportunity to explore the effects of colonization and the slave trade on Brazil. Combined, these academic and personal experiences have developed into a keen interest in social justice, frameworks of oppression, American history, and African American studies.

The motivations behind the evaluation of grade 8 history textbooks in this study are equally personal and practical. To begin, this researcher is also a practicing teacher who teaches primarily a historical curriculum in courses that have included grade 8, 10 and 11 social studies, and grade 12 history. History remains the central academic interest of this researcher and has therefore focused this study in the direction of social studies textbooks. Grade 8 history textbooks were chosen as it was only kindergarten to grade 8
textbooks that were submitted to the California State Board of Education in 2005 for approval, and this researcher has personal and practical experience in working with a curriculum designed for the intellectual and emotional development of children in this age group. In short, a combination of personal history, experiences and interests have integrated with academic interests and have led this researcher to this study.
CHAPTER II: A Review of the Literature

2.1: A History of Bias in Textbooks

The 1800s brought forth a new method of instruction in schools. The textbook was introduced as a supporting document and guide for teachers. The use of textbooks as the primary source of historical knowledge is problematic in both concept and practice. It essentially allows one author or even a handful of authors and publishers to determine what history is for students. They determine what is considered legitimate knowledge and also the perspective from which we understand the history of the world. Elliot Eisner (1987) suggests that, “the textbook not only defines a substantial proportion of the content, sequence, and aims of curriculum, it also influences the way in which certain topics will be regarded” (p. 12). Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant (1991) argue that the author of the textbook decides what is considered knowledge and what is the accepted “version of reality” (p. 80) that children will learn. They argue that this narrows the understanding of what knowledge is and what knowledge is worth knowing. Apple (1991) contends that, “the controversies over ‘official knowledge’ that usually center around what is included and excluded in textbooks really signify more profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories. Conflicts over texts are often proxies for wider questions of power relations” (p. 3). It can be argued that the authorship of a textbook begins a process of writing prejudice and bias into textbooks as the authors and publishers are, almost without exception, people of the dominant culture, language and race who have themselves been indoctrinated into a discursively prejudiced society that has always afforded them cultural, societal, political, and economic privileges far beyond what they recognize.
These textbooks, that may reflect various societal injustices, are then heralded as a trusted source of “truth” and “knowledge” which serves to reproduce the bias inherent in society. Frances FitzGerald (1979) argues that textbooks are “like time capsules, the texts contain the truths selected for posterity” (p. 47). Further, what is understood as truth changes over time because truth or at least the truth of textbooks is what the authors and publishers determine it is. This truth is then reproduced throughout the school system. Walter Werner (2000) speaks to this process as he suggests that,

Textbooks are the pervasive and the de facto curricula that define the scope, boundaries, and sequencing for the subject matter … young people learn from experience that books are sources of uncontested information, repositories of answers to be mined under the guidance of end-of-chapter questions or worksheets. In what Apple refers to as a “dominant reading of a text, one accepts the messages at face value” (1993: 61), on the assumption that it speaks an intrinsic and singular meaning authoritatively and straightforwardly to the careful listener, and that the primary purpose of reading is to receive this truth by locating the right information, transmitting it into one’s notebook, and then giving the “facts” back on demand (on the test or assigned task) with minimal distortion. (p. 193)

In terms of the role of minorities in American history and in particular the role of African Americans in American history, their truth has been rewritten many times. The 1960s brought comprehensive revision and rewriting of history as a result of the Civil Rights movement (Elliot, 1990; FitzGerald, 1979; Tyson-Bernstein, 1986). It is problematic that textbooks be used as a primary source of truth and knowledge in the school system and by teachers when this truth can be revised and changed. Further, how can it be considered truth when the role and contributions of minorities are “ignored or abused by the textbooks” (FitzGerald, 1979, p. 39)?

One of the major outcomes of this revision of minority history within American history were the committees that began to spring up that were dedicated to exploring the
bias found in textbooks and curriculum. One such organization was the Council on Interracial Books which began to look into bias in textbooks as it related to ethnicity, race and religion, and they began to suggest how textbooks could begin to correct themselves. This more poignant and legitimate concern over the misrepresentation and under-representation of racial, cultural and ethnic minorities led to even more significant revisions in the pictorial (and some of the narrative) content of textbooks in the later 1960s (Elliot, 1990, p. 48).

After the Civil Rights movement had largely fizzled out of the public eye there was a significant conservative backlash and therefore what began as an intense investigation into the bias in textbooks also faded away. As a result the portrayal of minorities in textbooks remained, overall, inappropriate and incomplete. James Banks (1981) argues that “the infusion of bits and pieces of ethnic minority groups into the curriculum not only reinforces the idea that ethnic minority groups are not integral parts of U.S. society, it also results in the trivialization of ethnic cultures” (p. 158). Laura Hein and Mark Selden (2000) further argue that “Americans as yet feel little pressure from domestic or foreign critics to depict foreigners as human beings. In this way, American hegemony translates into isolation from any imagined community in concert with the rest of the world” (p. 42). The American Textbook Council has recently suggested that the portrayal of minorities in textbooks, even those published after the revision of curriculum standards that were a result of the inadequacies highlighted in the document A Nation at Risk (1983), remains tokenistic and incomplete. Erika Gold (2004) states that, “even with the great struggle and debate that has ensued over the last forty years in the realm of textbook reform, very little lasting, comprehensive progress had been made” (p. 37).
fact the efforts to develop a more inclusive and comprehensive curriculum have only resulted in the further limitation of curriculum development. Specifically, Gold (2004) and Ravitch (2003) suggest that progress has been made in the last decade in terms of how various groups are portrayed in textbooks; however, this sensitivity has exaggerated itself into an over-sensitivity leading to a sterilization of content and censorship resulting in an erasure of history. This sanitation of history under the guise of sensitivity is as dangerous as is blatant bias. It allows the youth of a nation to believe that history is not contentious, and that the present economic, social and political injustices are not the result of a long, oppressive and violent colonial history. Further compounding the ramifications of this sterilized history are acts passed by the government of the United States, specifically parts of the Patriot Act and ensuing related state acts, which prohibit any sort of “unpatriotic” or unfavourable portrayal of Americans or American history in schools or curriculum (Jensen, 2006; Westheimer, 2006).

2.2: The Politics of the Textbook

Textbooks are highly politicized cultural artifacts. There is nothing within textbooks or about textbooks that does not have the potential to be controversial or contentious. There is nothing about curriculum development, the authoring, or the publishing of textbooks that is not political. Venezky (1992) states that, “school textbooks occupy a highly visible position in American life, situated where paths of education, society and commercialism cross” (p. 436). Apple (1991) states specifically that,

Texts are not simply “delivery systems” of “facts.” They are at once the results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles and
compromises ... what texts mean and how they are used are fought over by communities with distinctly different commitments and by teachers and students as well.... it is naive to think of the school curriculum as neutral knowledge. Rather, what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender/sex, and religious groups. Thus, education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet. (pp. 1-2)

The controversial nature of the complex political, economic, social, and cultural interactions that surround textbook production and dissemination alludes to inherently contentious contents that may be found in textbooks given that they are such cultural and highly politicized artifacts. Thomas Popkewitz (2001), a critical theorist interested in the connections between education, power and knowledge, states that, “historical thought is part of the present. It is conveyed in the very structures of representation that provide the narratives that construct memories of the present” (p. 4). Illustrating once again how textbooks, language and history cannot be disconnected either from each other or from their historical and present contexts. Textbooks are often manifestations of relationships between history, society, cultures, politics, and economics that are necessarily and intricately interrelated.

So what kinds of weaknesses are found in textbooks? What do these weaknesses look like? Gold (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of twenty research studies published on racial bias in United States history textbooks, including African American racial bias, between the years of 1950 and 2000. As a result of her research Gold argues that there are three major areas of inherent weaknesses in textbooks. These weaknesses have been previously documented by a variety of authors who will be acknowledged here also in support of Gold’s findings. According to Gold (2004) one major weakness of textbooks is that the information is communicated in dull bits and pieces. Apple and Christian-
Smith (1991), Elliot (1990), Tyson-Bernstein (1988), and Wong (1991) suggest that textbooks make history appear to be a random set of individual events rather than a continuum of complex political, social and economic interactions. This discourages students from understanding how the events of today are the result of a long and complex history, and that the events of the future are directly related to the events and actions of today.

Gold (2004) also contends that textbooks attempt to cover too many topics superficially in an effort to please everyone and end up with a phenomenon called "mentioning" instead of going into depth on any topic (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Ornstein, 1994; Tyson-Bernstein, 1986). Apple (1991) states specifically that,

As disenfranchised groups have fought to have their knowledge take center stage in the debates over cultural legitimacy, one trend has dominated in text production. In essence, very little tends to be dropped from textbooks. Major ideological frameworks do not get markedly changed. Textbook publishers are under considerable and constant pressure to include more in their books. Progressive items are perhaps mentioned, then, but not developed in depth. Dominance is partly maintained here through compromise and the process of "mentioning." (p. 11)

Essentially Gold maintains that the process of making textbooks "politically correct" has resulted in a glossing over, or sanitation, of history and curriculum. In order for textbooks to avoid offending anyone, they offend all by ignoring the intricacy and complexity of history and historical events. Further, Gold (2004) states that textbooks are not concerned enough with intellectual quality and often contain factual errors (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; FitzGerald, 1979; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988).

Scholar upon scholar has argued that the major conveyor of curriculum is the textbook (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). In fact, many argue that often the textbook is the
curriculum (Apple, 1991; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1990; Horne, 1988; Ornstein, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Swartz, 1993; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988). If, in fact, the textbook is a primary conveyor of knowledge in schools (Sleeter & Grant, 1991) and it is a trusted source of “truth” and “knowledge” (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991) that students internalize throughout their educational careers (Sleeter & Grant, 1991), then inadequate, inaccurate and biased textbooks will have widespread effects on a population. The “knowledge” of these textbooks will be indoctrinated into entire generations. Caroline Cody (1990) asserts that,

In the American system, is it clear that school boards have the responsibility to decide what students should read and should learn. It is also clear that … it is easier for school policymaker to avoid the politically painful decisions. Unless school boards take a strong hand in dealing with textbook issues and are willing to decide what students will learn in their schools and, in addition, are willing to design textbook policies which ensure that quality materials are produced, selected, and used to teach that curriculum, they will have reneged on their three-hundred-year-old responsibility to America’s school children. (p. 143)

As the effects of inadequate textbooks and curriculum become apparent, it becomes overwhelmingly imperative that there be a critical investigation into the representation of African American history in terms of the embedded power relations present in the textbooks approved by the California State Board of Education in 2005 that are now circulating nation-wide.
2.3: The Importance of Inclusion

Gold (2004) articulates five major rationales that embody the importance of the inclusion of minorities and minority history in curriculum.

First, Gold argues that an inclusive curriculum improves the quality of education. A multicultural or inclusive education supports the understanding of history from a variety of perspectives and standpoints and therefore encourages critical thinking processes leading to a more in-depth and intensive education.

Next Gold suggests that an inclusive education increases academic achievement. Gold supports this argument with a statement from Caroline Banks and James Banks (1997) who state, “An equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender and social-class groups” (p. 22). So as teachers modify the curriculum and their implementation of that curriculum, students from a variety of social, economic and political backgrounds become more involved with the curriculum and this enables their success at school.

Further, Gold alleges that an inclusive approach to teaching and an inclusive curriculum supports inter-group relations and better prepares students for adulthood in a demographically and socially multicultural society. As students develop skills that allow them to positively interact with others from a plethora of cultural, economic, political, and religious backgrounds they develop as citizens of humanity who understand their combined and separate histories.

An inclusive curriculum also reduces prejudice and racism (Gold, 2004). It allows all students to present their viewpoints, reactions, histories, and understandings
rather than have them presented only through textbooks. Gold (2004) argues that the material regarding minorities in textbooks “is usually presented from mainstream criteria, and rarely incorporates content about ethnic groups throughout the text in a consistent and fully integrated way” (p. 56). Banks and Banks (1997) suggest that this incomplete and un-integrated method of presenting ethnic history and points of view has “negative consequences for both mainstream American students and students of color. A mainstream-centric curriculum is one major way in which racism and ethnocentrism are reinforced and perpetuated in the schools and also society at large” (p. 229).

Additionally, Gold (2004) suggests that an integrated and inclusive curriculum tends to build a healthy self-esteem as all students develop pride in their histories, and also cultivate their sense of place in history and the curriculum.

Christine Bennett (2003) complements Gold’s (2004) suggestions as she states the broader implications of the incorporation of a multicultural education into a more inclusive educational system: “We are in urgent need of national and global citizens who possess multicultural competence, and who are committed to the achievement of worldwide social justice and economic equality as a foundation for lasting peace on the planet” (p. xi).

2.4: Racial Bias in Textbooks

Investigations into racial bias in textbooks are common. In order to contextualize this study in that body of knowledge, five recently published authors are presented here. Kenneth Montgomery (2005) conducted an analysis of racial bias and racism in 27 grade 10 Canadian history textbooks used in Ontario between the years of 1945 and 2000 with
a specific focus on Canadian history post-World War Two. His results indicate a marked improvement in how racism and issues of racial tension have been addressed over the last 50 years. However, he suggests that “racism continues to be understood largely within a prejudice/discrimination framework that reduces racism to irrational and individualized problems of thought, behaviour, and assumption” (p. 193). More specifically, he argues that the textbooks used in Ontario’s schools between the years of 1945 and 1959 deny or obscure race problems through geographical or national containment of these problems to countries such as Germany and the United States. The textbooks of the 1960s continue to spatially or temporally contain racism, relegating it to certain individuals and specific events rather than recognize it as a permeating reality. The 1970s, 80s and 90s were the years of improvement in textbooks as stereotyping and discrimination on the basis of race were addressed explicitly as issues necessary to understanding Canadian history. However, despite these advances, racism continued to be dealt with as an attitude problem perpetrated by isolated individuals as part of isolated events. Echoing the American meta-analysis of Gold (2004), Montgomery suggests that there have been dramatic changes made in textbook content related to racism and racial bias in recent history, but that those improvements have reached a kind of plateau that continues to fall short of comprehensively addressing issues related to race.

Jennifer Tupper (2002) and Tim Stanley (2003) provide further evidence for Montgomery’s (2005) later findings. Tupper (2002) focused her investigation on how three of Alberta’s grade 10 social studies textbooks address the Japanese Internment of World War Two. The primary finding of this investigation was that the account of and information related to the Internment is brief. Further, the voice of Japanese Canadians
and accounts of their experiences are marginal or non-existent. There is no attempt by the textbooks to contextualize the racism the Japanese Canadians experienced. In fact, Tupper argues that textbooks were mainly informed by the experiences of the dominant social group and that inequalities remain embedded in social relationships. Stanley (2003) maintains Tupper’s (2002) claims in his investigations into schooling as a method of indoctrination in British Columbia. He asserts that textbooks in British Columbia have continuously fostered an ideology of difference and distance which legitimizes the construction of history according to the dominant culture. Specifically Stanley maintains that Canadian textbooks are consistently patriotic and imperialist, and tend to engage in the “othering” of minority groups and histories. “Othering”, as he defines it, is the homogenization of minorities into a collective “they” or “he” which characterizes anything “he” is or does not as a particular historical event but as an instance of pre-given custom. Otherwise stated, an individual becomes primarily a reflection of a particular demographic group’s (stereo) typical identity or ideology.

The findings of Canadian textbook investigations pertaining to the marginalization of minority experiences and histories as discussed by Montgomery (2005), Tupper (2002) and Stanley (2003) are also apparent in recent American investigations. Tonia Alexander (2002) conducted an analysis of 28 grade 4 history textbooks used in the state of Texas between the years of 1950 and 2000. Paralleling Gold’s (2004) meta-analysis and Montgomery’s (2005) Canadian analysis, Alexander found that many of the overt ways that textbooks perpetuate bias and racism are not as prevalent as they once were. Like in Canada, it was the decades of the 1970s, 80s and 90s that brought the most comprehensive textbook revisions. Further echoing the claims
of Canadian and American researchers, Alexander (2002) found that the primary method of perpetuating bias is omission. Topics of racism and minority continue to be confined to units which are tangential and separate from the dominant narrative of the text.

Leah Wasburn (1997) conducted an analysis of 65 middle and secondary history textbooks published between 1900 and 1992 that were used in Indiana (United States) Public Schools. She observed that from 1900 to 1930, textbooks appeared to give a balanced presentation of slavery through the inclusion of the pros and cons of slavery from the perspectives of both the North and the South of the United States. From the 1930s to the end of World War Two, Wasburn (1997) suggests that textbook authors appeared to justify the slave system by appealing to market forces. The presentation of slavery in mid-1940s to the 1950s changed as it was portrayed as a necessary evil. Textbooks of the 1960s and 1970s appeared to regard slavery as un-American, and certain aspects of the presentation of the slave system in texts in the 1980s and 1990s reflected a conservative backlash to the changes made in the 1960s and 1970s. Across national borders and grade levels, textbooks continue to be sites of subtle cultural reproduction through the marginalization of minority histories and the omission of their voices.

2.5: The Tradition of Black Studies

Any discussion of the development of African American studies must include the academic legacy of W.E.B. DuBois. Although most of his work detailed the relationships between race and society, it was Black Reconstruction in America published in 1935 that focused on how history had traditionally been told from the majority point of
view, with little or no acknowledgement of minority perspectives. DuBois further argued that American history, in large measure, could be best understood by studying the status and treatment of Black people and their response to that treatment. As testament to the insightfulness and relevance of DuBois’ work, academics today continue to rehash, explore and expand his work, despite some of it being almost a century old. For example, Carole Davies (2003) further articulates DuBois’ conclusions when she states that the academy is a “source for the production and re-production of a variety of discourses which keep in place certain colonial structures which have as their tent the maintenance of Euro-American hegemonies at the level of thinking and therefore in the larger material world” (p. 14). DuBois symbolizes the beginning of a mainstream African American intellectual tradition within the educational context at the turn of the century, and his arguments remain as important and relevant today as they were then.

DuBois may have been the foremost African American scholar-activist during this “conceptual period” (1900-1930s), but he was most certainly not alone (Marable, 2000). More than 100 public and private post-secondary institutions for African Americans were founded by black academics and activists during this time period. DuBois’ contemporaries also included Monroe Work, who published the *Negro Yearbook* in 1912, and Carter G. Woodson, who established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1916. The later part of this “conceptual period” in African American educational activism became the foundation within academia for the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement, and was characterized by more radical scholarly developments becoming public policy practice. In 1944 Charles S. Johnson became part of this new, more vocal and visible area of black studies when he initiated
the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University whose main purpose was to attempt to connect public policies with the more sophisticated academic views concerning race relations in America. Johnson's colleagues were also investigating the American narrative of history and the under and mis-representation of African Americans within it. Among the more famous of these scholars were Horace Bond, Allison Davis, E. Franklin Frazier, St. Clair Drake, Oliver Cromwell, and Rayford Logan. In 1939 the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) echoed these scholars by publishing Anti-Negro Propaganda in School Textbooks which made direct correlations between textbooks and associated social attitudes. This publication, with the support of black scholars and activists, would lead to the formation of the American Council on Education ten years later. This direct connection between textbooks and society would become one of the main areas of focus of reform for scholars during the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Manning Marable (2000) contends that "in the quarter century after WWII African American studies was transformed from a discourse and body of scholarly work confined largely to racially segregated institutions, to a vibrant curriculum and hundreds of programs fighting to change white higher education" (p. 6). The impetus for such sweeping adjustments in the educational realm was the Civil Rights Movement which transformed the global status of African Americans. The consequence of this political and demographic empowerment was the rise of black studies. In 1950 only 75,000 "Negroes" were enrolled in American colleges and universities, and the majority of these students were in designated African American schools. However, by 1970 there were nearly 700,000 "Negroes" enrolled in colleges and universities, and three-quarters of
those were in traditionally white institutions. These scholars continued the work of previous generations and this resulted in enormous political and intellectual upheaval (Kilson, 1973). Scholars such as Stampp (1956), Elkins (1959), Sloan (1966), Carpenter (1968), and Elson (1964) took further issue with the fact that their people, their history and their culture had been constructed, interpreted and disseminated by non-African Americans (Keita, 2000). As a result of these efforts education experienced a multisided transformation that would provide the groundwork for the next chapter, often referred to as the maturation of the Black Studies Movement.

The maturation of the Black Studies Movement in the late 1970s was characterized by scholars such as Professor Charles Davis at Yale’s Afro-American Studies Department, Professor Nathan Huggins at Harvard, Professors Joseph Washington and Houston Baker at the University of Pennsylvania, Professor St. Clair Drake at Stanford, and Professor Claudia Mitchell-Kernan at the University of California, just to name a few (Kilson, 1973). These scholars interlocked the structuring of the academic regime of black studies with the established academic disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities. Thus they filtered the facets of black studies into the curriculum and modes of curriculum packaging (Kilson, 1973). As Mahan Keita (2000) states, “in the face of oppressive epistemologies and historiographies, and the ideologies and propagandas that are part of their [white] train, is that the oppressed will put forth their own epistemologies and historiographies, and, of course, attendant ideologies and propagandas, based on their own experiences” (p. 9). This phase of the black studies history is characterized by a relatively successful rewriting of American history, but there were still setbacks. As noted by the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1977) the
complexity and controversy of African American history in American history was still being dealt with through omissions, distortions and rationalizations. They further stated that,

As recently as 1965 Samuel Eliot Morison wrote a best selling history of the U.S. in which Black people were barely mentioned, except as happy slaves. [But] since U.S. national politics, morality, religion, culture and economy have all been inextricably linked to the Black experience, it follows - as DuBois claimed - that history books which do not honestly explore the “color-line” bear little resemblance to reality. (p. 15)

As Martin Kilson (1973) noted, “In general, while the violence surrounding the birth of black studies was quite short-lived, a tendency toward ideological rigidity in regards to the academic organization and pedagogical execution of the field of black studies proved rather tenacious and long-lived” (p. 172). So despite giant leaps forward with the formation and inculcation of black studies, there remained structures in place that prevented a complete transformation, or, as some would argue a satisfactory representation of African Americans in main stream American history.

Textbook evaluation in the United States began in the early twentieth century as black academia forcefully opposed the part being played by African Americans in the historical narrative of American history which corresponded to the social, economic and political circumstances being lived by African Americans in the United States. This textbook evaluation peaked in the 1960s and 1970s with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement and the incorporation of Black Studies into mainstream academia. However, after the 1980s the enthusiasm for textbook evaluation experienced a significant decline (Alexander 2002). With the global trend of “multiculturalism” the focus shifted from black studies to the plight of the other minorities. Squabbles within academia regarding the entitlement of certain groups to
explore the past and “represent” other groups clogged the channels of communication and academia, to a certain extent, turned its attention elsewhere.

In the 1980s Genna McNeil and Michael Winston (1988) stated that “the current acceptance of Afro-Americans in positions of power and prestige remains a conditional one. It depends on their willingness to identify with the aims and ideologies of the white-dominated institutions with which they are associated” (p. 108). McNeil and Winston’s statements reflect the continued limitations placed on the political power of African Americans. As their power remained limited it follows the prestige and place of African Americans in history textbooks may begin to erode as the activism and awareness of the sixties began to fade and give way to conservative backlash. In the 1990s textbooks continued to be deficient in the portrayal of African American history (Alexander, 2002). The inequalities of race and gender were not considered “textbook subjects” which resulted in what scholars described as an unrealistic portrayal of U.S. history and contemporary life experience by glossing over controversial topics and avoiding discussion of discrimination and prejudice (Gold, 2004). Tonia Alexander (2002) felt that the relegation of race relations and African American history to a sterilized version not only misleads the reader in their historical understandings but that this in turn affects their understanding of race relations in the present and future, and this may have even larger repercussions. McNeil and Winston (1988) articulate this relationship best when they state, “race relations are not so much a fixed pattern as a changing set of relationships that can only be understood within a broader historical context that is itself constantly evolving and thus altering the terms under which blacks and whites interact” (p. 100).
The “political correctness” that drives the sanitation of textbooks does not allow for an understanding of history as a messy undertaking with conflicting ideologies, policies, pedagogies, and other such complexities. It robs the reader of a more appropriate understanding of the intricacies of historical narratives, and therefore of history itself. As W.E.B. DuBois (1935) feared at the turn of the century, our textbooks and educational system have perpetuated the probability that students will complete their education without any idea of the past which the black race has played a part in. The intellectual tradition of black scholars since the turn of the century exemplifies the continued importance of the evaluation of the main stream American historical narrative in terms of its portrayal of African Americans today. It has always been an integral part of the institution of black studies, and apparently has never been addressed at a level beyond satisfactory even at the peak of the Black Power movement. Thus, the findings of the American Textbook Council regarding the inadequate portrayal of minority history in the textbooks adopted in California in 2005, is a statement that comes with a lot of history.
CHAPTER III: Methodology

3.1: Research Purpose and Data Collection Procedures

This study evaluated embedded power relations in the presentation and depiction of African Americans and African American history in grade 8 United States history textbooks approved by the California State Board of Education in 2005. The textbooks approved and published in California in 2005 are:

- McGraw/Hill: American Journey
- Pearson/Prentice Hall: The American Nation
- Harcourt/Holt: United States History
- Mifflin/McDougal: Creating America
- BL Harcourt/Holt: Call to Freedom

All textbooks were read by the researcher in order to identify references to African Americans. First, any sentence, reference, or obvious indication of absence was transferred to a data table (see Appendix A for two examples). Second, each reference to African Americans or African American history, whether one sentence or one page, was then evaluated according to five specific criteria conducive to making visible embedded power relations. These criteria were ethnocentrism, over-simplification, appearance of African American voice, absence, and inclusiveness. Integral to the evaluation of each excerpt was an examination of its context in the surrounding textbook content, as well as an analysis of its physical placement in the paragraph or chapter section. Finally, each excerpt was assessed as either satisfactory or un-satisfactory in its representation of African American history.
3.2: Articulation and Rationale of Evaluation Method

Allan Luke (1988) aptly articulates the need for sophisticated and nuanced methodologies of textual analysis in order to uncover more subtle messages in textbooks regarding the construction of knowledge and discursive power relations. He states,

A major pitfall of research in the sociology of curriculum has been its willingness to accept text form as a mere adjunct means for the delivery of ideological content: the former described in terms of dominant metaphors, images, or key ideas; the latter described in terms of the sum total of values, beliefs, and ideas which might be seen to constitute a false consciousness. For much content analysis presupposes that text mirrors or reflects a particular ideological position, which in turn can be connected to specific class interests.... It is predicated on the possibility of a one-to-one identification of school knowledge with textually represented ideas of dominant classes. Even those critics who have recognized that the ideology encoded in curricular text may reflect the internally contradictory character of a dominant culture have tended to neglect the need for more complex model of text analysis, one that does not suppose that texts are simply readable, literal representations of “someone else’s” version of social reality, objective knowledge and human relations. For texts do not always mean or communicate what they say. (pp. 29-30)

This study employed a critical approach based on Popkewitz (2001) and Apple (1986, 1991, 2000) that focused on the evaluation of embedded power relations in textbooks around five criteria related to the construction of power and knowledge. The critical approach developed for this evaluation centered on an understanding that texts represent power because they embody interests. Interests benefit some and not others, and so this evaluation aims to uncover who benefits from the historical constructions of these textbooks. Embedded power relations are subtle textual manifestations of privileges and benefits enjoyed by a dominant cultural group, often appearing as cultural assumptions or depictions of social, political and economic relationships where social and cultural power is established. Five criteria were used to help pull embedded power relations out of the
These five are by no means comprehensive criteria for all manifestations of embedded power relations, but are adequate for starting to make visible discursive power frameworks in these textbooks. These criteria are commonly used in other, similar textbook evaluations, and have been employed and discussed at least in part by Walter Werner (2000) and Christine Bennett (2003). In her book *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*, Bennett (2003) suggests the importance of acknowledging and addressing ethnocentric narratives in particular. She uses various criteria through which ethnocentric narratives can be identified, and stresses how education can be developed that is more inclusive of minorities. One of her principle articulations of an ethnocentric and exclusive educational practice is centered on the notion that classroom practices or resources can be over-simplified and can therefore leave the reader with an incomplete and unrepresentative understanding of the place of minorities and minority education in history and society. These three key themes, of ethnocentrism, inclusiveness and over-simplification, are used in this evaluation as they are subtle but effective tools in uncovering embedded power relations in texts. A continuation of an understanding of ethnocentrism, as well as the addition of the last two criteria of this study, voice and absence, are provided primarily by Werner (2000). In his suggestions for interpreting authorship of texts, Werner (2000) asks that the reader question whose voice is dominant, who is being asked to speak, and who is not being asked to speak, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of who may be dominant, in what ways and why. The final criterion, absence, is where motivations and purposes behind “missing” viewpoints and histories are questioned, which allows a
reader to develop a better understanding of whose interests a text might serve as well as who may benefit from the narrative presented within it.

The textbooks were critically examined for embedded power relations using the following criteria which have been developed using Bennett (2003) and Werner (2000):

- **Ethnocentrism** – The evaluation of another culture through one’s own cultural constructions or experience.
- **Over-simplification** – Representations that over-simplify historical events, political and ideological views, economic and social experiences, and cultural and demographic groups.
- **Voice** – The representation of African American history through their documented testimonials and experiences.
- **Absence** – Material not presented may have the effect of marginalizing, silencing or avoiding potentially contentious topics.
- **Inclusiveness** – The presentation of a variety of narratives as central to the representation of American history.

This research embarked on an examination of these criteria as presented in the textbooks with the understanding that hegemony is not static, but rather it is constantly changing as a part of a dynamic and intricate system that is understood and interpreted by as many people who encounter it.

The critical approach used in this study, combined with an understanding of its limitations, provided the evaluation of these textbooks with a subtle and flexible method of qualitative evaluation which focuses on the development of the possibility of a more critically democratic educational practice and satisfies the concerns of Luke (1988) described above. The foundation of the critical approach used in this study is the understanding that, “for some groups of people, schooling is seen as a vast engine of democracy – opening horizons, ensuring mobility, and so on. For others, the reality of schooling is strikingly different. It is seen as a form of social control or, perhaps, as the embodiment of cultural dangers, institutions whose curricula and teaching practices
threaten the moral universe of the students who attend them” (Apple, 1991, p. 1). The textbooks themselves represent these constructions of reality which have the power to oppress or to emancipate, marginalize or empower. Although approaches to critical theory are diverse, most critical theorists seek to investigate and interrogate the constructions of reality, power and knowledge. For the purpose of this study which is related directly to textbooks, critical theory is defined in the words of Popkewitz (1995) as:

Revers[ing] the historical amnesia by making the inscribed power relation as the problem of research.... There is a disciplined questioning of the subtle and indirect ways in which power works. The modes of inquiry are to understand how institutional patterns constrain and restrain the development of democratic conditions. Foci in contemporary critical social sciences give attention to how the marginalization of people is constructed, the various forms in which power operates. (p. xii)

Essentially, this study aimed to evaluate embedded power relations in these textbooks through the interrogation of historical relationships and events (Popkewitz, 2001). This evaluation centered on the refusal to accept dominant meaning and nuances, and further asserted the possibility of changing it. This study aimed to ask critical questions of the material within these textbooks and their relationships to larger ideological, political and epistemological contexts in order to not only develop a critique, but also develop a language of possibility (Apple, 1986). A language of possibility is directly related to the development of a more critically democratic education. This study does not simply aim to criticize, but to recognize areas of the textbook that have been satisfactorily constructed according to the criteria outlined in this study, and also to encourage and support more inclusive and representative textbook content.
As Apple aptly suggests, “being critical means something more than simply fault-finding. It involves understanding the sets of historically contingent circumstances and contradictory power relationships that create the conditions in which we live” (Apple, 2000, p. 5). No matter how grounded our critical stance may be, we must acknowledge that stance is constructed within larger dynamics of politics of power, oppression and dominance. Nonetheless critical investigations into textbooks and inscribed power relations are important as we all have a responsibility to question and evaluate the constructs around us in order to engage with the possibility of a more critically democratic education and society.

3.3: Positionality

Lisa Long (2005) argues that there are two main positions in the discourse surrounding the ability of white scholars to research and work in African American studies, and oscillations between these two theories clutter the literary traffic on the issue. The first of these positions is termed the “Humanist position” and proponents of this side argue essentially that any person can research in the history of any other person because we are all human and can therefore know and understand each other’s experiences. Proponents of this side argue that scholars of Medieval studies research in this area despite not being from the Medieval time period, and that they are able to do so because by being human they are in a position to understand the history of other humans. It is further argued by this side that if white scholars cannot research in the area of black studies, then that also would mean that African American scholars cannot research in the area of white history and other predominantly white areas of study which Humanists feel
would limit the understanding of history. The Humanist position is a precarious position because it does not address the possibility that white scholars might speak authoritatively but ignorantly on very politically, ideologically and historically sensitive issues (Long, 2005). The Humanist position ignores the present and historical complexities of race relations in America, which critics of this theory view as representing a continuing social investment in white authority. It is further argued that the Humanist position lacks a recognition of race as a social and cultural construction, rather than a biological one. Critics of the Humanist position are particularly concerned with the understanding of race as biologically constructed, because as such it ignores the ways that race is an economic, legal, political, educational, historical, and social order that influences one’s understanding of the past, present and future. By ignoring the complexities of race and race relations the Humanist position seems to be an irresponsible one. Long (2005) argues that although the Humanist position is problematic, the stance of its most extreme critics is equally so.

Long (2005) identifies a second position that argues that the impact of socially constructed meanings of race create racial differences that result in unbridgeable gaps in knowledge. It is argued that economic disparities, social bias and unacknowledged political entitlement prevents a complete understanding of any historical issue by an “other.” Russ Castronovo (2005) further articulates this argument when he questions the ability of whites to “teach, research and write about black texts without making these texts conform to a liberal agenda that validates consensus over radical technique, accord over disjunction, and quaint lessons about mutual understanding over a more insurgent pedagogy dedicated to examining enduring inequalities” (p. 30). This statement
effectively addresses the problematic nature of white scholars researching in black studies because it acknowledges the relatively unprocessed racial history of the United States. In fact, the development of race relations in the United States does create gaps in knowledge and experiences, and this is problematic, but this should not completely shut down scholarly discourse on the subject. Long (2005) identifies the major limitation of this point of view as assuming a universal “black” experience at the expense of the variety of identities that can be brought to a study. In other words it reduces identity to black and white whereas any researcher will bring an entire set of identities which can highlight a plethora of historical narratives within an area of study. Most notably Katherine J. Mayberry’s Teaching What You’re Not (1996), James A. Banks’ Multicultural Education, Transformative knowledge, and Action (1996), and Bonnie T. Smith and Maureen T. Reddy’s Race in the College Classroom (2002) explore this intricacy in the relationship between power and knowledge, the positionality and textuality of the scholar, and the interaction between identities in this area of study. Although varying in their positions, central to their discourse is the fundamentally vexed nature of academic authority.

Despite the overwhelming complexities involved, Long (2005) argues that, “work by white scholars [in black studies] is not definitively impossible, it is imperative” (p. 3) and she takes this stance based on the belief that the idea of a “black experience” is not reflective of the variety of identities with which any scholar can approach African American studies. Long (2005) and Nita Kumar (2005) specifically cite gender, geography, nationality, sexual orientation, and rank as examples of the plethora of identities with which one can approach any historical narrative. Approaching black
studies from the vantage point of one or many of these identities allows for an
interpretation of events that is not limited by a simple black/white narrative. Sabine
Meyer (2005) further claims that the simplification of the study of African American
history to an exclusively black and white narrative limits the understanding of it. Meyer
asserts that a “dialogue based primarily on the confirmation of shared marginality, in
other words, would surely fall short of the potential of a cross-generational and global
interaction across identities and affiliations that might promise the brightest future yet for
the field” (p. 132). Although Long, Kumar and Meyer feel that there is a danger of white
scholars assuming that their academic authority in black studies rests on their “mastery”
of the knowledge of African American history rather than acknowledge the problematic
nature of that authority. However, they argue that the door to discourse between white
scholars and black studies must remain open because shutting it will only limit its
understanding. These scholars acknowledge that academia has traditionally been the
product of and forum for the ideological imperatives of a white supremacist culture, but
feel that open channels of communication, as explosive as they may be, are potentially
the most productive way to come to terms with such a historically, politically and
emotionally charged subject. Nellie McKay (1998) maintains that there is a need for
“African American scholars and scholars of African American history (black and other)
to come to terms jointly with academic spaces they can carve out for themselves” (p.
123). Kumar (2005) further argues that “if race is understood not in terms of essential
identities, but as the operation of modes of domination and oppression, then the colonial
and racial subjects can have access to shared lines of communication as the others” (p.
135). Essentially both academics agree that scholarly work that does not deny the
construction of race can be done in this area (McCaskill & Miller, 1993). bell hooks (1992) supports this by indicating that not only can this work be done, but that there is “pleasure to be found in the acknowledgement and enjoyment of racial difference” (p. 88). As Kilson (1973) simply states, “the exclusion of whites from black studies is unjustified” (p. 11).

As a white researcher in an area of African American studies it is essential to acknowledge and address the longstanding ideological, pedagogical and historical complexities involved in such an undertaking. It is with an understanding that I am a product of the discursive systems that have long oppressed minority groups and an acknowledgement of the problematic nature of the academic authority of a white scholar researching in black studies that I proceed in this research with the hope that my other identities (as female, Canadian, etc) will highlight a narrative within the research that may otherwise have been overlooked. There are social consequences to my research as this research cannot be taken out of the context of a long and problematic colonial history. Clear articulation of evaluation criteria will be the most effective method of defense with respect to the potential ethical consequences of this study.

3.4: Significance of the Study

The importance of textbooks in the educational system and society is highlighted through a review of the literature (Chapter II). Further contributing to the significance of this study is that California is one of the three largest adoption states in the United States and therefore the textbooks adopted by California have significant influence on textbooks used and the textbook standards for the entire nation. It has been stressed that a slipping
in the standards of textbooks in California can afflict the educational system nationwide because what California adopts today will be sold across the nation tomorrow (ATC, 2005).

3.5: Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by the researcher herself. Given the positionality of the research, a complete understanding or observance of the effects of colonialism and their manifestations in texts and textbooks is problematic. Again, the researcher hopes that clearly articulated evaluations of texts will provide the reader with confidence in the results of this study.

This study is further limited by its focus on a race-ethnicity demographic. Research that focuses on a demographic group is problematic as race is a broad, unclear and socially constructed category. It encompasses a variety of people and therefore does not account for many individual experiences and identities as an African American, including gender, class and sexual orientation. It is the opinion of this researcher that although this study is problematic in its focus on African American as a category or subject of research, it nonetheless contributes to an understanding of the implications and significance of the publication of these textbooks, as well as their impact on American culture, society, education, and politics. Further, this research defines “ethnocentric” as values or viewpoints that reflect those who have historically held power; white, Christian, heterosexual, middle to upper class, native-English speaking men.

This study is further limited by practicality. There are obvious needs for the delimitation of any study. This study does not evaluate the images in the textbooks or e-
resources that may accompany the textbooks. This study is specifically limited to only the written text in each of these textbooks. This study is limited to grade 8 United States history textbooks approved by the California State Board of Education in 2005.
CHAPTER IV: Presentation of Findings

This chapter presents the findings of this study for each textbook individually. Each summary introduces the reader to the textbook content and to the authors of the textbook. It then provides an overview of findings which are supported with relevant sample selections. Each selection is discussed as either contributing to the adequacy or inadequacy of the textbook. The textbook summary ends with an overall conclusion regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook and final statements regarding the representation of African Americans in the text. It is important to note that all the textbooks in this study include content above and beyond the state-mandated curriculum.

4.1: American Journey

This textbook is designed to meet the curriculum requirements related to United States history as part of the state-mandated grade 8 social studies curriculum in California. The textbook is a survey of over 500 years of American history and the textbook itself is 953 pages long without including references and indexes. The textbook begins with Columbus’ arrival in North America, continues through Colonization, the American Revolution, the formation and expansion of the Union, the Civil War and Reconstruction through to the industrialization of America, the World Wars, the Depression, the Cold War, the Civil Rights era, the War in Vietnam, and finally onto the Bush presidency and the War on Terror. Given the immense scope of the textbook, it is a survey of American history that attempts to construct a cohesive American narrative of a “more perfect union” from discovery to the present.
This textbook is written by three very accomplished history professors who are employed with well-known and highly respected universities in the United States. Joyce Appleby is a Professor of History at UCLA whose published works include *Capitalism and a New Social Order*, *The Jeffersonian Vision of the 1790s*, and *Ideology and Economic Thought in Seventeenth Century England*, which won the Berkshire Prize. Dr. Appleby served as president of the American Historical Association, and the Organization of American Historians, as well as chairing the Council of the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg. She has also been elected to the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. Alan Brinkley is an Allan Nevins Professor of American History at Columbia University. His published works include *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* which won the 1983 National Book Award and *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War*. In addition, Dr. Brinkley was awarded the Levenson Memorial Teaching Prize at Harvard University. Finally, James McPherson is a George Henry Davis Professor of American History at Princeton University. Dr. McPherson is the author of 11 books about the Civil War era including *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1989. He is a member of many professional historical associations including the Civil War Preservation Trust. This textbook also employs 11 academic consultants and 11 teacher reviewers presumably in order to facilitate and support a more inclusive and comprehensive text, and to "validate" (Venezky, 1992) the textbook and its contents.
There are 76 incidents in this textbook where African Americans appear. This number includes both single sentences and small chapter sections where African Americans appear exclusively, as one incident each. Of this 76, 58 of these references to African Americans or African American history are inadequate in terms of the criteria of this investigation. The overwhelming majority of these 58 references are over-simplistic in their representation of African American history as the contexts and implications of historical, political, economic, and social climates and events are not provided to the reader. A lack of African American voice in this construction of history runs parallel to this tendency to over-simplify. The overall result of this over-simplification is an apparently ethnocentric American history where the contributions and accomplishments of African Americans are marginalized, glossed-over and excluded from a dominant American narrative.

Although this ethnocentric and hegemonic approach marginalizes African Americans, this is not static or consistent within the textbook; various parts of the textbook do present African American history as fundamental to the communication of American history. Eighteen sections of this textbook were satisfactory. These sections largely appeared in chapters referring to African American contributions to American wars, music, education, and government. In general, the contributions of African Americans during the American War of Independence, the Civil War and the World Wars are covered in depth, as well as their motivations for joining and their experiences during. Contributions, particularly to music, are dealt with in depth in this textbook, as are the accomplishments of African Americans in higher education and business. The Civil Rights Movement is also exemplary in its inclusiveness, presentation of African
American voice, and the complexity and comprehensiveness of representation. However, perhaps as a result of the nature of a survey textbook catering to an over-sized curriculum, the representation of African Americans and African American history in *American Journey* is marginalized through its presentation in pieces of information that are tacked onto the ends of paragraphs and seem to have little connection to the material surrounding it or to American history in general. This largely ethnocentric presentation of African American history illustrates embedded power relationships.

To exemplify these relationships, examples from the textbook are discussed here. These examples have been selected based on their correspondence to all of the appropriate criteria of embedded power relations that are the concern of this study.

Page 90 of *American Journey* states:

> Many enslaved Africans who arrived in the Carolinas worked in the rice fields. Some of them knew a great deal about rice cultivation because they had come from rice-growing areas of West Africa. Growing rice required much labor, so the demand for slaves increased. By 1708 more than half the people living in southern Carolina were enslaved Africans. (p. 90)

This is one of many statements in this section that directly refers to the institution of slavery without incorporating African American voice or referring to the practice of slavery as anything more than an economic necessity in the South. Although the excerpt is not historically inaccurate, it is problematic. To a grade 8 reader, the growth and entrenchment of a system of slavery appears as a “neutral” event where the lives of people are neither positively nor negatively affected. In other words, without the incorporation of voice the text does not provide the reader with an understanding of the social, emotional, political, and economic repercussions of the practice and expansion of the institution of slavery on Africans, Africa or African Americans. The growth and
entrenchment of a system of slavery into United States history and society is not a neutral event, and it cannot be simply listed or presented without context or without the representation of the various voices that define this time and these events. This text passage, and many of the passages that surround it, do not incorporate the voices of African Americans through the inclusion of connections to political, social, economic, and emotional implications and reactions. The presentation of the system of slavery as a necessary evil in the economic growth of the South represents an ethnocentric power structure where the voices of African Americans are subordinated for the good of economic growth, or the good of the country. To more specifically address the criteria of this study, this text excerpt represents an ethnocentric American historical narrative as the expansion and entrenchment of slavery is over-simplified and lacks adequate inclusion of African American voice. The presentation of a critically democratic history would see the incorporation of many perspectives as central to the presentation of American history, as fundamentally, American history is the combination and interactions of these histories.

Page 175 initiates further discussion regarding an ethnocentricity that may be the result of embedded power relations in this textbook. Page 175 states,

The Revolutionary War ideals of freedom and liberty inspired some white Americans to question slavery. As early as the Stamp Act crisis, religious groups had voted to condemn slavery. In 1778 Governor William Livingston of New Jersey asked the legislature to free all enslaved people in the state. Slavery, Livingstone said, was “utterly inconsistent with the principles of Christianity and humanity.” African Americans made similar arguments. (p. 175)

To a grade 8 reader this text passage, which appears at the beginning of a discussion regarding emancipation, insinuates that it was white Americans who first questioned the institution of slavery, and that African American contributions
to the movement were limited to “making similar arguments.” This excerpt reveals an embedded power structure that implies that resistance to slavery was inspired by white Americans who questioned it first, and that the emancipatory efforts of white Americans were more significant. The absence of an acknowledgement of the resistance efforts of African Americans to slavery from its inception here leaves the reader with the feeling that it was white Americans who began the movement to end slavery. It may have been white Americans who organized the first visible and politically viable movement to end slavery, but African Americans also played major roles in this political movement. The emphasis on the contributions and objections of white Americans before those of African Americans, could lead a reader to believe that African Americans did not play a significant and founding role in the movement to end slavery. Further, without the voice of African Americans, the reader is completely unable to piece together perspectives, experiences, political, social, or emotional contexts with regards to their resistance efforts to the institution of slavery. The combination of these factors reflects an ethnocentric narrative of history that points to an underlying power structure wherein the voices, accomplishments and contributions of African Americans are not explored as part of a fundamental understanding of American history and emancipatory efforts.

Further reinforcing the power structure discussed in the previous analysis is the introduction to the emancipation movement at the time of the American Civil War. The textbook opens the chapter with an extensive description of
William Lloyd Garrison and his contributions, introduced in the following manner,

William Lloyd Garrison, a dramatic and spirited man, fought strongly for the right of African Americans to be free. On one occasion Garrison was present when Frederick Douglass, an African American who escaped from slavery, spoke to a white audience about life as a slave … Garrison shared Douglass’ outrage at the notion that people could be bought and sold like objects. (p. 418)

As an introduction to a section regarding the abolitionist movement during the American Civil War, the textbook has chosen to focus and emphasize the accomplishments and contributions of a white American, and refers, in large part to Frederick Douglass as the “African American who escaped from slavery” and inspired Garrison. Is this a justifiable portrayal of Douglass, one of the most influential and accomplished abolitionist speakers and writers? Beyond that, is the emphasis of a white American over an African American an equitable presentation of the abolitionist movement? A critical approach to this analysis must lead to the interrogation of the placement, physically and symbolically, of a white American at the head of the abolitionist movement, and further, the marginality of African Americans as a result of this placement. This study suggests that this excerpt represents an ethnocentric narrative that does not adequately incorporate African American voice and over-simplifies their contributions to the abolitionist movement.

The over-simplification that one would assume is inherent in such an expansive curriculum is particularly marked in this textbook. The over-simplification of events in this textbook is largely associated with a lack of
African American voice that can then lead to an ethnocentric presentation of American history. This over-simplification is exemplified in passages found on pages 512 and 831. On page 512, the textbook states, “Along with education, most freed people wanted land. Some African Americans were able to buy land with the assistance of the Freedmen’s Bank, established in 1865. Most, however, failed to get their own land.” The use of the word “failed” here represents an over-simplification of the political, economic, social, and emotional context of African Americans during Reconstruction. It places the responsibility for economic and political advancement indirectly onto African Americans without the incorporation of the climate and context of these failures. This may appear to be a fine point, but to a grade 8 reader, the use of the word “failed” implies individual blame, rather than fostering an understanding of the circumstances that may have led to failure. Further, without the incorporation and presentation of voices to enlighten the reader as to the barriers and difficulties of any type of advancement, the reader is left without an understanding of how the social, political and economic context of Reconstruction failed African Americans. More simply stated, the over-simplification of the social, political, economic, and emotional context of Reconstruction, combined with a lack of African American voice, could result in a reader’s difficulty in integrating a variety of perspectives and contexts that more comprehensively represents a critically democratic American historical narrative. A further example of over-simplification is on page 831, “African Americans also questioned their place in society in the 1950s. After years of struggling for their rights, African Americans became increasingly
impatient for change and less willing to accept their status as second-class citizens. They launched a new campaign for civil rights." This passage represents part of the introduction to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s to 1970s. Like the abolitionist movement, this introduction also begins with an articulation of the accomplishments and contributions of white Americans rather than those of African Americans. In addition, African American accomplishments, contributions, social and emotional contexts are marginalized and over-simplified as the textbook states that they also questioned their place in society, rather than presenting African Americans as the initiators who were the impetus and core of the movement. The combination of emphasis on white Americans, and the placement of African Americans after them in an introduction to the Civil Right Movement is indicative of an ethnocentric and inequitable construction of American history. Overall, the text appears to marginalize a complex and extensive African American history of resistance, defiance and struggle through an absence of voice.

One final selection for analysis exemplifies the need for interrogating absence as part of any discursive framework of power. Between the pages of 855 and 953, where the textbook presents more recent American history, including the Vietnam War and the War on Terror, African Americans no longer appear. It is as if all constructions and implications of race in American society were wiped away by the Civil Rights Movement and the political, social, economic, and historical contexts and contributions of African Americans are no longer relevant or even existent in American society and culture. This represents an over-
simplification and marginalization that neglects African American voice and context. The absence of African Americans in the last chapters of the textbook is problematic if the goal is a democratic, comprehensive and inclusive construction of American history.

Ethnocentrism, over-simplification and absences of African American voices are not consistent through the text. The representation of African Americans and the construction of their histories in this textbook reflect a dynamic and intricate set of changing embedded power relationships and interactions. There are several areas of the textbook that comprehensively include voice and African American histories, and provide detailed accounts of political, social, economic, and emotional contexts. Page 401 exemplifies how voice can be combined with these contexts to better represent African American history:

Planters gathered in the bright Savannah sunshine. They were asked to bid on a strong slave who could plow their fields. Fear and grief clouded the enslaved man’s face because he had been forced to leave his wife and children. Later, he wrote this letter: “My Dear wife I [write] ... with much regret to inform you that I am Sold to a man by the name of Peterson.... Give my love to my father and mother and tell them Good Bye for me. And if we shall not meet in this world, I hope to meet in heaven. My dear wife for you and my Children my pen cannot express the [grief] I feel to be parted from you all.” (p. 401)

This passage encourages the reader to understand the experiences and effects of the slave trade on people through the words and experiences of an African American. The inclusion of voice results in a greater complexity and comprehensiveness in the presentation of American history. Another example of the empowerment of African Americans and their inclusion into American history with a sense of importance and significance is as follows:
The cities provided free African Americans with opportunities to form their own communities. African American barbers, carpenters, and small traders offered their services throughout their communities. Free African Americans founded their own churches and institutions. In New Orleans they formed an opera company. Although some free African Americans prospered in the cities, their lives were far from secure. (p. 407)

Although this does not incorporate African American voice directly through their words, it does begin to more intricately and comprehensively represent social, economic and political contexts that link it to, and include it in, a larger American narrative. This inclusion and increased complexity moves away from an ethnocentric presentation towards a more inclusive and pluralistic construction of American history.

The chapter section on the Civil Rights Movement is, overall, the most comprehensive inclusion of African American voice into American history. The textbook details the accomplishments and contributions of a variety of civil rights leaders and events. It incorporates the voice of a spectrum of people that were involved and affected by this movement and this time. An example of this inclusiveness is found on page 851 where the textbook states,

To rally support for the civil rights bill, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the SCLC organized a massive march in Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963. More than 200,000 people, of all colors and from all over the country, arrived to take part. Emily Rock, a 15-year-old African American, described how she felt at the march: "There was this sense of hope for the future-the belief that this march was the big step in the right direction. It could be heard in the voices of the people singing and seen in the way they walked. It poured out into smiles." (p. 851)

Overall this section provides the space for, and emphasizes the inclusion of, a plethora of perspectives that equitably merge together to form a larger narrative.
The inclusion of voice and the resulting increase in the comprehensiveness and complexity of the text builds a more critically democratic history.

To conclude, this textbook is largely structured and authored in a way that over-simplifies the representation of African Americans and as such is limited in its inclusion of African American voice. This results in an ethnocentric presentation of the majority of American history. There are some notable exceptions to this presentation where, in particular, the accomplishments of African Americans in war, education, culture, and government are highlighted. However, these adequate representations appear as isolated pockets. The Civil Rights Movement is the textbook section that is most consistently adequate in its presentation; unfortunately, the rest of African American history appears as a supporting narrative tacked onto, rather than incorporated into and emphasized within, a dominant American narrative.

4.2: Creating America: A History of the United States

This textbook is designed to meet the curriculum requirements related to United States history as part of the state-mandated grade 8 social studies curriculum in California. The textbook begins with a description of the world in 1500, the European exploration of the Americas, the establishment and growth of the thirteen colonies, the development of an “American identity”, the American Revolution, the constitution and the launching of a new republic, the Jefferson era, the national and regional growth of America, the age of Jackson, Manifest Destiny, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the growth of America in the West,
industrialization, changes in American life (including progressivism), the growth of America as a world power, World War One, the roaring twenties, the Great Depression, World War Two, the Civil Rights Era, the Vietnam war, the major issues of the seventies and eighties, and ends with recent technological and economic changes. The theme of the textbook appears to be the development of citizenship throughout American history. This textbook is 890 pages long without the inclusion of indexes and appendixes.

This textbook is authored by “senior consultants” and also appears to incorporate a vigorous review process. Included in the credits are eight content consultants, seven members of a multicultural advisory board, 26 teacher consultants, 19 members of a teacher panel, and 12 members of a student review board. Senior consultant Jesus Garcia is a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Kentucky. He is also a former social studies teacher and continues to act as a consultant on social studies standards for the public school systems in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Donna Ogle is a professor of reading and language arts at National-Louis University in Evanston, Illinois. Also a former social studies teacher, she is now the director of a Goals 2000 grant for Reading and Thinking in the Content Areas for four Chicago high schools. Dr. Ogle is most well-known for her development of the K-W-L reading strategy. C. Frederick Risinger is the director of professional development and coordinator for social studies education at Indiana University. Dr. Risinger is the past president of the National Council for the Social Studies. Finally, Joyce Stevos is a recently retired teacher who served as the social studies area supervisor in Rhode Island.
In this role Dr. Stevos developed programs on Holocaust studies, the Armenian genocide, character education, voter education, and government and law.

Given the apparent collaboration and extensive review efforts, an articulation of the responsibilities of each of the panels and consultants is helpful. A description of the responsibilities of each panel is provided in the textbook; however, the descriptions are relatively unspecific. The content consultants reviewed the manuscript of the textbook for historical depth and accuracy and for clarity of presentation. The multicultural advisors reviewed the manuscript for appropriate historical content ("appropriate" is not defined in the description), and the teacher consultants are active educators who contributed activity options for the pupils' edition, and teaching ideas and activities for the teachers' edition. The teacher panels provided ongoing review during the development of prototypes, the table of contents and key components of the program. The student board also reviewed pages of the textbook. As a system of review, although the descriptions of responsibilities are unclearly presented in the textbook, the structure would appear to provide a framework and network of support that could facilitate a more democratic and representative education and history.

The construction of an American historical narrative for a textbook is a complicated process. It involves the representation of complex and intricate events that are subtly but irrefutably interconnected. A comprehensive reflection or presentation of this intricacy in a textbook, particularly one that hopes to present such an immense expanse of time, is challenging. This textbook does not present a consistent framework of power relations, or of that relationship to
knowledge. This textbook shifts between perspectives, often sectioning African Americans into compartments that usually satisfactorily represent their contexts and voices. On the other hand, the compartmentalization of African American voice leaves the reader with an impression of disconnection and irrelevance. This marginalization is reinforced when African American voice and representation abruptly disappear after Reconstruction, with the exception of the Civil Rights Movement.

In this textbook, African Americans appear on 69 separate occasions. Each one of these instances often represents a large portion of a page, or sometimes even several pages in a row. On 44 of these occasions an ethnocentric and dominant narrative marginalizes the representation of African Americans and therefore the text is not inclusive and representative. In particular, ethnocentrism and an absence of African American voice are particularly pronounced in this textbook and this results in the construction of an exclusionary and unrepresentative American historical narrative. However, embedded power relations in this textbook are dynamic, contentious and contradictory. There were 25 balanced, representative and democratic presentations. The majority of these sections focus on African American resistance. A critical examination of selected examples will help to articulate inconsistencies.

Pages 349 to 350 are titled “Slavery Expands.” This section represents the majority of the textbook’s presentation and explanation of the entrenchment of the system of slavery. This section is a list, in paragraph form, of the economic advantages of slave labour which the textbook uses as a rationale for the
proliferation of slavery in the South. This representation is exemplified on page 349 as the textbook states,

From 1790 to 1860, cotton production rose greatly. So did the number of enslaved people in the South. Using slave labor, the South raised millions of bales of cotton each year for the textile mills of England and the American Northeast. (See the graph on page 350.) In 1820, the South earned $22 million from cotton exports. By the late 1830s, earnings from cotton exports were nearly ten times greater, close to $200 million. As cotton earnings rose, so did the price of slaves. (p. 349)

The inclusion of African American perspective into this section may encourage the reader to see that slavery may have “made sense” economically, although there was most certainly a moral and ethical cost. The result of the absence of African American voice is an ethnocentric presentation of the rationales behind slavery, and the political, economic and social consequences of its practice on all Americans.

Page 351 offers a direct textual manifestation of an embedded power structure. The majority of this page is concerned with “Finding Strength in Religion” which the textbook approaches in a general manner in order to exemplify how religion was incorporated into the lives of African Americans. What is disturbing about this passage is that all African Americans are referred to as “slaves” and all white Americans are referred to as “owners” or “slaveholders.” Free African Americans are not referred to in this section. This leaves the reader with the impression that free African Americans were either not a part of African American culture, were inconsequential or unimportant, or simply did not exist. A grade 8 reader might then assume that all African Americans were slaves, and all white Americans were owners. This establishes an embedded framework of
power as race relationships, and interactions become marked by a "slave" versus "owner" dichotomy. This black/white, slave/owner frame of reference oversimplifies intricate social, political and economic interactions, as well as undermining African American voice. This then indirectly facilitates an ethnocentric American historical narrative.

Page 693 offers an example of how the absence of African American voice can lead to the over-simplification of historical events and social, political and economic contexts which then hinders a comprehensive and inclusive American narrative;

Between 1910 and 1920, about 500,000 African Americans moved north to such cities as New York, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis. This movement became known as the Great Migration. African Americans left to escape bigotry, poverty, and the racial violence of the South. They hoped for a better life in the North. (p. 693)

The Great Migration marked a significant change in the social, political, economic dynamics of American culture, which were the result of complex historical events and contexts. This representation, while historically accurate, does not present the reader with the significance of the Great Migration. The movement of 500,000 people in a relatively short period of time begs an examination of the push-pull factors in order to more comprehensively understand this time period and the associated events. The conditions under which African Americans were living were most likely inadequate. Would an exploration of these conditions, through the voices of African Americans not be appropriate in order to comprehensively convey the complexity of American history and the perspectives within it? The absence of voice in this section leads to an oversimplification in the presentation of events which results in the subjugation of
African American perspectives to a dominant, often ethnocentric, American narrative.

Further evidence of absence can be found in the last 60 pages of the textbook, where no African Americans are mentioned after the chapter section of the Civil Rights Movement. This absence may be indicative of an unwillingness to address current social, political and economic contexts and realities through a historically empathetic framework. This absence results in the exclusion of an African American voice, and this does not support a pluralistic and inclusive American narrative.

This textbook is unique in that it does provide space for African American history in small pockets. These pockets, while framed within an exclusive and ethnocentric framework, are examples of inclusiveness and the incorporation of African American voice into the construction of a democratic American narrative. These satisfactory representations of embedded power relations are found throughout the text, but an overwhelming majority of them center their focus on resistance. They provide a more balanced and democratic American narrative which focuses on the valuing and inclusion of a plethora of perspectives. Pages 442 and 444 are the biographies of Harriet Tubman (who worked to free African Americans on the underground railroad) and Sojourner Truth (who was an outspoken advocate of women’s rights and abolition), and they exemplify this inclusion and voice. Harriet Tubman’s biography, for example, states, “She later described her feelings as she crossed into the free state of Pennsylvania: ‘I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person now that I was free. There was such a
glory over everything” (p. 442). Both of these biographies use the voices of these women themselves as well as the voices of Americans in completely different social and political situations in order to empower and emphasize the contributions and accomplishments of these women as well as incorporate an understanding of the implications of their work in leading America to a more democratic, representative and equitable society and culture. As many perspectives combine and interact, the reader is left with a more involved and representative construction of American history that is inclusive and pluralistic.

Pages 509 to 510 are titled “Resistance by Slaves” and document the violent and non-violent resistance of famous and not-so-famous African Americans as they resisted slavery on a daily basis within their individual capacities. Included within this extensive documentation are the voices of many African Americans. The following textual excerpt begins to exemplify the detailed nature of this textbook’s representation of the resistance of African Americans to slavery,

Another factor that affected the South was the growing resistance from slaves. To hurt the Southern economy, slaves slowed their pace of work or stopped working altogether. Some carried out sabotage, destroying crops and farm equipment to hurt the plantation economy. When white planters fled advancing Union armies, slaves often refused to go along. (pp. 509-510)

The combination of this more extensive representation of context combined with African American voice presents the reader with a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of an American narrative.

A final example of an adequately representative presentation of African American history is the 10 pages dedicated to the Civil Rights Movement. Given
that the text is a survey of American history, ten pages represents a fairly large physical space for the Civil Rights Movement. The section itself emphasizes and incorporates the voices of many African Americans in order to articulate the struggles, the accomplishments, the barriers, and the changes that occurred politically, economically, socially, and emotionally. The comprehensiveness of voice fosters a more inclusive and encompassing American history that acknowledges a variety of perspectives. This inclusiveness and comprehensiveness is again exemplified on page 814 and 815 as the textbook states,

In 1955, about six months after the *Brown II* decision, Rosa Parks was arrested, as you read in One American’s story on page 813. News of her arrest quickly reached the other members of her church. The church members issued a notice to other African-American churches and local groups. It said, “If Negroes did not ride the buses, they [the buses] could not operate. We are, therefore, asking every Negro to stay off the buses Monday in protest of the arrest and trial.” This protest, called the **Montgomery bus boycott** began that day. That evening, local NAACP leaders held a meeting to decide whether to continue the boycott. A 26-year-old Baptist minister from Atlanta, Georgia, named **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, spoke to the group. A voice from the past: “There comes a time that people get tired. We are here this evening to say to those who have mistreated us so long that we are tired - tired of being segregated and humiliated; tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression.” (pp. 814-815)

Overall, this textbook does provide the physical space for the incorporation of African Americans and African American history. These spaces are inclusive of minority perspectives and are infused with the voices of African Americans. However, they appear as pockets that are tacked onto a larger framework that over-simplifies and excludes minority history and perspectives and is therefore generally ethnocentric in nature. As such, these pockets of
adequate representation lack connection to each other and to the surrounding material. They appear as isolated incidences which serve to marginalize and silence African American voice, history and experience. African American history as it appears in this textbook is not fused with an American narrative so as to encourage the reader to understand it as fundamental to a dynamic construction of an American historical narrative.

4.3: United States History

This textbook is designed to meet the curriculum requirements related to United States history as part of the state-mandated grade 8 social studies curriculum in California. This textbook begins with a survey of the earliest Native American cultures and the trading kingdoms of West Africa in a unit entitled “Beginnings-1500.” It then moves on to European exploration, the English colonies in America, the American Revolution, the formation of government, citizenship and the constitution, the Jefferson Era and the Jackson Age, national identity, the expansion West, the North and the South, the Civil War, Reconstruction, more of the movement West, the Industrial Age, and Immigration. It then enters the modern era with America as a world power, the World Wars, the roaring twenties, and the Great Depression. Continuing with the Cold War, the Civil Rights era, the Vietnam War, “A search for order” in the 1970s, and then ends with “America looks to the future” and George W Bush’s presidency. The textbook constructs an American historical narrative with an emphasis on progress. Technological, ideological, political, economic, militaristic, and territorial progress is presented as
fundamental to the recounting of American history and for the comprehension of its historical, present and future paths.

The text is authored by William Deverell and Deborah Gray White. Dr. Deverell is a professor of history at the University of Southern California. His published works include Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910 and Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of the Mexican Past. He is also the editor of the Blackwell Companion to the American West. William Deverell is the former chairman of the California Council for the Humanities. Dr. White is a former New York City school teacher who is now a Distinguished Professor of History at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She is a specialist in American history, African American history in particular, and her published works include Ar’n’t I A Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South and Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994. This textbook also employs various councils as part of the consultation and revision process. Kylene Beers, Ed.D is listed as a contributing author, Frances Marie Gibson, Ph.D as general editor, and Carol Jago as senior literature and writing specialist. There are also three senior consultants, one associate director, one religion consultant and one senior religion consultant listed in the credits. In addition to this there are 12 academic reviewers and 18 educational reviewers.

This textbook is 959 pages long without the inclusion of indexes and appendixes. In this space there are 46 places where African Americans and African American history appears. There are significantly more places where African Americans are mentioned, but only as part of a sentence concerned with another idea or topic, and therefore African Americans and African American history are not the direct focus of that text passage. As
they contribute nothing to the construction of African American history, those examples are not included in the count of 46 based on their irrelevance. The majority of these 46 references are small, with the overwhelming majority being a partial page. Thirty-nine of these references were not satisfactory. Almost all of these were found to be inadequate based on an over-simplification or absence of events, perspectives and histories embedded into a framework where the voices of minorities are entirely under-represented or missing completely. As the quantitative results of this evaluation indicate, adequately negotiated textual passages are few, but three of them appear after the Civil Rights Movement. As the social, economic and political conditions of African Americans appear and are contextualized in these last chapters of recent American history, this indicates an effort to connect historical circumstances and events to today.

The selected examples from the text do not represent historical inaccuracies or any offensive or derogatory language or connotations. They do, however, represent an over-simplification of context, connection and experience which serves to disconnect the textual passage from implications, consequences and American history in general. Pages 93 and 94 exemplify this over-simplification, marginalization and exclusion of African American voice. These passages appear at the end of the textbook section on the expansion of slavery. The hopes of the researcher at this point were to have the textbook bring together the small pieces of information found in the previous paragraphs to form a more solid and cohesive representation that outlined the effects and the implications of a system of slavery on American society, culture and politics. Instead, this section is a repetition of previous information that continues to be marked with an absence of African American voice. The presentation of African American history as repetitive bits that bear
little connection to an American narrative, and no connection to any implications, changes or social, political, economic, or emotional context, serves to marginalize an African Americans as they are absent or seemingly irrelevant. An ethnocentric narrative is the result of this combination of absence, lack of voice and over-simplification of the African American experience of slavery.

Page 327 further exemplifies this disconnection and absence as it states, “Southerners also relied on enslaved African Americans to work the plantations. The issue of slavery would become increasingly controversial between the North and South.” By itself it is a historically accurate statement and could be considered, by all accounts to be an adequate transition of topics. However, this is the first direct reference to African Americans in 200 pages. The text has largely concerned itself with the presentation of battle details, and the detailing of several, relatively obscure, political treaties and events. African Americans have been mentioned in these 200 pages, but only indirectly, as part of a sentence with a different focus. None of the sentences have directly referred to African Americans, none have been named and there is no documentation of voice. In chapters that pertain to America after colonization and before the Civil War, how can this absence be justified? The major observation of the researcher at this point in the evaluation of this textbook was that it was exclusive, inadequate and incomplete in its representation. The primary reasoning behind this finding of inadequacy is absence. Implied in absence is a lack of voice, the exclusion and marginalization of African American history, the over-simplification of not only African American history but of American history, and the construction of an ethnocentric, dominant historical narrative.
Pages 380 to 410 detail the conditions in the North before the Civil War. In this 30 page section there is not a single mention of African Americans. This textbook focuses on technological progress and presents, in great detail, the technological inventions of the North at this time. It seems that the textbook is purposefully excluding African American perspectives in order to avoid the inclusion of contentious relationships and events in American history. Again, this absence results in an oversimplified, exclusive and ethnocentric American historical narrative.

As a final example of absence and over-simplification, this textbook details the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement with disconnection and detachment. Beginning with Brown v. The Board of Education and ending with the Montgomery Bus Boycott and a biography of Martin Luther King Jr. this section is only four pages long and represents the textbook’s presentation of how “The Civil Rights Movement Takes Shape.” The textbook simply lists the occurrences that mark the official beginning of the movement but fails to provide a comprehensive presentation of the implications and significance of these events. This section does not recognize several organized movements and individuals that did not gain much media hype such as Ella Baker, Septima Clark and the SNCC movement to increase voter registration in Mississippi. This section does not detail the violent resistance that marks this movement, or the varied and significant consequences of this movement on politics, economics, culture, and society. In the entire four pages that represent the Civil Rights movement taking shape in the United States there are only two places where the textbook has included the voices of African Americans, and both of these are only one sentence long.
The chapter section titled "Kennedy, Johnson and Civil Rights" the textbook begins to change its presentation. Beginning with the inclusion of African American voices, and combining these with a more comprehensive presentation of African American history, the textbook begins to more adequately and equitably represent American history. As the textbook begins to incorporate African American voice, the reader becomes more aware of political, social, economic, and emotional contexts and climates in the United States during the Civil Rights Movement. This fosters a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the various perspectives and experiences that make up any construction of American history. As such it more successfully addresses ethnocentrism and embedded power relations in order to support historical empathy and cultivate connections, implications and consequences of history in today's political, social, economic, and emotional contexts.

It should be further noted that this textbook does briefly incorporate African Americans into the units after the Civil Rights Movement. Although this incorporation is limited, it does represent an inclusiveness that is lacking in the other textbooks of this study. Page 883 states, "Other women worked for change by running for public office. In 1968 Shirley Chisholm was elected to represent New York City district in the House of Representatives. She was the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Congress." This simple textual addition does allow the reader to see the political gains of African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement as well as link African American women to the women's liberation movement in the 1970s. As a result the text empowers African Americans, women in particular, and connects them to an American historical narrative. It provides the reader with a more in-depth understanding of the social and
political climate of the late 1960s and encourages the reader to understand this history from a framework that empowers and recognizes the contributions of African Americans.

In addition, page 933 states, “Many African Americans benefited from new opportunities in the 1970s. For example, the number of African Americans attending college in 1976 was four times higher than it had been a decade earlier.” This small passage serves to link the Civil Rights Movement with real benefits for African Americans. Not only does it provide historical context for these achievements, but it allows the reader to understand the achievements of African Americans within this context. These references are small, over-simplified and inadequate in terms of a comprehensive representation, but they do begin to lead the reader in the right direction.

Further, the inclusion of African American experiences begins to deconstruct an ethnocentric narrative.

As a result of a textual framework and conceptual focus on technological, territorial and militaristic progress, combined with an immense and expansive curriculum, the representation of African Americans in this textbook is entirely inadequate. Although individual textual examples were neither historically inaccurate nor offensive or derogatory in any way, they largely neglected to articulate any comprehensive political, economic, emotional, or social context that would allow a reader to construct an American historical narrative that was inclusive of a variety of perspectives that are all equitably empowered and represented. Further, absence was the primary indicator of the inadequacy. The exclusion and over-simplification of African American contributions and accomplishments throughout the text resulted in an ethnocentric narrative that silenced African American voice. Within this framework it
was difficult for the text to begin to change this power dynamic as a reader was not provided with missing historical context for understanding more inclusive and representative statements. This resulted in most references to African Americans appearing disjointed and disengaged. Although some effort was made to include African Americans after the Civil Rights Movement unit, it was simply a matter of too little too late. The textbook, in its entirety, is therefore found to be inadequate.

4.4: The American Nation

This textbook is designed to meet the curriculum requirements related to United States history as part of the state-mandated grade 8 social studies curriculum in California. The textbook is 899 pages long without including appendixes and references. It provides a survey of American history that constructs an American narrative that emphasizes the growth and progress of the nation. It begins with a geography section which is concerned with the lands and climates of the United States. The textbook then moves to its historical content which begins “before the global age, prehistory-1600,” then onto exploration and colonization, with the thirteen colonies being the focus of the next two chapters. The American Revolution is next, which leads to creating a Republic, a government, a constitution, and citizenship. The Jefferson and Jackson Eras are addressed as part of an articulation of how the nation grows and prospers, and particularly how it expands West. Next is the North and the South, the division of the nation over the question of slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction. The textbook then focuses on the transformation of the nation, the new West, industrial growth, the development of a new urban culture, and the progressive era. Moving onto America’s
development into a new world power, there are the World Wars, with the roaring twenties and the Great Depression in between. The last unit covers the Cold War, the prosperity and further reform of America (the Civil Rights Movement as one chapter heading), and finishes with America as a nation in a new world, which covers America from 1970 to the present.

The text is authored by Dr. James West Davidson and Dr. Michael B. Stoff with Dr. Herman J. Viola as senior consultant. James Davidson has taught at both the high school and college levels and has consulted on curriculum design for American history courses. He is the co-author of After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection and Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic. Michael Stoff received his Ph. D. from Yale University and currently teaches at the University of Texas in Austin where he has won numerous grants, fellowships and teaching awards. He is the author of Oil, War, and American Security: The Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941-1947 and co-editor of The Manhattan Project: A Documentary Introduction to the Atomic Age. Herman Viola, curator emeritus with the Smithsonian Institution, is also a distinguished historian and author. He founded the scholarly journal Prologue at the National Archives and has also served as director of the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Viola is a nationally recognized authority on American Indians, the history of the American West and the Civil War. This textbook has also employed eight academic consultants, 22 teacher reviewers, a reading specialist, a curriculum and assessment specialist, an accuracy panel, and three program advisors.

There are 52 sections in this textbook where African Americans appear. There are very few instances where only one or two sentences have been included into a
paragraph with another topic as this textbook has opted to present African American
history largely in small blocks of text titled “African Americans” somewhere in most
chapter sections. On 36 of these 52 occasions, the textbook has over-simplified or failed
to provide the reader with an adequate articulation of appropriate political, social,
emotional, or economic contextual information that would allow a comprehensive
understanding of the intricacy and contentiousness of the historical event or climate. This
over-simplification is directly related to a lack of African American voice in the textbook.
Lack of voice makes it difficult to present a spectrum of points of view that would
represent a more comprehensive and intricate understanding of historical events that
comes much closer to providing a reader with a sense of historical empathy and
consciousness. However, there are particular points where the textbook has provided the
space and has developed a contextual understanding of historical events and happenings
from a variety of perspectives. In these spaces the text emphasized and supported
African American voice and experiences. The majority of these areas are found in the
chapters related to abolitionist efforts, the Civil War and Reconstruction. The following
are selected examples that illustrate the spectrum of embedded power relations found in
this text according to the five main criteria used in this study.

Pages 118 and 119 are titled “Slavery in Africa, the Middle Passage and Limiting
Rights” and are concerned with the beginnings of the slave trade in America. Given that
the textbook allots only two pages for a set of historical events for which there is so much
pertinent information, over-simplification and absence are inherent in this spatial
structure. In fact there is a lot that is left out and over-simplified in this text section.
There is no discussion of the political, social, economic, or emotional impacts of the
practice of the slave trade on Africa or Africans. Further, the Middle Passage is glossed-over, as are the horrors of it, evident in the sweeping phrase found in the text that represents the treatment of African Americans on that voyage; “Others died of mistreatment” (p. 119). The arrival of Africans in America is listed as a series of laws that were passed in order to entrench their inferiority rather than a discussion of the social, emotional, political impacts, consequences, implications, and relationships that were the result of the slave trade. Further, the voice of African Americans in all of this history is limited to a few sentences by Olaudah Equiano in a minuscule font in the upper corner of the page which is visually disconnected from the text itself. These textual passages, although not historically inaccurate or refutable in their testimony, represent an absence of historical context and historical empathy that leads to the marginalization of African American voice. This also leads to an ethnocentric presentation of history wherein a reader is not aware of the plethora of perspectives that construct a pluralistic and democratic American narrative.

Pages 423 to 426 represent the textbook’s articulation of African Americans as they experienced slavery in the South. In this entire presentation of slavery there are only two small quotes that represent African American voice. This represents a severe shortage of African American voice in a section that deals largely with the entrenchment of racism as a system and as a rationale for oppression that would last for centuries. The text focuses on the lists of rights that were denied to African Americans, not as the groundwork for further discussion and inquiry into political, economic, social, emotional, and historical context and implications, but merely in order to state them. Slave rebellions are briefly addressed, but punishments are emphasized rather than rationale
and empowering motivations. Further, some of the wording of this text betrays an ethnocentric narrative exemplified as the textbook states, “Some [African Americans] even made valuable contributions to southern life” (p. 423). Does this phraseology not imply that African Americans had very little that was “valuable” to contribute to American culture and society? A combination of the absence of African American voice, and an over-simplification or absence of relevant and significant information regarding the historical context, contentiousness and complexity does not provide the reader with adequate understanding of historical perspectives. Further, it also does not allow a reader to begin to see implications and connections to America as it stands now.

As a final example of the marginalization of African American voice and perspectives, the Civil Rights Movement is also over-simplified and trivialized through its incoherence and subjugation to a narrative that concerns itself largely with presidential efforts to better the rights and conditions of African Americans. The information provided in the text is un-representative of the efforts of African Americans that were not as publicly recognized as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. In fact, the section on Martin Luther King Jr. is the only incorporation of African American voice that this text provides. This results in an undermining of the empowerment, coherence and implications of this movement then and now. Once again highlighting how a combination of over-simplification, absence of pertinent information and absence of voice can shape a textbook passage into an ethnocentric, dominant narrative. With no place for the development and support of a variety of American voices, relationships that are both contentious and constructive are presented that do not contribute to a more comprehensive and intricate understanding of United States history.
Through descriptions of the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans in the field of education, the textbook provides a context for the accomplishments of abolitionists. The abolitionist movement as constructed in this text focuses on and emphasizes the role of African Americans. The textbook opens the chapter with detailed, contextualized, empowering biographies and the articulation of a variety of the accomplishments of African Americans. White abolitionists are included, and valued, but their contributions are physically positioned behind those of African Americans. The textbook also includes a comprehensive articulation of the barriers, particularly racism and ensuing violence, to the abolitionist message, to abolitionists themselves and even towards African Americans who began to set up educational institutions that would encourage and support the empowerment of African Americans in general. As an integral part of the presentation of the abolitionist movement, the textbook includes the biographies and detailed lists of the accomplishments of Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. Frederick Douglass’s biography exemplifies the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of the text in representing abolitionists and abolitionist efforts as it states,

Even while he was still enslaved, Frederick Douglass bravely fought slavery. He suffered beatings for resisting commands and was once jailed for trying to escape. Even after he finally did escape, Douglass was in constant danger of being recaptured and returned to the South. Despite the risk, he did not hesitate to speak out against slavery. In 1845, Douglass wrote his autobiography. Fearing for Douglass’s life, an abolitionist friend warned him not to publish it. Douglass did so anyway. Two years later, friends raised money to buy Douglass his freedom at last. (p. 440)

Often the text uses a variety of voices to illustrate the significance of their contributions to the emancipation of African Americans. This entire section provides the reader with African American voice as an integral and important part of a larger American narrative.
It provides the reader with comprehensive and intricate knowledge of the political, economic, emotional, and social context and contentiousness of this historical time period while at the same time empowering African American voice.

This empowerment continues with the textbook’s presentation of a lengthy excerpt from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Although this book was not written by an African American, it is based on the stories of African Americans which informed the writer. In a representation of how slavery began to divide the nation into North and South which has, in every other textbook, been relegated to a political discussion that is not linked to the struggle for freedom by African Americans, the addition of this lengthy passage has the same effect on the reader as it did on many Northerners at the time of its publication. This particular excerpt re-humanizes the slavery debate by introducing an emotional context in particular, but also a social and political one. As it is emphasized in this chapter and is so emotionally moving, it could serve to highlight and support an African American voice and perspective of the Civil War and foster interest, curiosity, interrogation, and most certainly discussion. Particularly since this section is supported previously by the voices of African Americans in the abolitionist movement, the reader already has a framework of reference from which to analyze, interpret and internalize this history and this perspective.

Under the title “The Nation Reacts” the text begins to depict the more direct events that led to the Civil War. Again, with the incorporation of Frederick Douglass’ reaction to the Dred Scott case, (which ruled that African Americans were not citizens of the United States) the textbook supports African American voice. This extensive quote also provides the reader with emotional and social context which again supports the
incorporation of African American voice into a more pluralistic and democratic American narrative. The quote that the textbook incorporates to support its inclusion of African American voice is as follows,

“All I ask of the American people is that they live up to the Constitution, adopt its principles, [take in] its spirit, and enforce its provisions. When this is done...liberty...will become the inheritance of all the inhabitants of this highly favored country.” Frederick Douglass, *Collected Speeches*, 1857. (p. 472)

This textbook’s account of the Emancipation Proclamation has been provided with a comprehensive and complex historical framework in the preceding chapters and so, to the reader, there is already a context into which this enters. The textbook once again negotiates a balanced portrayal of President Lincoln’s views of slavery within the context of the political climate and the demands of his job. African American contributions to the war, both to the fighting and the support that they provided for Northern armies in the South, are explored in detail. This is important as it empowers African Americans who resisted and fought for their liberty but are often overlooked based on their inability to join the Northern army. The following textual excerpt exemplifies the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of the textbook’s representation of the end of the Civil War,

African American soldiers protested against this policy of discrimination that denied them the same treatment as other soldiers. Gradually, conditions changed. By 1863, African American troops were fighting in major battles against the Confederates. In 1864, the United States War Department announced that all soldiers would receive equal pay. By the end of the war, about 200,000 African Americans had fought for the Union. Nearly 40,000 lost their lives. One of the most famous African American units in the Union army was the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. The 54th accepted African Americans from all across the North. Frederick Douglass helped recruit troops for the regiment, and two of his sons served in it. On July 18, 1863, the 54th Massachusetts Regiment led an attack on Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina. Under heavy fire,
troops fought their way into the fort before being forced to withdraw. In the desperate fighting, almost half the regiment was killed. The courage of the 54th Massachusetts and other regiments helped to win respect for African American soldiers. Sergeant William Carney of the 54th Massachusetts was the first of 16 African American soldiers to win the Medal of Honor in the Civil War. Such soldiers had “proved themselves among the bravest of the brave,” Secretary of War Edwin Stanton told Lincoln. (pp. 498-499)

Further, the textbook provides the stories of two African Americans, one being Frederick Douglass, as they reacted to the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. This once again provides the reader with historical empathy, emotional and social context, as well as incorporating and supporting African American voice as fundamental to an American historical narrative.

Continuing on with Reconstruction, the textbook details the political, physical and psychological threat of the Ku Klux Klan, as well as the economic, political and social consequences of a system of sharecropping, voter restrictions, the cycle of poverty, and the Jim Crow laws. The text provides a factual basis to which it continuously incorporates African American voice. An example of this comprehensive factual basis is found on page 521 where the textbook states,

After the war, most southern states promptly ratified the Thirteenth Amendment. However, southern legislatures also passed black codes, laws that severely limited the rights of freedmen. The black codes did grant some rights. For example, African Americans could marry legally and own some kinds of property. Still, the codes were clearly meant to keep freedmen from gaining political or economic power. Black codes forbade freedmen to vote, own guns, or serve on juries. In some states, African Americans were permitted to work only as servants or farm laborers. In others, they had to sign contracts for a year’s work. Those without contracts could be arrested and sentenced to work on a plantation. (p. 521)

Based on an intricate and comprehensive understanding of the conditions before the Civil War and of the Civil War itself, the textbook builds in voice to support readers in their
understanding of the political, economic, emotional, and social contexts. As this section starts out so strong, a reader develops a fundamental understanding to which information, context and voice are added and these begin to accumulate and form a cohesive, comprehensive, multi-perspective and more democratic representation of American history.

Unfortunately, the historical construction of the Civil War and Reconstruction in this textbook is not representative of the textbook in its entirety. These sections are situated in the middle of a disconnected, over-simplified historical narrative where the voice and perspectives of African Americans are largely missing. This evaluation found that the majority of this textbook did not adequately empower, support and incorporate the voice of African Americans into history. However, the textbook’s entire section on the Civil War and parts of Reconstruction are exemplars of the equitable incorporation of African American voice into a fundamental understanding of an American historical narrative.

4.5: Call to Freedom

This textbook is designed to meet the curriculum requirements related to United States history as part of the state-mandated grade 8 social studies curriculum in California. It is a survey of over 500 years of American history that constructs an American narrative centered on the ideals of progress and reform. The textbook begins with a survey of the world “before the opening of the Atlantic” and continues to explore the new empires of North America. It then begins to focus on the development of American history with the English colonies. A description of the English colonies is
broken up into various major chapters which deal with “life in the colonies” and “conflict in the colonies.” It then moves on to the American Revolution, the formation of a new government, a constitution, citizenship, and into the launching and expansion of that new nation. Through this expansion a new national identity emerges as the North and the South begin to differentiate ideologically, politically and economically. The textbook then focuses on the social movements of the time as well as the territorial movement west. The division of the nation through the Civil War is then addressed, followed by Reconstruction. Units 8 and 9 address the growth and progress of the American nation as it moves west and develops economically in the Industrial Revolution to emerge as a world power at the beginning of the twentieth century. World War One, the roaring twenties, the Great Depression, World War Two and the Cold War then follow. America as a peaceful and prosperous nation under Eisenhower is used to provide context for a unit on a “Time of Change” that focuses on the Civil Rights Movement. The Vietnam War, the Nixon presidency and the “search for order,” and a chapter on “America looks to the future” finish off the textbook’s American historical narrative.

Sterling Stuckey and Linda Kerrigan Salvucci are the authors of this textbook. Dr. Stuckey is a professor of history and holds the presidential chair at the University of California, Riverside. His published works include Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America and Through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History. Dr. Salvucci is associate professor of history at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. She is currently working on a book entitled Ironies of Empire: The United States-Cuba Trade Under Spanish Rule. In addition this textbook
employs 21 academic content reviewers, 15 educational reviewers and 10 field test teachers.

This textbook is 952 pages in length and contains 41 textual references to African Americans which usually appear in larger sections of at least a page. Thirty of these references are adequate according to the five criteria employed in this study. In fact the overwhelming majority of the textual information provided by the textbook from its beginning to Reconstruction is outstanding in terms of its incorporation of African American voice, as well as in its provision of a rich and informative framework for the reader’s understanding of social, political, emotional, and economic contexts as they relate historically, and as they connect to America today. The Civil Rights unit is also empowering and comprehensive in its inclusion of African American voice and constructs a more pluralistic and democratic American historical narrative. The 11 textual references that did not reflect this comprehensive inclusion were largely found between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement, and African Americans were not incorporated into any of the material between the end of the Civil Rights Movement and the end of the textbook. This evaluation first explores the more comprehensive and democratic representations of United States history found in this textbook in order to provide reference for the sections that did not provide the reader with adequate accounts.

As all of the chapters that were concerned with the beginnings of the slave trade were found to be satisfactory, a series of excerpts will be given here in order to illustrate the findings of this research:

The Portuguese set up small trading posts along the coast of Africa. There they traded cloth, amour, and guns for gold, ivory and slaves. The Portuguese got slaves from Arab or African merchants, who traded people who had been captured during wars or raids. Most Europeans felt that it
was acceptable to enslave non-Christians. Many enslaved Africans worked on farms in Portuguese colonies where they endured hard labor and bad living conditions. For these people and their communities, the European explorations had disastrous results. (p. 33)

As an introduction to slavery, this text excerpt is satisfactory in a variety of ways. It first situates the practice of slavery within a historical time frame, when Europeans believed it was acceptable to enslave non-Christians. It also presents the reader with a rudimentary understanding of the misery of a system of slavery from the point of view of African Americans. Most importantly, it begins to lay the groundwork for a reader’s understanding of the impacts of slavery on Africans as people and Africa in general. This excerpt begins to provide the reader with a framework from which to develop an understanding of the motivations behind the slave trade, and also the experienced reality of it from an African point of view. As information and voice are added to this in later paragraphs, the reader begins to develop a more comprehensively complex understanding of the political, emotional, social, and economic consequences and significance of the slave trade.

Labor in Virginia – The widespread use of slave labor helped some tobacco plantation owners become rich. However, this wealth came at a great cost in human life and liberty (p. 69).... Many historians believe that African laborers taught the colonists how to raise rice in the 1690s. (p. 83)

The addition of these excerpts into an articulation of slavery in the Americas empowers African American voice as the emotional, physical and social costs of slavery are explored. This text does not seek to justify slavery through economic growth and benefit to the South; while it is recognized that economic growth was a motivating factor, the cost of this expansion and “growth” is not ignored. This adds to a reader’s awareness of a variety of perspectives, motivations and experiences under a system of slavery. On
page 83 we see the empowerment of African Americans through the text’s inclusion of their contributions, skills and accomplishments. This encourages the reader to see that African Americans were enslaved, not inferior. Together, and as part of a larger representation of African Americans in this textbook, these excerpts empower African Americans in history as well as provide various perspectives and experiences through which the reader is encouraged to explore this history, thereby facilitating a more democratic and inclusive American historical narrative.

The beat of a drum began trade at the slave market. African slaves stood terrified as buyers rushed in to make their choices. Cries were heard from people who were separated from their family and friends. Such scenes led Olaudah Equiano, once a slave himself, to ask, “Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives?” The answer was money and greed. The slave trade had become an important part of the colonial economy. (p. 98)

This addition of African American voice once again refocuses the political arguments and economic rationale of slavery. It reintroduces a perspective that is forgotten in political debates and policy making. It provides a reader with social and emotional consequences, significance and implications of historical events.

Continuing into the political debates that surrounded abolition, the textbook continuously feeds the reader with contentious and comprehensive information that is supported by African American voice. Even in the thicket of the political debates, the textbook returns again and again to how African Americans would have viewed or understood these happenings. This is exemplified on page 203 which is concerned with the Three-Fifths Compromise,

The admission of slaves into the Representation ... comes to this; that the inhabitant of [a state] who goes to the coast of Africa and ... tears away his fellow creatures from their dearest connections and damns them to the
most cruel bondages [slavery], shall have more votes in a Government [established] for protection of the rights of mankind. (p. 203)

This illustrates how the incorporation of voice highlights how minorities may have seen political, economic and social legislation and events, and encourages a reader’s discussion of these perspectives. The textbook’s articulation of the system of slavery and its description of the South continues to incorporate voice which is supported with equitable and balanced information that promotes historical empathy from a variety of perspectives and encourages readers to be more inclusive in their understanding. The abolitionist movement also provides this more complex understanding of the contributions of African Americans and their white allies in an equitable presentation that highlights the voices of African American women through Harriet Tubman in particular.

The Civil Rights Movement marks this textbook’s continued presentation of an inclusive, democratic and pluralistic construction of American history. The main focus and emphasis of the chapters and sections that address the Civil Rights Movement are the efforts of African Americans who were not overly publicized. The efforts of SNCC, the freedom riders, and the college students who organized sit-ins are heavily emphasized over the contributions of a few leaders. This empowers African Americans as the textbook recognizes the efforts of the not-so-famous and presents the reader with an understanding that many resisted within their capacities and individual contexts. These sections are infused with a variety of African American voices as well as the stories of others who were affected and took part in the movement. As such these sections create space for a variety of voices to interact, and develop connections and significance to both this historical time period and everything that would ensue.
Unfortunately this inclusive and complex construction of American history is not consistent through the text. The units between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement barely mention African Americans. This exclusion leaves a reader with an over-simplified, inaccurate and inadequate understanding of American society, culture and history. To further this impression, the reader is left without any inclusion of African American voice beyond the Civil Rights Movement. There is simply no mention, nothing to encourage a reader to see history as the foundation for today’s society and culture. This absence serves to undermine African American voice and perspective, as well as disconnect the reader from the implications of these absences in today’s society. As such the textbook reverts to an ethnocentric conveyor of one truth, rather than an integration of multi-perspectives from which a reader can develop a diverse and comprehensive historical empathy.

Overall, the majority of this textbook incorporates African American voice into a rich and contextual understanding which encourages a reader’s understanding of American history as a space for a variety of voices. This more inclusive construction of American history works against the presentation of one dominant, ethnocentric narrative and fosters inquiry, compassion and empathy. However, this success continues only until Reconstruction. Beyond this, with the notable exception of the Civil Rights Movement, the text no longer includes African American voice and these sections are marked by absence and exclusion. This results in the latter half of the textbook presenting an ethnocentric American historical narrative.
CHAPTER V: Discussion of Findings

5.1: Introduction

The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate five textbooks approved for use in California in 2005 under the 1998 curriculum guidelines for the presence of embedded power relations as they relate to the representation of African American history. This evaluation employed a critical framework with five specific criteria that helped to make power relations visible. This study indicates that all five textbooks have sections that are representative and inclusive of African Americans. However, there continues to be a dominant and ethnocentric narrative through the majority of these textbooks. In most cases, embedded power relations continue to privilege and benefit the dominant culture. In four of the textbooks this ethnocentric narrative was apparent from start to finish, with pockets of adequacy littered throughout.

This chapter explores the primary findings of this investigation in order to draw conclusions about the representation of African Americans in the grade 8 United States history textbooks approved for use in California in 2005.

5.2: “Sectioning” vs. “Mentioning”

The phenomenon of “mentioning” has been well documented (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Ornstein, 1994; Tyson-Bernstein, 1986) and is usually the product of an over-sized curriculum that is far too expansive to cover topics in any depth and so mentions events and issues, but only very superficially. Mentioning is when information regarding African Americans appears in smaller pieces, normally as just one or two sentences tacked onto the ends of paragraphs. American Journey most actively employs
a strategy of mentioning. This approach resulted in African American history being
communicated in bits and pieces that impede the construction of history as a complex
continuum of political, social and economic interactions, relationships and consequences.
Often the information provided when an event or person is mentioned is inadequate in its
depth. It simply fails to present a reader with enough information to construct a more
comprehensive understanding of context, significance or consequence, and results in
over-simplification. This can then be exacerbated if the textbook fails to incorporate
African American voice in order to support textual details or present various perspectives
and experiences. The primary evaluation of this textbook was that it was simplistic in its
presentation of African American history because of its use of mentioning.

In Creating America, The American Nation and United States History the
phenomenon of “mentioning” is combined with the process of “sectioning.” Sectioning
entails the incorporation of African American history into units that concern themselves
primarily with a representation of African American history and are often titled simply
“African Americans” in order to reflect that goal. A strategy of either mentioning or
sectioning was used depending on the depth or comprehensiveness desired, with
sectioning providing the space for more in-depth presentations. The weakness of
sectioning is best illustrated through United States History where the sections, while
potentially providing the space for comprehensive explorations and representations, were
over-simplified and inadequate in their presentation of African American historical
information and context. This resulted in the disconnection and visible
compartmentalization of an African American historical narrative that appeared to have
little relevance or relationship to the rest of the text or to the construction of an American
narrative. Despite the increased textual space provided with a sectioning approach, inclusive and pluralistic narratives depend on the adequacy of the content of this space. Creating America and The American Nation, on the other hand, used sectioning more effectively. To construct a more inclusive, pluralistic narrative, often within entire chapters, sectioning allowed for the presentation of more comprehensive and complex information, often supported through the incorporation of African American voice. Unfortunately, these sections were too infrequent, resulting in the segregation and marginalization of an African American historical narrative.

From Exploration to Reconstruction, Call to Freedom does not employ either a sectioning or mentioning strategy. African American voices, as well as contentious and complex political, economic, emotional, and social contextualization, are woven into American history that recognizes African Americans as fundamental to its very construction. Unfortunately, the textbook does not carry this inclusiveness through post-Reconstruction. As such it could be argued that there are satisfactory embedded power structures only within specified content (sectioning), rather than a re-articulation of an American history that is more inclusive, pluralistic and democratic. The phenomena of sectioning and mentioning were employed throughout all five books with the exception of the first half of Call to Freedom. Both methodologies resulted in the disconnection and marginalization of African American history.

5.3: Voice

An indicative criterion of an ethnocentric, over-simplistic and unrepresentative construction of history is the absence of voice. It was observed throughout this
evaluation that incorporation of voice often provided a foundation for inquiry and the development of multiple perspectives. In all of the textbooks, the incorporation of a quotation provided additional content complexity and increased understanding of contentiousness in a specific context. For example, the quotation of a famous person required additional contextual information in order to situate it. So the incorporation of voice begins to structure textual material in such a way that supports and facilitates an African American narrative.

The voices of African Americans were incorporated into all five texts without exception. Each book, however, varied in the extent to which voice appeared. In general, the more references to African Americans, the less voice was incorporated. Creating America and American Journey exemplify this as they contained the largest number of references to African Americans, but were weak in their incorporation of voice; this was the result of mentioning. A notable exception was United States History which contained few references and was also inadequate in its incorporation of voice. American Nation and Call to Freedom more comprehensively incorporated African Americans; although they have fewer references, each one tended to be larger, more complex and inclusive sections of text. Call to Freedom in particular, was consistently inclusive of African American voice in the first half of the text. Voice, through its association with complex content, is key to constructing more democratic and inclusive histories.
5.4: Inclusiveness

Although the focus of the grade 8 curriculum is American history up to 1914, all of the textbooks examined here extended far beyond this demand. Each textbook, in fact, ended with George W. Bush’s presidency and the War on Terror. It was in this latter part of the textbooks that the most and least inclusive chapters appeared.

Overall, the chapters or units on the Civil Rights Movement were the most adequate. In general, the narrative here was empowering, and the texts incorporated rich, comprehensive and complex information that included a variety of voices and perspectives which provided the reader with an understanding of African American history as an intricate continuum of political, economic and social relationships. Specifically, the Civil Rights sections represented a significant portion of the references to African Americans. The majority of these references were found to be adequate due to their consistent inclusiveness of voice and through pluralistic and democratic representations of minority perspectives. Creating America, American Journey, and Call to Freedom were balanced, equitable and empowering in their presentation of the Civil Rights Movement as determined by the criteria above. United States History was mixed in its presentation with an inadequate introduction, but later improving its presentation. The only textbook with an inadequate presentation of the Civil Rights Movement was American Nation as the entire section lacked African American voice and the associated contextual information. Despite the discrepancies of the American Nation and part of United States History, the Civil Rights topic most consistently met the criteria of this study and represented adequate, more inclusive constructions of American history.
Without exception, the chapters after the Civil Rights Movement were the least inclusive. Often without a single mention of African Americans or African American history, these chapters present an ethnocentric, dominant construction of history where historical empathy and the significance and consequences of a long and rich racial history were ignored. The absence of reference to African Americans after the Civil Rights Movement leaves a reader with the impression that race is no longer a relevant issue in modern America. Further, a long and contentious racial history appears inconsequential and unconnected to present social, economic or political contexts and experiences. Few connections are made between history and present day society, culture or politics. Interestingly, this absence is the only similarity across all five textbooks.

5.5: Summary

This study set out to evaluate five grade 8 United States history textbooks approved by the California State Board of Education in 2005 for their representation of African American history. The study employed a critical framework centered on five major criteria that aimed to make visible embedded power relations constructed in these textbooks. The motivations behind this study were varied, but center around a belief that textbooks are the major conveyor of curriculum in classrooms. As such, the great majority of American youth are exposed to the material in textbooks. Studies have suggested that how students see themselves in literature and history has a profound impact on their self-esteem and sense of identity and place within society (Barksdale-Ladd & Hefflin, 2001; Bieger, 1996; Bishop, 1990; Collier, 2000; Roethler, 1998). Given that African Americans have traditionally been negatively portrayed in textbooks
DuBois, 1935; Gold, 2004), and that California claims to have addressed the presentation of minorities in their new curriculum standards, an evaluation of these textbooks seemed imperative.

The primary finding of this evaluation is that there is an ethnocentric, dominant narrative that underlies all of these textbooks. However, there are chapters and sections that are satisfactory in terms of inclusion and incorporation of voice. More specifically, this evaluation found that an important indicator of satisfactory embedded power structures was voice. When African American voice was incorporated, it was usually supported by textual intricacy and more comprehensive historical content. The Civil Rights Movement was most adequately represented in the textbooks, with the rationale for this finding associated with the infusion of African American voice into the chapter or section. The chapters after the Civil Rights Movement were almost entirely devoid of African American voice, context or content of any kind and were therefore the least adequately presented in terms of representation.

The expansive grade 8 curriculum combined with a push for one textbook to “do it all” requires the simplification of history in order to literally fit into a textbook. To simplify history often means to exclude or gloss-over the histories of a plethora of peoples. As such, the dominant American narrative remains intact and textbook authors simply add sections when and where there is space rather than recognize the multiple perspectives that should be fundamental to its construction and representation throughout. Given the immense scope of this curriculum, it would be almost impossible to be inclusive of these multiple perspectives. If this evaluation had been focused on Native
Americans, or Irish immigrants, would the findings not be the same? It is not possible for one book to satisfy all of these demands. Textbooks are set up to fail.
CHAPTER VI: Implications

The textbooks assessed in this study are the result of educational and curriculum changes in the state of California in 1998. Although this investigation is focused on these textbooks, their evaluations have led to more pressing concerns regarding the role of a textbook in delivering curriculum. More specifically, a discussion of evaluative findings leads to questions regarding the relationships between curriculum and textbooks. This chapter seeks to explore these issues as they relate to California.

6.1: The Role of the Textbook in Delivering a Curriculum

Numerous renowned academics have been critical that the textbook is often used as the curriculum (Apple, 1991; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1990; Horne, 1988; Ornstein, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Swartz, 1993; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988). Textbooks published in 2005 in California are manifestations of curriculum changes in 1998 and serve as a vehicle for translating these changes into school contexts and teaching practices. Research indicates that textbooks are often used to organize classroom instruction, through chapters and units; they are typically used as the central objects of attention in schooling, and are often the most significant resource in a classroom (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1991). However, based on the findings of this evaluation, educational policy changes and curriculum changes affect not just the content of a course, but also what is expected from textbooks. This has implications for how texts are used in classrooms.

Cody (1990) argues that “waves of dissatisfaction with public schools and resulting school reform movements have historically turned to textbooks as a mechanism
to change and control what teachers do in classrooms” (p. 128). More specifically, in
time periods when teachers or school systems are seen as “inadequate” by the public or
media, the reaction has often been standardization supported by curriculum, textbooks
and testing. Textbooks, above all other educational resources, grow in importance in
these periods of high accountability. Textbooks provide educational systems with a
concise, “knowable,” “teachable” and “testable” vehicle for curriculum. Textbooks then
are looked at as complete instructional programs and are even marketed as such. They
are accompanied by teacher’s editions that provide teachers with lesson plans, with
activities, with sample test questions and even helpful hints on how to prepare their
students for impending testing. Standardized tests also shape the type of knowledge that
may be presented in textbooks covering immense expanses of curriculum and
information.

The motivations for curriculum changes in California in 1998 were based on
California’s renewed commitment to its goal of meeting the learning needs of each
student, and to enabling their success (CSDE, 2006, para. 1). The method by which
California intends to accomplish this is by setting challenging standards and continually
being accountable to these goals. The cornerstone of this accountability system is the
Academic Performance Index (API). The API is defined as a “simple yardstick” for
measuring school performance, ranking schools based on academic achievement, and
comparing schools of similar populations. It is seen by the public as a legitimate means
of holding schools accountable for student achievement (CSDE, 2006). Very simply,
schools are ranked based on their results on statewide standardized tests across all
subjects. Each school is expected to improve its test results by five percent each year
compared to its distance from the statewide target score. This means lower-performing schools are expected to develop larger growth targets as the gap between the statewide target and their results is greater. It also means that a school’s performance on the API will determine its eligibility for either state awards or for intervention programs. Based on the centrality of API test results to a school’s funding and credibility, standardized testing has become a significant focus of schooling in California. It has quite dramatically changed the relationships between course content, teaching and testing. The textbooks evaluated in this study reflect the changes in these relationships.

The results of California’s standards tests are published as part of the API index and therefore preparation for this test is important to students, teachers and schools. The test for grade 8 social studies consists of seventy-five multiple choice questions. The California Board of Education has released ninety sample questions from tests given between 2003 and 2007 that indicate the focus of the test as well as the type of questions that students will encounter. In terms of African American history, students are likely to encounter questions such as “What agricultural invention, designed to increase production, had the effect of increasing the number of slaves needed for labor in the Deep South?” (the answer is B, the cotton gin) or “The slave-based agricultural system in the South encouraged the development of ___(blank)____” (the answer is B, “a rigid social class system”). The multiple choice questions on this test are not designed to assess the results of in-depth discussions and inquiries. They are not designed to assess a student’s depth of understanding of contentious topics or grasp of intricacies and complex relationships. Multiple choice is here used to evaluate factual recall abilities. As a result African American history is reduced to questions such as “One of the functions of the
Freedmen’s Bureau was to ______?" (the answer is C, “provide assistance to former slaves"), which involves testing the student’s ability to recall the duties of the Freedmen’s Bureau rather than understand what the Freedmen’s Bureau accomplished, and what the significance of those accomplishments were in terms of American historical, political, economic, and social contexts. Specifically, these exam questions and answers ignore how knowledge is socially constructed and defines students’ and teachers’ success in terms of their ability to transmit, receive and regurgitate knowledge. The primary criticism of this study is that these textbooks are inadequate in presenting a comprehensive construction of American history that addresses its contentiousness and complexity. However, they clearly prepare the students to succeed on the standardized tests of California which appear to be designed to assess factual recall and memorization abilities rather than more complex and in-depth understandings.

Apple (1991) suggests that little information tends to be dropped from curriculum; the trend is always to add to it. As curriculum accumulates, the need for the textbook to be succinct develops. There is less room for subtleties, suggestions and discussion. The exploration of controversial content and concepts, and the development of critical thinking skills are much harder to incorporate into such an enormous curriculum. The textbook evaluations conducted for this study have quite clearly pointed out how this overextended and expansive curriculum has resulted in the construction of an American history that is rarely more than a collection of dates and facts. In this way American history has become “knowable” and “testable.” Standardized tests as used by California in testing grade 8 social studies, are not designed to encourage discussion or
critical thinking, they are designed to test factual recall and other such lower order thinking skills.

The textbooks published in 2005 answer this call for a simple, factual history that can be memorized and recalled. This has left little space for discussions of history as contentious and to acknowledge complex interactions and relationships. Given that each textbook was roughly nine hundred pages and covered nearly five hundred years of American history, it is fair to say that the textbook is faced with an extraordinary task of fitting everything in. There is little time or space for minority voices in this educational setting. Discussions that reflect the intricacy of history as experienced by the multitude of people who shape it is not the type of knowledge that is tested and measured on an API and therefore may take a backseat in the classroom. In fact, based on the structure of California's educational system and its grade 8 curriculum, the findings of this evaluation would most likely parallel the findings of any evaluation of cultural minority perspectives in these textbooks, whether Native American, Muslim, Hispanic, or any other. The reasoning behind this statement is simply that a textbook that emphasizes a history that is little more than the listing of events, dates and people, based on time and space constraints as well as testing constraints, could never satisfactorily construct a pluralistic, critically democratic or inclusive history.

Teachers are then presented with moral decisions about whether to incorporate a variety of perspectives and resources, or concentrate on test preparation. Despite best intentions, teachers are often forced to bow to the accountability testing not only for the good of their careers, but also for the success of their students. The weaknesses found in the textbooks of this study are not indications of poor authorship or a desire to reinforce
an ethnocentric construction of American history. More likely, they are the result of California’s educational reforms that have overextended curriculum and emphasized standardized testing.

As previously stated in the review of the literature (p. 12), California’s 1998 curriculum standards specifically indicate that students should be able to describe political, economic and social relationships that existed between 1500 and the early 1900s, analyze the philosophies behind events and ideologies, discuss the significance of major events, evaluate the major debates throughout this time, and understand the significance of these happenings (CSDE, 2005). These standards aim to encourage the development of good citizens, and foster equitable and socially just spaces for students in accordance with their mission statement and educational goals. The textbooks approved for use in 2005 and the standardized testing designed to assess Californian students do not appear to reflect this aim.

California’s content standards align themselves with California’s stated educational aims but not the content of the textbooks and format of standardized tests. For example, of the sixty-nine criteria for content standards in grade 8 social studies, fifteen of them specifically address African Americans and African American history. All but one of these content standards requires students to engage with the grade 8 curriculum in a thoughtful manner with the obvious intention of fostering historical empathy, and encouraging thoughtful and compassionate citizenship. Unlike many of the textbook materials used to support this curriculum, and the standardized tests used to evaluate it, content standards in California do not indicate that students should be addressing textbook material in an un-engaging and prescriptive fashion. California’s
content standards do not reflect the idea that the knowledge in textbooks should be memorized and then simply recalled on a test. California’s content standards are dedicated to encouraging students to perceive the complexity of social, economic and political problems with the aim of having these students respect the rights of others to differ with them and develop into ethical citizens (CSBE, 1998). A dichotomy then develops between California’s educational aims and content standards and what that looks like in practice through textbook material and testing.

Let us examine three specific examples from California’s content standards document in order to exemplify the reasoning behind the statements made here. Section 8.11, standard number five states that students are expected to “understand the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments and analyze their connection to Reconstruction.” In order to understand these amendments it is reasonable to assume that students must know the histories behind the inclusion of these amendments to the constitution. Further, understanding these amendments would require students to comprehend the significance of civil rights and their applications to historical and present day American culture, politics and society. In order for students to analyze the connections of these amendments to Reconstruction they must not only understand the policies of Presidents, but the motivations behind the introduction of these amendments. This would require intimate knowledge of American historical political, economic, social, and emotional contexts and occurrences. This content standard and the implied knowledge that would enable a student to successfully be evaluated according to its criteria most certainly support California’s educational aims of developing conscientious, knowledgeable and empathetic citizens.
Section 8.11 content standard number three states, “understand the effects of the Freedmen’s Bureau and the restrictions placed on the rights and opportunities of freedmen, including racial segregation and ‘Jim Crow’ laws.” In direct opposition to how California’s standardized tests address this topic, this content standard encourages students not just to understand the responsibilities of the Freedmen’s Bureau, but also its significance in American history and in the lives of African Americans and others who were affected by its actions. Further enhancing the student’s understanding of the role of the Freedmen’s Bureau, students are further required to understand its relationship to the development of racial segregation as political and social legacies that would have long lasting societal, political, economic, and emotional legacies in American culture. This standard is most certainly in line with California’s goal of fostering a complex and comprehensive understanding of the various perspectives that make up American history.

There is one exception to California’s progressive and comprehensive content standards. The one content standard that does not appear to be consistent with California’s educational aims is in section 8.9 which bears the heading, “Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence” (p. 3). The California State Board of Education requires that students understand the process of the abolition of slavery by describing the leaders of the movement who they list as John Quincy Adams, John Brown, Harriet Tubman, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass. It is interesting to note that five out of the seven people who are considered the “leaders” of this movement are white Americans as opposed to African Americans. This is misleading and is not an equitable representation of abolitionist efforts. It under-
emphasizes the role that African Americans played in the abolitionist movement through individual efforts and daily resistance to the system combined with the outstanding and exceptional local leadership of enslaved African Americans. Does the dissemination of this misrepresentative ideology or "knowledge" create an intellectual and emotional support for African American students as is a stated aim in the Board of Education’s mission statement? I argue that this is a simplistic, truncated, biased, and inadequate view of the place and importance of African American history in the mainstream American narrative that could negatively affect the self-esteem and sense of place in the community of African American students. Is this content contributing to the development of people who "excel as citizens" (CSDE, 2006, para. 3)? Fortunately this content standard is the exception rather than the rule. The remaining fourteen content standards do reflect California’s goals of developing good citizens.

Robert Jensen (2006) argues that American understandings of history and society in curriculum are moving away from creating American citizens who think critically about the history and present realities of American social, political and economic issues. He argues that, “U.S. students are taught a sanitized version of history in which the inherent superiority and benevolence of the United States is rarely challenged” (p. 1). Further, he argues that more and more of the content of history is seen as a series of facts that are “knowable, teachable and testable” and some states are “legislat[ing] out of existence any ideas to the contrary. They are not just saying that their history is the best history, but that it is beyond interpretation” (p. 1). Westheimer (2006) echoes the concerns of Jensen as he states that some states have gone as far as to state that middle school social studies curriculum should “instill a love of country” (p. 608) and should
include the “exploits and deeds of American heroes, singing patriotic songs, memorizing the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ and ‘America’ and reverence for the flag” (p. 608).

Westheimer argues that the stated aims of the California State Board of Education are in opposition to the stated educational aims of the federal government, which are focused on using education “primarily as a means of conveying to American youths and young adults a monolithic set of important historical facts combined with a sense of civic unity, duty, and national pride” (p. 615). Jensen’s and Westheimer’s arguments are reflected in the inadequacies of Californian textbooks and testing but not in California’s content standards or stated educational aims. This begins to illustrate the tensions that exist between educational aims and textbooks and testing.

How can the difference between California’s educational aims and their textbooks be bridged? Are there alternatives or solutions to the weaknesses or problems that seem inherent in California’s educational system? How would the introduction of multiple resources, an emphasis on discussion and higher level thinking skills align with the accountability system in California? Would an inclusive, pluralistic and democratic education be possible under such circumstances and what would it look like?

6.2: The Role of a Teacher in Using a Textbook

The apparent gap between California’s educational mission statements and curricular goals, and its textbooks and accountability testing can be bridged by teachers. The textbooks approved by California in 2005 are largely inadequate; however, there are ways in which teachers can address these weaknesses and make them work towards California’s educational goals. Penney Clark (1999) suggests that, “since there is no
promised land where textbooks come without bias, or, at least perspective, students need to be taught to view a text as representing particular perspectives rather than as the objective authority on a topic” (p. 345). Clark (1999) further states that “the task of teachers is to tear down the sanctity of the text and help students learn to probe surface discourse for the latent messages texts deliver” (p. 347). In this way it becomes the role of the teacher to interrogate and augment the text (Wasburn, 1997).

Clark suggests three approaches that can be used by teachers to enrich textbook materials. The first is to “teach students to directly confront the biases found in their texts by means of examining both their written content and illustrations from a critical stance in order to locate and analyze the distortions and omissions, as well as author perspective” (p. 345). Marcy Gabella (1994) acknowledges the complexities of such a task but stresses its importance as she states that, “the impact on pedagogy implied by the view that knowledge is situated in a community of inquiry is profound. Our task becomes one of providing students with ample opportunities to practice the roles of knower and inquirer, the namer of significance, rather than only the receiver of knowledge” (p. 352). In this way history becomes more interpretive, interactive and engaging. Teachers’ facilitation of the development of a critical stance in students and the support of their engagement with social studies can effectively begin to address the stark contrast between Californian textbooks and educational goals. Clark’s (1999) second suggestion is for teachers to incorporate source materials to “demystify and dethrone the textbook” (Osborne, 1995, p. 155). Ken Osborne (1995) specifically states that,

It should be obvious that the study of history depends on the use of historical sources and records of all types: official records, letters, diaries,
posters, documents and artifacts. It should be equally obvious that if we want students to understand the nature of history as an academic discipline and the nature of historical argument, they need to understand, at least at a basic level, what historical evidence is and how historians use it. … The key point is to use a wide variety of sources, liberally defined, in order to take students far beyond the pages of the textbook. If students understand what historical evidence is and how historians use it, they will be less ready to accept their textbooks and other alleged authorities uncritically. (pp. 133-134)

As students are exposed to additional materials they begin to develop the skill sets required to deconstruct the authorship of textbooks and recognize the limitations of texts. Wasburn (1997) also emphasizes the development of critical thinking and analytical skills in students in order to detect and identify bias and historical contexts. The responsibility for the incorporation of additional materials and the development of critical stances falls largely onto the shoulders of teachers. Once again teachers are in a unique position to navigate the tensions and conflicts between educational goals, textbooks and testing. Clark’s (1999) final suggestion is the use of alternative textbooks. Clark states that alternate textbooks “allow students to examine and compare the treatment of particular topics in the different texts. They can look for distortions, omissions, degrees of emphasis, tone of presentation and the perspectives from which information is presented” (p. 346). This requires relatively little investment in terms of time and energy by teachers and can be a powerful tool in connecting content standards and textbook materials.

Teachers are the key to the translations and applications of broad educational goals in the classroom. Each textbook evaluated in this study has provided exemplars of adequate, comprehensive, inclusive, and complex historical narratives. The infusion by teachers of experiences, ideas, interpretations, and additional-supplemental materials can
enhance textbook materials. Teachers have the opportunity to use textbooks, inadequate or otherwise, to reach educational goals. Teachers occupy a unique position in an educational system as their daily actions negotiate educational tensions and navigate contentious educational terrain. The onus to bridge the gap between California's textbooks and educational goals falls on teachers. However, these responsibilities must be acknowledged and addressed by schools, school boards and the state. It is essential that the pre-service and in-service professional development of teachers is funded and supported by these administrative bodies. Further, polices and administrative practices that ensure that Californian teachers are qualified social studies teachers before they enter a classroom are the responsibilities of the state, districts and individual schools. Reflecting the ideology that the first priority of educational change should be to restore the professional space of teachers (McCarthy, 1990), California has encouraged, supported and legislated professional development for its teachers. It is the belief of this researcher that the development and training of Californian teachers could be the most effective and rational method to address textbook inadequacies and balance a system which is intent on standardized testing. It is through teachers and teaching that students will be able to meet content standards and that California will be able to progress towards its educational goals.

6.3: Conclusion

This study evaluated five textbooks approved by the California State Board of Education in 2005. These five were a new generation of textbooks aligned with curriculum changes in 1998 which aimed to "develop a keen sense of ethics and
citizenship” in students, as well as have them “care deeply about the quality of their life in their community, their nation and their world” (Honig, 1991, p. 12). This study evaluated these textbooks for embedded power relations in their presentations of African American history using five specific criteria: ethnocentrism, over-simplification, voice, absence, and inclusiveness. The results were mixed. Parts of each textbook were empowering, inclusive and supportive of African American voice, but the majority of the texts remained ethnocentric, over-simplistic and exclusive. In light of California’s stated aims of education, and its motivations behind the curricular reforms of 1998, these findings appear inconsistent.

Educational reforms implemented in 1998 provide some context for the results of this investigation. When these five textbooks are understood in light of California’s renewed emphasis on standardized testing and accountability, the demand for textbooks to be simple, concise and uncomplicated becomes clearer. The pressure for school districts, schools, teachers, and students to succeed on standardized testing changes the role of teachers and textbooks and shapes an educational system. Teachers rely more completely on the textbooks because they contain the information most pertinent to examinations. Further, with such an extensive state curriculum and so little time to cover it all, it becomes more practical to rely on one book that can “do it all.” The results of this study indicate that textbooks that cover expansive curriculums and that are relied upon to be “the curriculum” simply do not have the space or ability to present a contentious, comprehensive American historical narrative that is inclusive and representative of minority histories. It is the final conclusion of this investigation that textbooks approved for use in California in 2005 were set up to fail. Based upon
California's emphasis on standardized testing and accountability, the consequences of not being accountable, and the expanse of the grade 8 curriculum, there is simply no space or opportunity for these textbooks to be adequate in their representation of African American history according to the criteria of this study. These textbooks cannot facilitate a pluralistic and democratic presentation of American history.
References


National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (1939). *Anti-Negro Propaganda in School Textbooks* [Brochure].


p. 33 – The Portuguese set up small trading posts along the coast of Africa. There they traded cloth, armor, and guns for gold, ivory and slaves. The Portuguese got slaves from Arab or African merchants, who traded people who had been captured during wars or raids. Most Europeans felt that it was acceptable to enslave non-Christians. Many enslaved Africans worked on farms in Portuguese colonies where they endured hard labor and bad living conditions. For these people and their communities, the European explorations had disastrous results.

Critical Evaluation of the Text Excerpt

As the introduction to history between European traders and Africa, this text passage develops a background knowledge and context for further exploration of this topic. The enslavement of Africans by Europeans is problematized (not over-simplified), and the voices of Africans are incorporated through descriptions of experiences. These factors work towards a more inclusive narrative, rather than an ethnocentric one.

Adequacy of Text Excerpt

Satisfactory – This text passage begins to develop an understanding of the social, economic and political impacts of the slave trade both on Europeans and on Africans and Africa. It allows the reader to begin to develop a context for further knowledge and understand the multiple perspectives from which to view this history.
Large plantations needed many different kinds of workers. Some enslaved people worked in the house, cleaning, cooking, doing laundry, sewing, and serving meals. They were called domestic slaves. Other African Americans were trained as blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, or weavers. Still others worked in the pastures, tending the horses, cows, sheep, and pigs. Most of the enslaved African Americans, however, were field hands. They worked from sunrise to sunset planting, cultivating, and picking cotton and other crops. They were supervised by an overseer—a plantation manager. Reading check—Why were many slaves needed on a plantation?

Critical Evaluation of the Text Excerpt

This text excerpt exemplifies how the practice of slavery can be represented as a neutral event. The realities of slavery, who owned slaves, how many and why, are listed off here as simple facts of history rather than problematized and discussed. This text passage lacks humanity. In an attempt to explain slavery in a politically correct fashion the text has over-simplified and over-sanitized the content, leaving a description of slavery as merely a set of listed facts. Further, the Reading Check at the bottom encourages the reader to justify the practice of slavery based on the needs of white plantation owners. This is not a historical perspective conducive to the understanding of history from an African American perspective. The voice of African Americans is not incorporated into the text. The combination of these factors; over-simplification, absence of voice and exclusion, contribute to an ethnocentric narrative.

Adequacy of Text Excerpt

Not Satisfactory—This passage leaves the reader with a sense of slavery as simply a list of historical happenings and facts, over-simplifying the problematic and controversial nature of the institution, and leaving the reader without an understanding of the social, political and economic consequences of these happenings.